

# Landing A Job You Love

*USING THE FAST START FORMULA*

A Career Guide for  
Champlain College  
Online Students



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## Hello! I'm Jen Morris, and I'm here to help Champlain College Online students understand and implement today's most effective job search strategies.

This ebook is full of tips and tricks that get fast results, guide you through ways to build your network, will keep you organized, and help you land a job you'll love.

### **What makes me an expert?**

I am a former agency recruiter, hiring manager, and corporate talent acquisition executive with over twenty years of experience finding talent. I've also been a job seeker myself, so I've experienced job searches from every angle. I know what makes candidates stand out and what strategies yield the best results.

### **Here are my goals for Champlain College Online students:**

- I want you to have full confidence in the steps you are taking. Job searching has changed drastically in recent times. Gone are the days when you could simply find a recruiter to champion you into a new role.
- I want you to feel supported and remain motivated throughout your search. In other words, I want you to focus on the high-yield activities and stop spinning your wheels.
- I want you to feel inspired to reach your goal. Perhaps job searching isn't a fun time for most, but it doesn't have to include self-doubt or a trial-and-error methodology. With the right support system by your side, you can make the most of your time and accelerate your results.

I hope you find this guide useful and that you gain valuable insights to help you in your job search.

*Jen Morris*



# Why Your Job Search is Failing



If you're feeling discouraged and overwhelmed by the online job search process, you're not alone.

I often hear that very sentiment from applicants who have applied to hundreds of jobs without landing a single interview. I also hear from candidates who know they're qualified for positions but can't seem to get the attention of hiring managers.

What's the most common problem I see with these applicants? They're not being targeted enough in their job search.

Think of it like this. A job search is similar to taking a trip. You probably don't just hop in the car and embark on an elaborate vacation with nary a thought about what you're doing, do you?

Of course not.

Instead, you develop a plan and take steps to ensure you arrive at your desired destination in a timely, (mostly) enjoyable fashion. You choose where you're going to stay, how you want to travel, and what you might do when you get there.

Likewise, if you want to land a job you love, you need to focus your attention, intention, and time on specific actions with specific results in mind.

And that is exactly what you do in a targeted job search. You select the industry, positions, and

companies where you want to work, formulate a strategy, and then implement a plan that puts you in control of where you're going.

## The Pain of an Untargeted Job Search

In contrast to a targeted job search, an untargeted search doesn't really work that well for job seekers and usually goes something like this:

- You comb through advertisements on job boards, find open positions that interest you, tailor your resumé just a bit, apply online, and wait. Then maybe you apply to a few other places, only to endure more waiting.
- The longer your inbox stays devoid of interview offers, the more frustrated and worried you become. So, you kick things up a notch. You apply to 10 more jobs. Then 10 more. Then another 10.
- By this point, you've moved from "positions that interest me" to "positions that might actually pay me in packing peanuts." And the worst part is, you're still left waiting without any response!

This type of job search strategy is basically akin to wandering around the countryside in a car that's low on gas, without any cell service for your GPS. You're exhausted, lost, and have no idea how to get to a place where you want to be.

## Why a Targeted Job Search is a Better Option

Targeted actions—instead of meandering with no real plan—are much more likely to result in you reaching the destination you want rather than just any destination.

It's a much better option, and you absolutely want to apply targeting principles to your job search. Why?

Because you'll be able to appeal more effectively to recruiters and hiring managers. Most of these decision-makers conduct very targeted searches, and if you don't fit the mold, they move on.

### **BECAUSE HAVING A SPECIFIC GOAL IN MIND MEANS YOU CAN TELL OTHERS HOW THEY CAN HELP YOU WITH YOUR SEARCH.**

You can say, "Hey, can you introduce me to this person?" instead of, "Do you know anyone who can help me?"

Because you will show up differently. You'll feel more focused and less reliant on factors you can't control. Not only does that kind of attitude help you uncover new opportunities, it also boosts your confidence.

Ultimately, a targeted job search allows you to craft a resumé and cover letter that sell you as uniquely and exceptionally qualified for specific positions. A targeted job search also enables you to focus on networking into the companies you want to work for—rather than just hoping you'll miraculously wind up at a destination that's appealing.

## How to Create a Targeted Job Search That Gets Results

If you're stalled in your search and not getting the results you want, I recommend following these four steps:

Get focused. Get really clear with yourself about your skills and abilities so that you can sell them when the time comes. Then, choose specific companies and roles based on your strengths, accomplishments, values, and preferences.

