



CAREER MANAGEMENT

Access the Hidden Job Market

SHIREEN DUPREEZ

Career Management: Access the Hidden Job Market

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Career Management: Access the Hidden Job Market

ISBN 978-0-9875435-2-3

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Publishing, Editing assisted by RainmakerMedia.com.au

DEDICATIONS

This book is dedicated to my family, friends and associates. May you live long, happy and successful lives with bountiful career opportunities.

I also devote this book to those who strive each day to be better and make a positive contribution to the world. I echo the belief of the GatesFoundation.org that every life has equal value.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to everyone who helped me during the journey of writing this book.

To Jorge, thank you for your patience and support every day, you are truly wonderful.

A special thanks to Morris Kaplan from Rainmaker Media for his first-rate editorial guidance. My appreciation goes to Maryruth Belsey Priebe from Jade Creative for editorial and proof-reading assistance. Bogdan Oprisan, a guy who thinks in pictures and provided the eye catching graphics for this book, many thanks. Gratitude to Kylie Sciortino for her excellent book design and layout work.

To the superb clients and candidates who have inspired me to write, thank you for the learning experiences.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

As an experienced Executive Search Consultant and Recruitment Advisor I have a wealth of information to offer you, the reader. You will benefit from the knowledge and insights I have gained from consulting to organizations of all sizes: start-ups to US Fortune 500 and ASX 100 companies. I have lived and worked in the US, UK and Australia, and believe this brings more depth to the book.

By utilizing the executive search model and leading-edge techniques, I locate and attract high-caliber candidates who are the right fit for my client's mission critical roles. With assignment experience across functional lines and right up to C-level it means I can provide you with the latest information about how to secure a career enhancing position with a top company.

I hold a Bachelor of Social Work degree and Post Graduate Diploma in Business (Marketing), both from Curtin University of Technology, Western Australia.

This is my second book, my first book was published in 2010 and is titled *The Executive Search Process: A Step by Step Guide to Finding the Right Candidate*.

