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Prologue

Welcome to the FPC Recruiters' Guide to winning your Bare Knuckle Job Search. What do we mean by 'bare knuckle job search'?

Take a minute and picture an old-time, "bare knuckle" fight and describe what comes to mind.

To us, among other things, it means a tough, hard-nosed, bloody battle that has virtually no rules. I could go farther and liken it to a mixed martial arts cage fight to the death. That's a little too scary, but I want to get your attention on the fact that you're going to get some very different advice about your job search here. Oh, and if the bare knuckle metaphor seems a bit macho, think Laila Ali. The job search tactics we'll be discussing are gender neutral. They work for men and women, alike. So, we're all going to take the gloves off.

For anyone who hasn't noticed, it's not easy to carve out a satisfying, upwardly mobile career path today. Beyond high unemployment figures, there have been permanent shifts in the world of work. Certain kinds of jobs in certain industries are just plain gone and never coming back. On the other hand, certain sectors – surprisingly U.S. manufacturing – are pretty vibrant and there's a hunger for top talent.

What's clear to everyone is that the job market is a very competitive place. In fact, the level of competition is unprecedented. What we find disturbing is that men and women in a job search are being advised to follow 'rules' that simply don't work in this kind of environment if they ever want to be employed again.



Rules like, 'send email, don't call', 'a great resume is the key to getting hired' and my favorite, 'send a personalized cover letter and resume via snail mail' are at best minimally effective and at worst, just plain wrong. Until you're hired and have to follow the rules in the employee handbook, forget about following 'the rules'. Instead, do what works!

Our company, which was founded in 1959, was a pioneer in executive recruiting. Since we started franchising in 1973, our proven executive recruiting system has spelled success for our franchise owners, for hundreds of the nation's top corporations and for tens of thousands of job candidates. Our system of executive placement is in large part what differentiates our offices from our competitors.

We've decided to share some of the secrets of how we do it for our clients and job candidates in the hope that we can help you do it for yourself.



Sir Winston Churchill said, "Continuous effort - not strength or intelligence - is the key to unlocking our potential." This is also the key to going twelve rounds of a job search. We're going to show you how to hang in, get your footwork working for you, and keep it going 'til you win.

You may find some of the information in this guide awfully blunt. You'll find suggestions that may seem virtually impossible to accomplish and uncomfortable for you to even imagine. As you read on, please consider the alternatives: remaining perpetually unemployed, struggling to pay your bills because you're under-employed, or just staying stuck in a dead-end job with no future growth opportunities.

As executive recruiters we look at what we do as "searching for a job for a living". Sounds like fun, doesn't it? To us at FPC it is fun, but only because of the way we approach it. Personally, I've been in and around the recruiting business for the past 16 years and have seen it from many different perspectives. I even worked for one of the most successful job boards for seven years selling job postings and resume database access before starting my own FPC recruiting firm.

I believe that these experiences have given me a unique point of view on the business of hiring. I'm a hiring manager for my own company, a recruiting/ talent consultant to my client companies and an advocate and coach to the people I place in executive positions -- as well as to our FPC owners and recruiters. I speak frequently to groups of both active and passive jobseekers and understand their pain and frustration. I also hear about their hopes and dreams.

The aim of this guide is to encourage you and help you to think differently than today's conventional wisdom. Doing so will not only get you more real opportunities, but will demonstrate initiative and creativity to those who can help you -- including hiring managers. It will also help you to regain the confidence that you once had. The best part of it is that you really only have to win once.

To trade our boxing metaphor for a fishing one for a moment...

You could toss a line with a bobber in the water and hope that some fish will swim along and grab it. Or you could cast a wide net and spend your days throwing back all the junk fish to get to one worth eating. We'd rather teach you to harpoon fish -- a bit riskier until you get adept -- but much more likely to get dinner on the table before you starve.

So here's a better way to move your career ahead. Based on what you've learned from others, you may feel that the approach I'm sharing with you is non-traditional, but in reality, it is exactly the opposite.



Chapter 1: The Internet is killing you!

How many times do we hear people say, "The Internet's a black hole that swallows up resumes." Most people know this, but they won't change what they're doing. They just go and post their resume on another site or send an email reply to a job posting somewhere online. Why? They hope it will work (despite experience to the contrary). They think this is the only way to job hunt in the digital age. They're afraid not to – and just plain afraid. Nobody's shown them a better way that works.

A word to the wise: Stop! If you're honest with yourself, you have to admit that not only is the Internet not leading you to a job, but it's killing your search in a number of ways:

- 1 It's sapping your energy (which you really need now) by wrecking your morale. Nothing's more frustrating than spending time on writing a state-of-the-art resume – or spending a lot of money to have one written for you -- searching for jobs that fit your skills and experience, sending the beautiful resume out to whoever gets them somewhere on the Interwebs, and then – nothing.
- 2 It's turning you into a commodity. How do you differentiate yourself as a human being and a professional when you reduce yourself to an anonymous 65kb pdf file? The answer? You can't.
- 3 It's wasting precious time that you could be devoting to efforts that will actually get you a job.