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**GET BRANDED.** Tailor your messaging to appeal to your target employer. (Attempting to be everything to everyone means not resonating with anyone). Customize your resumé, LinkedIn profile, and conversations to show where you're going and what type of work you'd like to do.

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**GET NOTICED.** Build and leverage your network. Engage with family, friends, and other industry professionals by creating value through meaningful interactions. This kind of cultivation will enable you to actually get in front of hiring managers instead of just endlessly applying online.

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**GET HIRED.** Give yourself and the process time. Job searching in today's market can take longer than you'd like, especially if you're making a career pivot. Sticking with your plan and the targeted search process will keep you on track, even if you feel discouraged.

Following these steps will help you stand out among other applicants by enabling you to connect the dots for prospective employers. The targeted search will also allow you to showcase the unique value you offer, which is just what you need to do to land more interviews and receive job offers you'll love.

# Surprising Facts About Recruiters



One of the topics that frequently comes up in my work with job seekers is that of recruiters. Some of the more common inquiries I hear include:

- How do recruiters find candidates?
- What can I do to get recruiters to notice me?
- Why didn't that recruiter message me back?
- How much do recruiters influence the hiring process?
- Are recruiters actually an alien species that no one can ever truly understand?

Okay, so I've never actually gotten that last question, but I do see quite a bit of confusion and frustration regarding recruiters. Thanks to my extensive history working as both a recruiter and a hiring manager, I'm usually able to demystify the other side of the recruitment process and help my clients attract the attention of those in a position to make hiring decisions.

Because I want to see everyone land a job they love, I've compiled five key points you'll want to know to understand how the job search process works from the perspective of a recruiter. I'm also going to give you targeted advice about how you can tailor your job search to get noticed by recruiters and ultimately get hired.

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## Recruiters Conduct Highly-Targeted Applicant Searches

Before LinkedIn and job boards, recruiting used to be about building personal connections, networking, and championing your contacts into roles—even though recruiters were paid by the employer. Recruiters had fewer ways to find people, so you worked with what you had. In recent times, networks have been blown wide open with technology.

**The takeaway: you can reverse engineer the job search by leveraging technology to conduct highly targeted job searches. LinkedIn is particularly useful for this tactic. By using its advanced search features, like recruiters do, you can find specific people in specific industries and target companies who can help you move your search forward.**

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## Recruiters Want Long-Term Relationships

When I was working as a corporate recruiter, I often knew about job opportunities well in advance of posting the role. Why? There is a strategic element that goes into staffing an organization. Part of the HR function is to assess the future demands of the business and determine whether the current staffing structure can meet those demands. If not, we build a recruiting plan.

**The takeaway: consider every conversation with a recruiter an opportunity. While I hear some job seekers express concern about exploratory phone conversations with recruiters who don't have a job opening, know that internal recruiters can be a valuable resource to have in your network. In my own search experience, I've started conversations with companies that had nothing for me at the time and then saw opportunities develop within a matter of a few weeks. Don't let these opportunities pass you by. Timing is everything.**

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### **Recruiters Need You to Connect the Dots**

During my time as a recruiter, I saw many confusing resumés that were difficult to follow. If I was left with too many questions about your experience in relation to the role I was filling, I moved on to the next candidate. Why? My main objective was to match your skill set to the job and understand how your contributions could benefit the organization. If that wasn't clear, I had more resumés to review that clearly told that story. I would also scan for keywords and duties with my eyes—not an application system.

**The takeaway: recruiters scan for information and keywords just like you've heard an ATS does. Ensure that your resumé clearly outlines your career story and the value you bring to the role. If you're not sure how to do this effectively, a professionally written resumé is a great investment.**

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### **Recruiters Follow the Hiring Manager's Lead**

As a recruiter, I spent a lot of time chasing down hiring managers for feedback after interviews. Hiring managers struggle to make new hire decisions. Why? Plenty of reasons:

- They are unsure of their own ability to make a hiring decision, so they drag out the process by seeking a second, third, or even fourth opinion. (*Let that sink in!*)
- They may seek alternative solutions other than hiring a new person.
- Or, they are so busy covering day-to-day work due to a staffing shortage, they just can't seem to find the time to move the process forward.
- Finally, they may simply want to continue to see what's out there. (Insert heavy sigh.)