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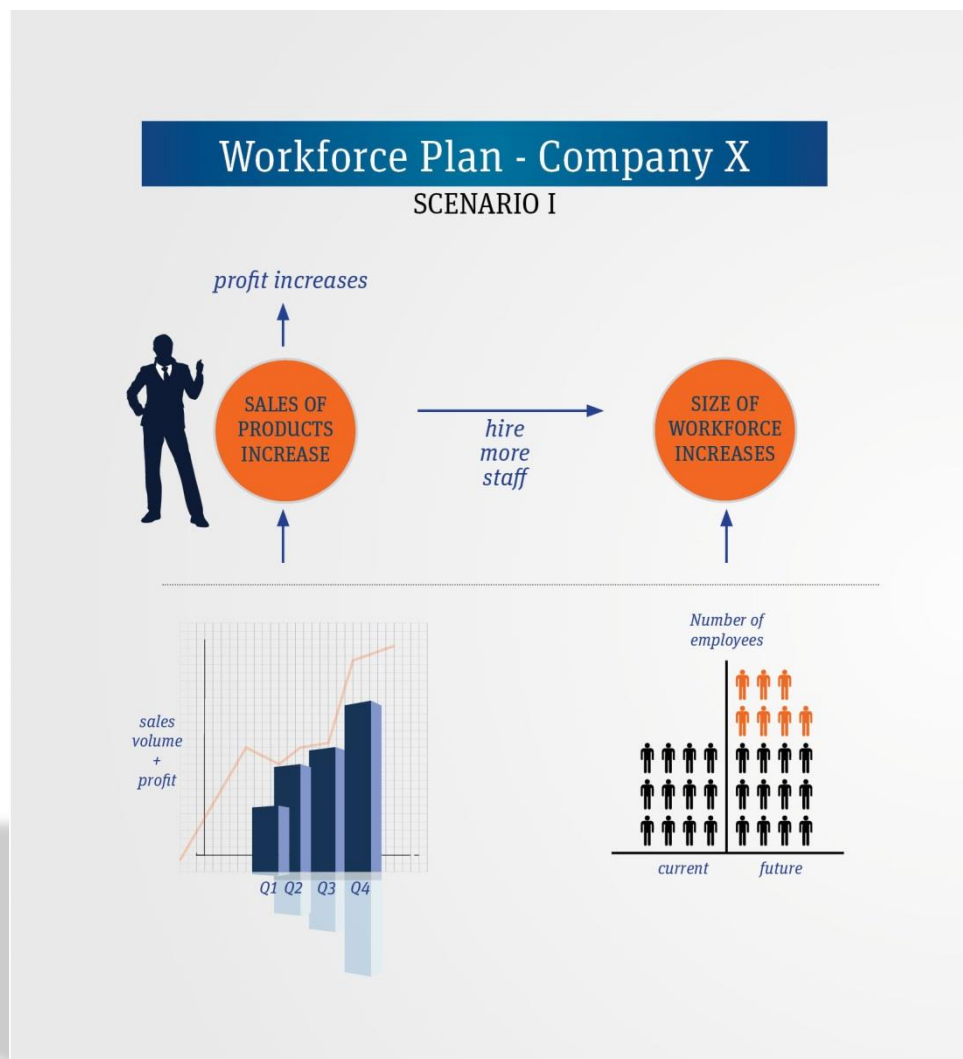
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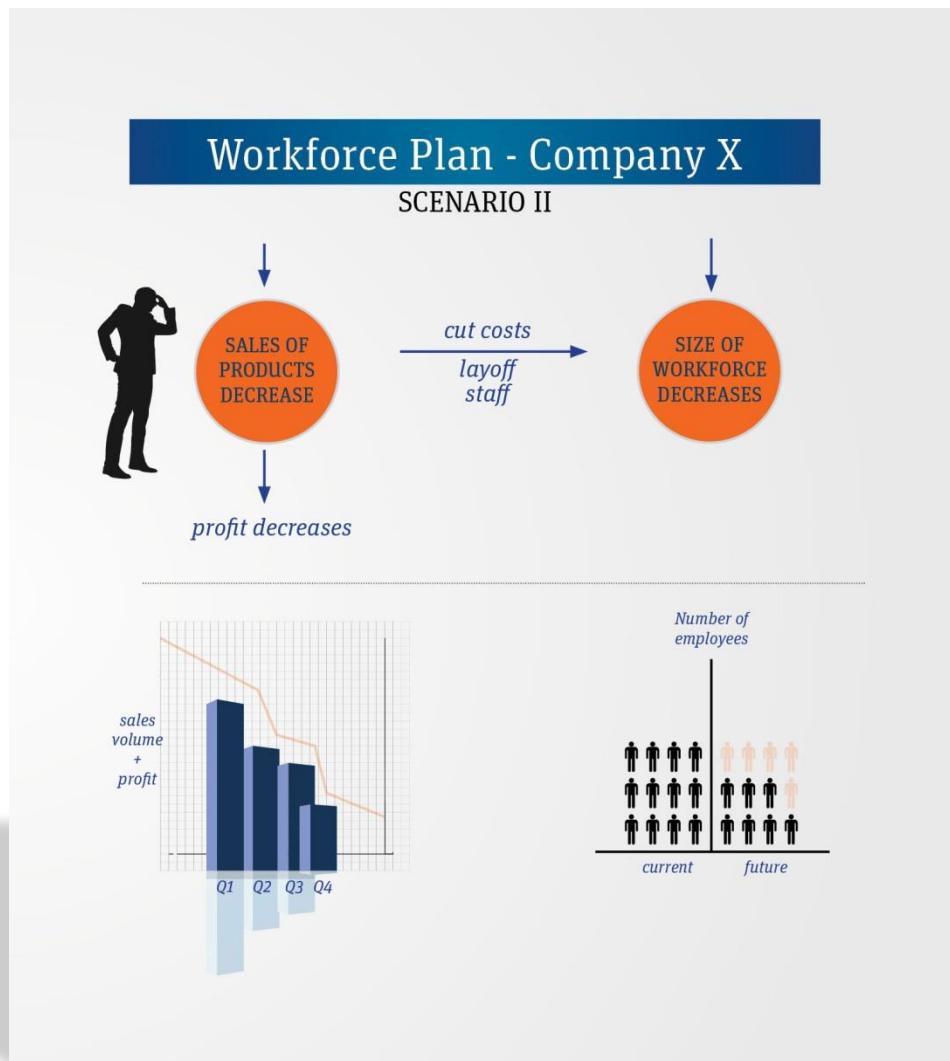
FOREWORD