Back when the only way you could find out what jobs were available was by searching the newspaper or trade journal classifieds, job search was done over the phone and in person. The rise of the Internet in job search has moved us light years away from this more human approach. At FPC we've always championed the importance of personal, individualized connection and from our observation, the pendulum is slowly swinging back.



As I mentioned, before I started my executive recruiting business, I worked for the job board CareerBuilder.com selling postings and resume database access. Then it was the way of the future, but I've seen the value of the Internet first plateau and, more recently, start to decline.

Here are some realities about job search on the Internet that explain why:

- 1 The Internet empowered HR.** The ability to post jobs and get responses direct from candidates had HR departments thinking they could do it all on their own. They thought they didn't need recruiters and didn't need to talk to people. Just look through the resumes that would arrive on their desktops and pick the ones that looked best. But the sheer volume overpowered HR. Which led to...
- 2 The 'black hole',** of course. Not too long ago I found the perfect candidate for a position that had been unfilled for a long time. When I presented the job to him he said, "I applied to HR for this job online two months ago and never heard a word back." I introduced him to the hiring manager who had never seen his resume. It had been put into a stack or a file in somebody's Outlook in HR and was never even read. Guess what? I made the placement and he was hired. And it cost the company a hefty fee, when they thought they could fill the job for free.
- 3 You may think you have the requirements, but you don't.** Every time I post a job opening for my own company I get a resume from the same person who is completely unqualified to recruit in our areas of focus. But he keeps sending a resume that's never going to get any attention. It's a waste of everybody's time. Quite frankly I think it's some sort of auto-apply feature on one of the job boards. Think of that for a second - "auto-apply". It's like something a robot does - in my mind you should never let a computer decide, based on some keyword search, how you are going to spend 40+ hours per week!
- 4 Companies are not posting their best jobs online anymore.** We FPC recruiters are getting more exclusive searches than ever before. Companies are just overwhelmed. They want a professional who knows the company, the culture and the job requirements to take over the process and find the right talent efficiently.

The Internet Does Have a Role

Don't get me wrong, we do use the Internet all the time in ways that have great value in recruiting. The same ways are invaluable to your job search. I was in this business back before everyone had computers and believe me, the Internet is very useful.

The most empowering way to use the Internet is for research.

- 1 Learn about the companies you're interested in
- 2 Use the obvious tools like Hoover's and SEC filings for basic financial data, but go beyond them
- 3 Check out press releases
- 4 Do Google searches to see who's talking about the companies related to various issues
- 5 Use LinkedIn to find people who can help you
- 6 Do Twitter searches to understand customer and employee sentiment about the company's brand and policies

**The main takeaway from this chapter?
Use the Internet as a tool – not a crutch!**



Chapter 2: Outplacement is out of place in a bare knuckle job search

The information you get in outplacement is way too soft: Write a cover letter. Email it with your resume or send out a fax blast. Wait a certain number of days. Email again. Don't call. Don't bother people.

Sorry. This doesn't work. If you've received outplacement services as part of your severance package, here are some points that will help you filter the way you use those services.

The truth: You have to call people. If you're bothering someone, you're on the phone with the wrong person. You're talking to an executive who doesn't see today's critical importance of talent acquisition to their own success. Hang up and move on to the next. We'll have much more about the role of the phone call in your job search, but for now it's a good example of the kind of advice that will get you nowhere.

What happens when you go to outplacement? You get access to a computer and to the Internet for emailing your 40 emails a day – or whatever the number being recommended. You learn how to customize your cover letter and that you need to send it to the right person. You probably won't learn how to zero in on that person. You get to be part of a job search support group with a lot of other unemployed people where you all practice your 'elevator pitch'.

There are exceptions to this scenario, of course. But it bothers us that too many people go to outplacement when they're still shell shocked from losing their jobs and then waste the first precious months on unproductive activities.

I don't know about you, but if I'm looking for a job, I definitely don't want to spend days hanging out with other people in the same boat as me. It seems okay because you need the support, but misery loves company? Not in a bare knuckle job search it doesn't. In fact there's no time for misery at all.

The reality is that outplacement usually does more for the company that just fired you than it does for you. Doing something that they believe will help you makes them feel better. That's what they're really paying for.

Every week we get hundreds of unsolicited resumes faxed over from outplacement firms. They send them out pro forma as part of their services. They go right to recycling without us even taking a glance. They also get people to put their resume into one single format – in essence they "sterilize" each person's background before sending it out. I can recognize that format right away and it bothers me every time I see it. Again, I know it sounds heartless, but we only have so many hours in the day. If I didn't prioritize my day as a recruiter and focus on activities that will get me a placement, I would never make a living.