**The takeaway: I know it can be frustrating when you're left waiting for answers. Be patient while employers work through their internal decision-making process and know that recruiters don't always have the answers. Don't assume the lack of communication means "no" but don't put all of your eggs in one basket either. You get to decide what you're willing to tolerate in the process, so continue to pursue other opportunities until you have a written offer in your hands.**

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### **Sometimes There's Nothing You Can Do Better**

When I was a recruiter, we left job postings up until the new hire started. Why? We wanted a database of candidates in the event something went wrong with the current group and we needed to start the search over again. Now some people will say this is deceptive. However, the job is open until the new hire starts, and there are situations where the selected candidate did not start the job for a variety of reasons. Sound strange? Trust me, it happens more frequently than you may think.

### The takeaways:

There are job postings that are further along in the interview process than you may know. Your resumé could be in a file that is not reviewed simply because they already have a good selection of candidates interviewing.

This is not your fault. There is nothing you could have done differently to your resumé to improve your chances. In some cases, it is simply a matter of timing and the employer's process.

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### What's the Bottom Line for Job Seekers?

Recruiters and the relationships you develop with them are one tool in an entire job-hunting strategy. While cultivating these connections can lead to amazing opportunities, recruiters should never be the sole path you focus on in your career search.

Also, keep in mind that true networking goes beyond just applying to the job and reaching out to the recruiter who posted the position. Why?

Focusing solely on recruiters and hiring managers means you are just scratching the surface of networking and probably not doing anything differently from the next savvy applicant applying to the role. Instead, you want to develop relationships with other people in your target company or industry, especially if they work in a similar job. Not only can these individuals give you great insight into business, they can also give you a heads up about potential job openings or put in a good word for recruiters.





# Six Most Popular Job Websites and How to Leverage Them



I am frequently asked which of the big job boards I recommend. Let me start by saying, I recommend you use job boards sparingly.

**HERE'S WHY. MOST ROLES ARE FILLED BY JOB BOARDS 20% OF THE TIME.**

While I think job boards are great for research purposes, I don't recommend you rely solely on job boards to land your next role. Given the dismal rates of success, I'd recommend you use a variety of methods to get noticed.

Now that we've got that out of the way, I recommend LinkedIn and Indeed.

LinkedIn has historically attracted more professional candidates. When I was a recruiter, I was very interested to see who was applying from this source. I also liked to review the LinkedIn profiles for additional insight, and they were just a click away.

Indeed aggregates jobs into one place at no cost to employers. Since companies are not required to pay, it is a great database of available jobs. Their sales rep once told me they are the "Google" of job ads. Some companies may opt to pay for prime placement, so you might also use this as an indicator of who is motivated to hire.

Here are the six most popular job websites:

careerbuilder®

ZipRecruiter®

LinkedIn

MONSTER

glassdoor

indeed®

**PRO TIP: SPEND 20% OF YOUR TIME ON JOB BOARDS.**

Perhaps you're wondering what to do with the other 80% of your time. Here's what statistics show. Third party recruiters fill 10% of roles. And the remaining 70% are filled through referrals and networking. Your highest chance of success will be through your network and referrals. Focus on people and not job postings.

## Four Key Ways to Leverage LinkedIn for Job Search and Beyond

I want to share something that really drives me crazy about recruitment. Before LinkedIn and job boards, recruiting was about building personal connections, networking, and championing people into roles, even though recruiters are paid by the employer.

Back then recruiters had fewer ways to find people, so they worked with what they had.



In recent times, networks have been blown wide open with social media platforms. Companies can say they want a “purple squirrel” and recruiters can go find that “purple squirrel.”

In my business, I took the idea of the company wanting the purple squirrel and reverse engineered it for the job seeker who wants to land a dream job.

Now more than ever your LinkedIn activity is paramount to the success of your job search. LinkedIn can be a powerful networking tool once you know how to use it. Utilize the platform to drive better results in your job search – and beyond.

Remember, networking doesn't start and stop with a job search. Your network will serve you well throughout your career. Grow and nurture your professional network and it will provide help for years to come.

## **4 Key Ways to Leverage LinkedIn for Networking**

**1**

**Confirm your settings to ensure you are totally visible**

**2**

**Engage with other industry professionals to promote value you provide**

**3**

**Optimize your profile to positioning yourself for your next role**

**4**

**Build your own personal database and connect with industry professionals**

# How to Tap into Hidden Jobs



Where is this hidden job market everyone is talking about?