Competition for jobs is as fierce as ever, and the race to find great talent is also at full speed. Companies know that securing the right talent is essential to business success, driving many companies to ever more extreme lengths to obtain talent that will set them apart.

At the same time, the nature of business today involves re-structures, redundancies, recruitment freezes, re-scoping, strategic cost reduction projects, right-sizing, off-shoring, contingent workers, virtual jobs and outsourcing. Rapid hire and rapid fire.

As I write, one of my clients is working on two workforce scenarios (see graphics below) for next quarter. If the price of their product goes up they will hire more staff for expansion projects. If the price of their product goes down they will have to wind down production and make some of their staff redundant.





“Many times, success is a self-correcting phenomenon; every organization is successful, until it’s not.”

—Gary Hamel, *What Matters Now: How to Win in a World of Relentless Change, Ferocious Competition, and Unstoppable Innovation*.

People are increasingly more loyal to their career than they are to a particular employer. And it’s no wonder this trend is occurring given the uncertainties that exist in the workplace. Gone are the days of diehard loyalty. No longer do employees repeat the refrain, “If I am loyal to my company, they will look after me and always assure me a job.” Stability is out, agility is in.

This guide is for you...

- Perhaps you are comfortable in your role at present yet don't want to be seen as actively job hunting? You don't want to damage your reputation. If you were approached by a head hunter or a contact about an opportunity, you might be open to a conversation if it were the right role. If this is you then this guide can help get you in the market without putting your current job in jeopardy.
- Maybe the job you signed up for hasn't panned out the way you expected? You are being under-utilized, overlooked or sidelined. This guide will give you the tools you need to find a better position that offers fulfilment and makes use of your many talents.
- Your work situation is starting to grate on you and you have only a vague memory of what it was like to be excited to go to work every day? Instead, you dread it. Worse still, your boss shows no signs of leaving, the opportunities are limited for advancement in other departments and rumours abound that your department might be moved to a less expensive part of the world. If this is you, it's time to rethink your career. This guide is full of information on how to be strategic in looking for a job that you look forward to going to every day.
- You are actively seeking a new job but just can't get traction? You have applied to jobs but keep getting impersonal rejection emails. With this guide, you'll discover sure-fire, insider tips to getting noticed by the companies which you're keen to work for.

This book is most relevant for professionals who are university-educated and have at least a few years of work experience behind them. This is because the majority of my recruiting experience is hiring for degree-qualified technical, professional, managerial and executive level staff. However, the principals and tools provided in this book are useful to anyone seeking a job change, no matter what their occupation is.

The benefits for you are manifold.

As a guide to uncovering the hidden job market, this book explains practical ways to find job opportunities, as well as get found for job opportunities. Here's just some the benefits you'll receive from reading this book:

- **The latest advice on how smart, proactive job seekers are getting ahead of the game.** It's not a level playing field; it is a changing playing field. The market has changed immensely in the last few years, and it's time for you to up-date your knowledge. More than simple tips and hints, this guide will provide you with a thorough system for finding your next job, promotion or obtaining the highest possible job offer.
- **An insider's view of how the job market works**, including why and how companies hire people. As someone who advises companies each day on who they should hire, I'll share with you my tips on how to maximise the likelihood of being approached for a new opportunity, and hired for a position.
- **A list of traps to avoid.** I have seen many applicants make mistakes during the recruitment process, and miss out on what could have been a great career move for them. If only they knew! This guide will help you spot some of the mistakes that may already have derailed you and help you avoid them in the future. Don't leave it to chance and bad odds. As an insider I'll share with you the knowledge to avoid the worst mistakes, as few others will.

I am not your average recruiter. Being an Executive Search Consultant, clients hire me to find them the top talent in their industry space. I call and am referred to people who aren't necessarily actively looking for work. This book will share with you tactics I use, and how you can position yourself to be on the other end of the phone call. You'll learn how to use the same search method recruitment consultants practice to your advantage.

I regularly get asked for advice by candidates (and some clients) on how best to find job opportunities. This book provides the answers and practical information for your job search issues.

This process will take commitment and effort on your part. Bill Gates, founder of Microsoft and multi-billionaire said, "If you're too focused on your current business, it's hard to change and concentrate on innovating."¹

Wise advice. Reserve time to develop your next career move after your current job, otherwise you may heed the advice when it's too late.

PART ONE: CAREER MOVES UNDER THE WATER LINE

There's an ongoing war for talent. Nevertheless, a good education, a solid work history and reliable referees are no longer adequate to guarantee you a stable job if you aren't in the top 10 per cent of in-demand professions this year. The old career escalator is broken. How do we familiarize ourselves with the new career conduits? What is it that we need to know, not just as job seekers but also for those of us who are in the business of helping others accelerate, re-boot or simply configure their career paths? Read on.

Chapter 1 – Recognizing change in hiring practices

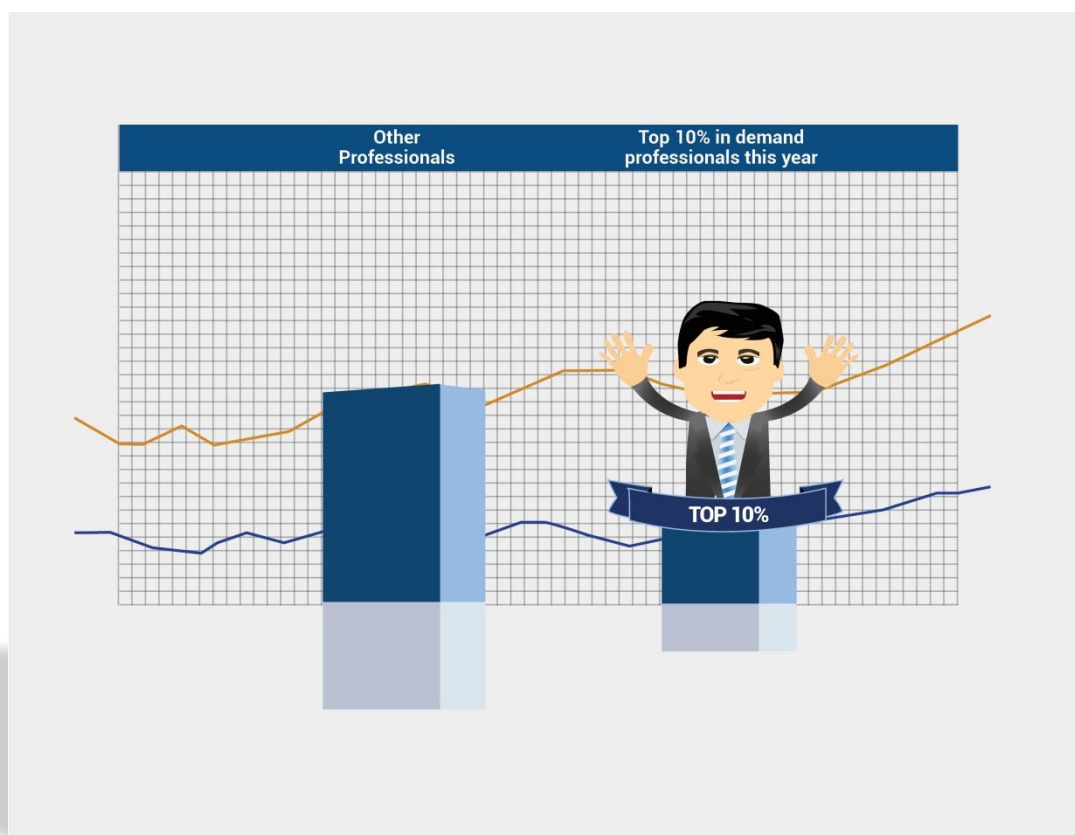
“The candidate is king.” That was the announcement of one of the speakers at the beginning of his presentation at a talent sourcing conference I recently attended. As the Group Recruitment Manager for an engineering and construction company that employs over 7,000 people, I can only imagine that he learned that lesson from his vast experience.