The answer lies with understanding how jobs are opened and filled by companies. This usually starts with communication from a hiring manager requesting a new hire.

The steps leading up to the formal request are where hidden jobs can be found.

Prior to requesting a search, managers typically check their own network. Managers may also ask current employees for referrals. When that turns up nothing, they go to a corporate (or external) recruiter for assistance, if available. The recruiter then checks their network.

When these hidden steps turn up nothing, the job is posted and advertised. Competition massively increases at this point!

**The first key to unlocking the hidden job market is to build a large, relevant network and remain visible throughout your job search.**

Here are four ways to stay visible with your network:

- Share relevant articles of interest to your contacts. This demonstrates you care and provides value to your connections.
- Update your network regularly on your job search or career moves.

- Follow your contacts on social media and engage where appropriate. Everyone loves a cheerleader on social media. Like, comment, or share their posts if appropriate.
- Stay top of mind with hiring managers, industry professionals, and recruiters to attract opportunities to you.

**The second key to unlocking hidden jobs is to be specific in your goals and your asks within your network.**

Here are three ways to be specific in your asks:

- Be clear and concise when describing the roles you are targeting. Provide a job title, industry, and location.
- Do your research to uncover exactly how this person can help you – and then tell them. Do they have information about a target company? Can they give you advice?
- Ask, “Who should I be talking to?” to get referrals to specific people rather than job listings. People hire people. They are your target audience.

Your goal is to ask for information, advice, or a referral that can lead you to a job opportunity. You are NOT asking for a job while networking.

Now, go out there and talk to people. You might find this part of the job search is actually fun. Happy hunting!

# Champlain's Fast Start Formula Career Course



If I've learned anything from collaborating with Champlain College Online (CCO), it's that increasing career mobility for their students is at the center of everything they do: developing career-focused programs, designing curriculum for workplace applications, focusing on the whole student, building soft skills employers are looking for, and making meaningful professional connections. That's why the Fast Start Formula Career Course and its pillars—**Get Focused, Get Branded, Get Noticed, Get Hired**—are so aligned with CCO's goals for its students.

## **Get Focused: Gain Clarity Around Your Career Goals**

- Set goals and understand the value you bring to your next employer.
- Create a step-by-step action plan to bring your job search to life and leave the waiting game behind.
- How to stand out among the competition to get the attention of decision-makers.
- How to uncover the “hidden job market” and find roles with little to no competition.

## **Get Branded: Optimize Your Resume**

- Revising your resume to get your target companies interested in meeting you and the exact formats that I've used to make it easy for decision-makers to understand your value.
- How to incorporate keywords and create impactful achievements that pop.
- Quick and easy ways to tailor your resume to jobs to get past the application websites and into the interview.

## **Get Noticed: Optimize Your LinkedIn Profile**

- How to write a LinkedIn profile in a way that makes recruiters want to talk to you now.
- What to include to ensure you are found by recruiters and capture attention.
- What to do each day to make the best use of your time and put social networking to work for you.
- Advanced searches to help you uncover hidden job opportunities within your network.

## **Get Hired: Build A Search Strategy**

- Strategies to leverage LinkedIn and create your own personal database of dream companies with contacts to help you get hired.
- Building your network with relevant connections that can provide insider job search information.
- How to stay top of mind with a team of supporters cheering you on and notifying you when jobs open up.
- How to write simple, but super effective outreach emails – including ways to increase the chances of getting a response.



## About Champlain College Online

Champlain College Online is at the forefront of adult education. Since 1993, we have carefully crafted online education to match the career aspirations of employees with the industry-driven needs of the organizations that employ them.

*As one of the first online programs in the United States, we are proud to be part of the distinguished history of regionally accredited, not-for-profit Champlain College, founded in Burlington, Vermont in 1878.*

Champlain College Online is consistently ranked by *U.S. News & World Report* as a leader in online higher education. Our nationally recognized programs address industry trends and critical skills gaps. We serve more than 3,000 students through 60 online undergraduate and graduate degrees, certificates, and stackable credentials in high-demand fields like cybersecurity, business, healthcare, and information technology.

Through our workforce development program called truED, we partner with some of the nation's leading businesses and organizations in a bold reimagining of workplace learning that enables employees to flourish and organizations to grow.



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