A few hours later, a recruitment manager at a global oil and gas producer (that employs 60,000 people) echoed a similar sentiment. They both stressed the importance of attracting top people and that it is essential to handle the process of recruitment strategically to guard against losing that talent to competitors.

There’s an ongoing war for talent.

As Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo, said during an interview on Bloomberg TV²: “Technology companies live and die by the talent they can attract.”

Nevertheless, a good education, a solid work history and reliable referees are no longer adequate to guarantee you a stable job if you aren’t in the top 10 per cent of in-demand professions this year. Even for those in the top echelon of in-demand skills, maintaining that status and having a continuous flow of options (in case you want to make a move) takes effort to sustain.



Prosperous companies aren't just sitting around patiently waiting for their next hires to graduate from university or apply to job advertisements. In fact, many aren't advertising positions at all. It's not just Silicon Valley technology companies today that are proactively seeking out top talent, creating positions to suit individuals, developing pipelines of potential hires and lining up groups of skilled professionals for when they are required.

Mike Beeley, CEO of Reagent Employer Marketing, an expert in recruitment marketing in Australia, says companies make a distinction between finding people who are, "on the market versus in the market."³ Five per cent might be considered active applicants who are consistently seeking employment. But in the general population, 95 per cent of potential hires are called passive potential candidates. These are the people whom heads of recruitment at multinationals are frequently talking about. They don't want to settle for the people actively applying to jobs at their organisation. Instead, they want to hire the best talent possible, and for many, the talent pool with the best candidates is the one filled with passive potential candidates.

Knowing that changing jobs or committing to a new employer is a big decision, companies are employing headhunting teams and using social media channels to build relationships with potential employees. They are also implementing recruitment campaigns to hire high performance and high potential professionals who will contribute comparably more than an average employee.

Taking charge of your career

I was recently speaking with a potential candidate who is in his mid-40s and has a role managing a commercial team at an oil and gas production company. While chatting about his career, James mentioned that he keeps an eye on the market. His main reason for doing so is because of his previous experience with redundancy with his former employer.

James had spent 15 years dedicated to a global petroleum producer, during which time he had regular promotions and opportunities to develop. After devoting a large proportion of his working life in loyal service to the company, James' position was made redundant without warning during a global restructure. He had thought that the company would look after him, so he never looked outside the company for opportunities.

But James grew savvier about his career following this experience. He now keeps a profile on LinkedIn and regularly networks. He was open to take my call as part of his strategy to keep an eye on the market. He said he had been approached by a few recruiters for roles but no offer had been compelling enough or at the right salary level to warrant a move. He is staying put, at least for the time being.

In this exponential world⁴, smart professionals who expect a fruitful career are increasingly taking ownership over the management of their careers in a proactive manner, rather than waiting for openings (or redundancies) to pass their way.

Change and innovation aren't just in the realm of business and recruitment; they apply to you, the employee, too.

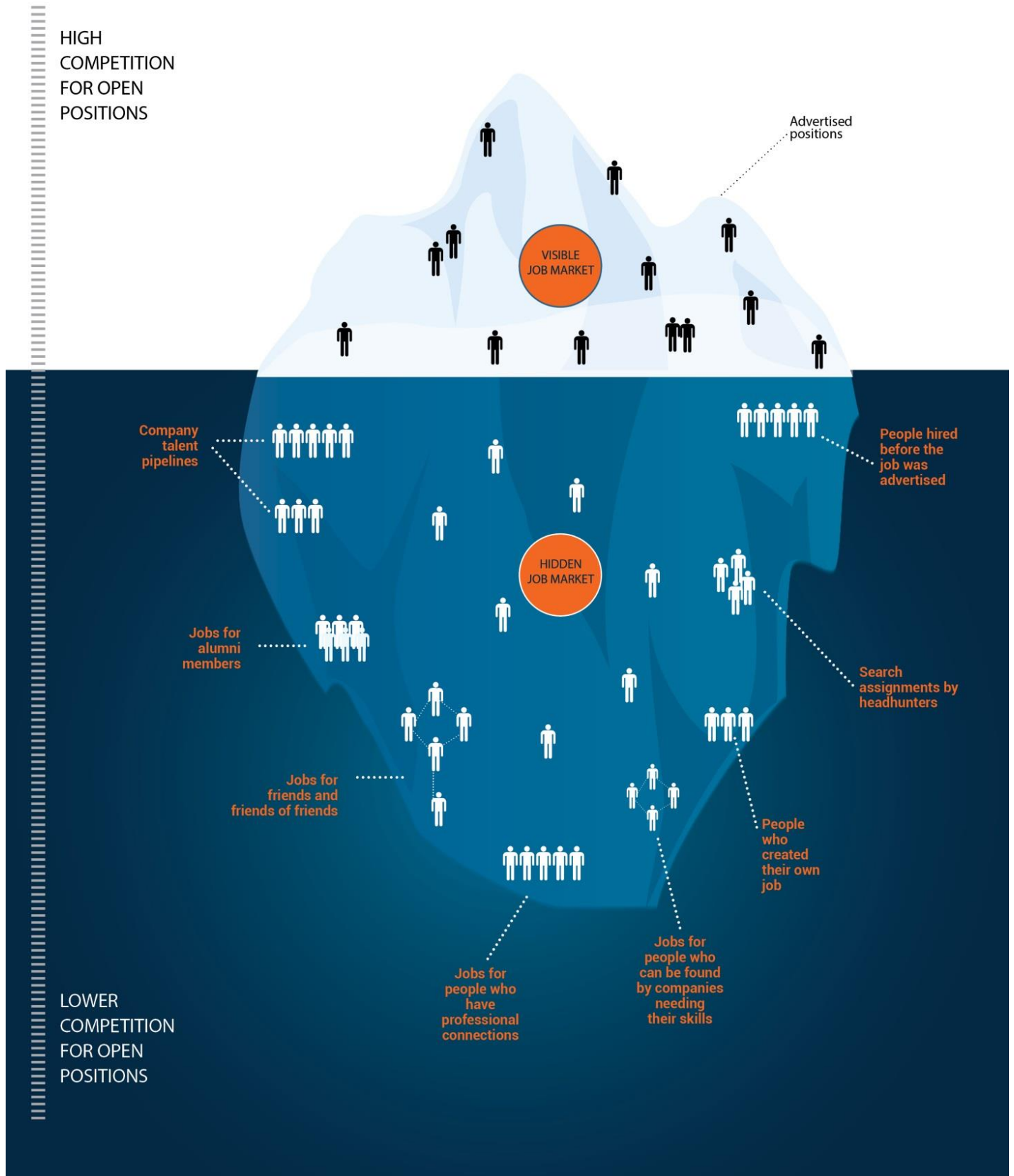
As business thought leader Gary Hamel states:

"What distinguishes our age from every other is not the world-flattening impact of communications, not the economic ascendance of China and India, not the degradation of our climate, and not the resurgence of ancient religious animosities. Rather, it is a frantically accelerating pace of change."

I'm sure the very reason you've read this far is that you recognize the importance of being open to learn, adapt and change in order to be relevant within the new job market reality. The most important new reality with which you need to become comfortable is the fact that today only a small percentage of people find a job because they applied to a job advertisement.

The other important factor I would urge you to consider is that it's your relationships, past, present and future, that are the single biggest determiners of the success of your career. Now let's dive in to look at the hidden job market.

THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET



The job market is like an iceberg, the largest part is hidden

“Beware the Phantom Job Listing. Jobs go unadvertised as managers rely on their own contacts.”⁵

—Lauren Weber and Leslie Kwoh, *The Wall Street Journal*.

The Wall Street Journal article quoted above essentially argues that hiring through employee networks and people with insider links before jobs are advertised is becoming the norm, not the exception. In other words, they’re hiring from a pool of potential candidates that isn’t readily visible on the surface.

Much like an iceberg in the diagram shown, the area above the waterline is akin to the visible job market. These advertised jobs are easily spotted as job ads on corporate websites, online job boards, in the print media or on a company Facebook page. The exposed portion of the iceberg is also where you’ll encounter the highest level of competition amongst active job seekers. In many cases, 100 qualified applicants or more will jockey for every job advertised.

By contrast, the bulkiest portion of the iceberg is below the water. Mostly invisible to those actively seeking work, without the insider knowledge and networks, it can be extremely difficult to reach. Yet this underwater section is much larger than the visible job market. In fact, between 30 – 90 per cent⁶ of all jobs openings are not advertised.⁷ What’s more, there’s much lower competition for the available positions in the hidden job market.

Replacing the out-dated job application process

Once upon a time, job search was straightforward. You simply applied to job advertisements. Over the years the rules have changed. Jobs are no longer advertised much, if at all. Worse, some of the job ads are actually phantom job ads and jobs are given to people with inside connections.

The result? People have started to adjust to how the jobs market works today. With 50 per cent or more job openings never advertised, increasingly jobs are being found in the hidden job market.

People who know about the hidden job market waste less time applying to job ads and more time spotting opportunities others don’t know about. Those who have adapted to the new reality get ahead of their competition. Smart job hunters have started taking more control over their careers and their destiny.

Now you can find a job opportunity in the hidden job market, too.

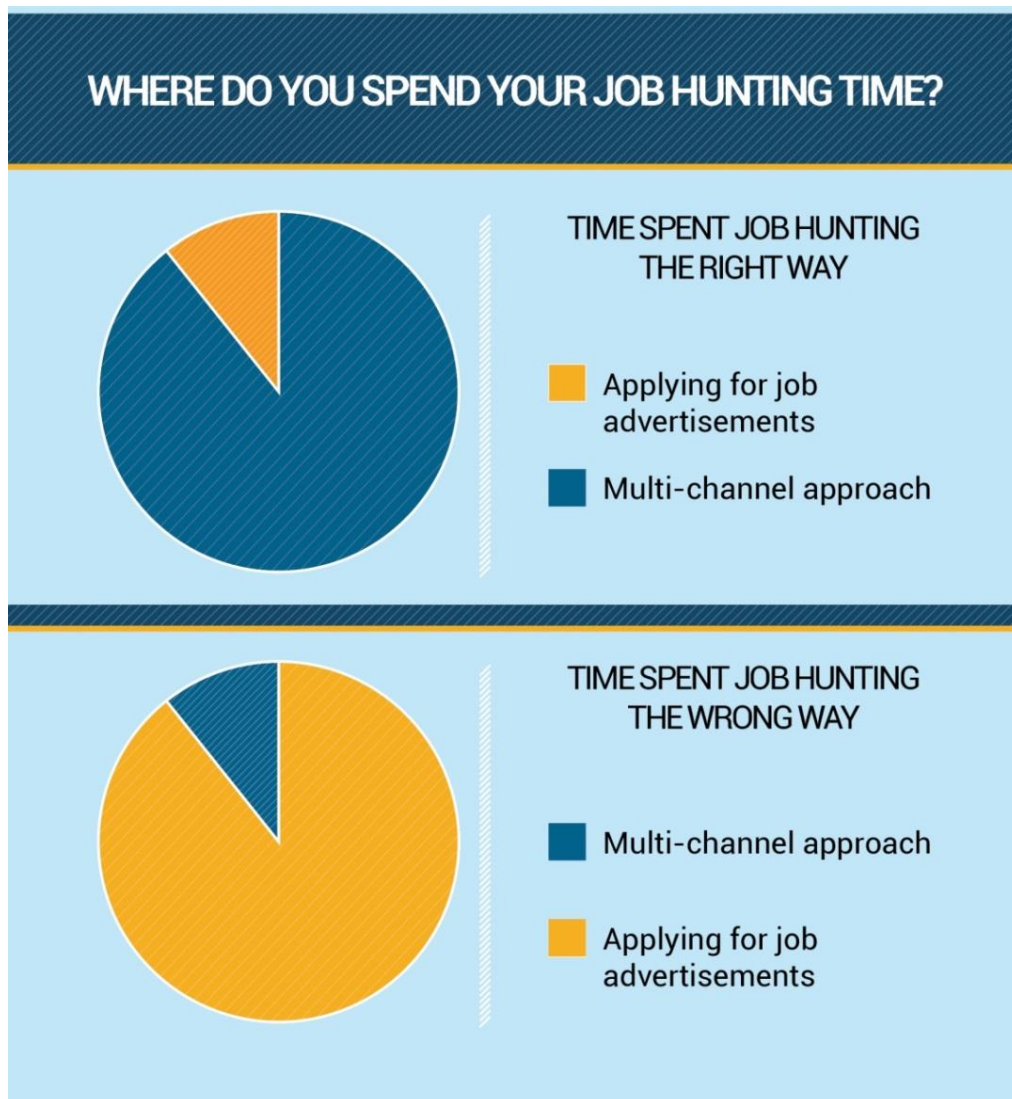
Time is precious. Don’t waste it on out-dated job search methods. Back in the days when positions were advertised in the newspaper, life was simple, now positions could be advertised in any of hundreds of places, or as I noted earlier, not advertised at all.

Stop wasting time with your job search techniques

“If you’re smart, you figure out where you want to work, who you want to work for and network your way in. For some, that’s too much trouble. It’s so much easier to surf the net, apply for a job and sit back and wait for the money to roll in. Except it doesn’t, ever. The odds of getting a job you apply for online are one in two hundred, unless you are a nurse, a coder with the latest skills or an undertaker. Otherwise, you’re just one more resume in the pile.”

—John Sumser, Editor HR Examiner.com

Stop spending hours trawling job boards. Quit hoping lady luck will smile on you as you paper the town with endless job applications. And don’t simply send around your LinkedIn profile. I have seen thousands of LinkedIn profiles, only a handful of them are up to par.



Certainly a job advertisement can be useful in terms of gathering information on companies that are hiring. But remember that the competition for the few jobs advertised is so fierce the numbers are against you. Worse, you may feel as though your efforts are worthwhile, oblivious to the fact that your efforts will actually be fruitless. Being busy is no substitution for being smart.

Instead, doesn't it make more sense to access the hidden job market where low competition and abundant opportunities exist? With the information I'll give you, you can avoid the mistake of putting all of your eggs in the wrong baskets by doing just that.

Don't get your heart set on a job advertisement

Here are the brutal facts: the visible job market is a lot like going to the casino and gambling your career chips. It might be entertaining but the odds aren't in your favor.

Recruiters get anywhere from tens to hundreds of applications for a single position, from all over the world. The hard reality, however, is that only a 5 to 15 per cent of the openly-advertised positions are filled by an individual who applied in response to a job advertisement.

More often than not, hiring managers choose individuals for promotion or new positions through other sources. In fact, some companies are reluctant to advertise positions for fear of being inundated by an unmanageable number of applicants.

There are even more reasons why replying to job postings is not productive. One is that phantom job advertisements, mentioned earlier, are becoming the norm. These are ads that are posted in order to satisfy an organizations policy of posting jobs, even though an internal candidate has already been earmarked.

Equally plausible is the chance that a company will morph a job description during the process of recruitment, rendering those who have already applied unsuitable for the new position. For you as an outsider it is nearly impossible to determine if a job posting is real or not.

The easiest way to avoid these pitfalls is to send fewer job applications in response to job ads, and qualify those you do send with a phone call first. This has the added benefit of ensuring you receive fewer rejection letters that chip away at your confidence.