So what about career coaches?

We often work with job candidates who've consulted career coaches. Their bare knuckles never even get a scratch. Once again, the focus is way too soft: far too much emphasis on resume writing; far too little on actually talking to people who can hire you.

Career coaches – the good ones – may help you zero in and focus on strengths that you can build on. They may help you get clarity on what options are realistic based on your experience and personal strengths. Help you with bare knuckle job search techniques? Nah.

Let's look at the pure economics of why a recruiter's advice holds water in this discussion. A top recruiter gets paid by the company -- in general, 25% of your first year's salary. That's our incentive for identifying and bringing to the table the best matched talent for a position.

We come at the process from a totally different perspective than outplacement firms or career coaches. We are performance based. In contingent search, if we don't perform, we don't get paid. In retained search, we get paid, but if we don't perform we don't get more retained searches.

In outplacement, your former company is paying for services on your behalf. But are those services performance based? We wonder how many executives hiring outplacement firms ask how many people they've actually placed in jobs or transitioned to business ownership. That's not necessarily the success criteria for people who are no longer employees.

When you hire a career coach, you yourself are paying. Obviously, the hourly rate has to be in line with what someone can afford who has no paycheck coming in and is trying to stretch out severance and unemployment for as long as possible. You'll probably feel better on some level with coaching. But will you get a job?

Outplacement and career coaching thrive in a down market. Recruiters do well in down markets and very well in good markets. Historically, there are a lot more boom cycles, even factoring in the Great Recession. We choose to be held to a performance standard of job placement because it's very well compensated and we do great over time.

Would it hurt you to adopt the same motivation to get yourself a job? We believe passionately that it will help you.

Takeaway from this chapter: Outplacement and career coaching will tell you what's easy to hear. We're telling you what you probably don't want to hear. But it's what will get you back to rewarding work.

Chapter 3: This is a sales job -- whether you like it or not!

Everything until now has been designed to get you ready to accept the prescription that follows.

The hardest pill for most job searchers to swallow is that the bare knuckle job search is a sales job! You are the product. Unless you are a salesperson, those looking for other roles will likely find the idea of selling terribly uncomfortable. Well think about this: What's more uncomfortable, being in sales for a few months or being out of work for years?

The good news is that those who follow our process find that it gets easier with practice – and it gets results. Plus, we're going to give you a specific plan to follow.

As we mentioned in the last chapter, back in the not so distant days when the only place you could find out about jobs was in a newspaper or trade journal, job searches were done on the phone and in person.

Guess what? On the phone and in person is still the way top recruiters work to sell our services and to market candidates. Remember that we're sharing our process so that you can do it for yourself. Sure, we'll send some emails, but person-to-person is the formula for success. That's why we're telling you to ignore that 'no calling' rule.

To give you another way to think about calling, here are some words of wisdom from our newest FPC owner, Darrin Davidson:

"It's easy to get people to open up when you're genuinely interested in what they're doing. At FPC we're learning recruiting, but we're already specialists in our clients' industries so we can offer good advice. Much of recruiting is done over the phone. I'm not the most extroverted person and someone asked if I could call people and sell. Well, I can call people and talk to them, and so far that's working just fine."

You have to call. Just don't call HR. They'll send you online. We're going to teach you:

- Who to call
- When to call
- What to say
- How to feel good about it



Okay. Here's your recruiter sales training manual.

Be enthusiastic about the product: **You!**

At FPC we do what we call Quality Candidate Marketing. When we're working with a quality candidate, we help them identify companies they want to work for. Then we go in and market them. We write a script, CALL the hiring managers and sell the candidate. You have to do this for yourself.

For example I would say, "Hi, this is Jeff Herzog with FPC. I know you weren't expecting my call, but do you have two quick minutes? I just got the opportunity to represent an individual with 12 years of overall experience, an MBA from University of Virginia who started his career going through the Financial Leadership Development Program at GE. He's been with several divisions of J&J for the past five years and is currently a senior manager of commercial finance, considering new opportunities. Who do you know who might be interested in speaking with him further?"

Think of yourself as a hot candidate and market yourself accordingly. Because here is another tough reality: If you're reading this and you're unemployed – especially if you've been employed for a while – we recruiters can't always help you. We get paid by most companies to find passive candidates -- talent that is already employed and not necessarily looking for a new job. That's why it's critically important that you learn to become your own recruiter advocate in your job search.

Yes, you should still connect with us, because nothing is carved in stone. We'll tell you later how to connect productively with recruiters, but you shouldn't rely on anyone but yourself in the final analysis. You have great experience and great value to the right company. Now we're going to tell you how to find that company and get hired.



Blueprint the company

You've probably been spending your time looking for posted positions that you think you're qualified for. That's a very reactive approach to the marketplace. What we recommend is far more proactive. Identify companies that you want to work for based on your personal needs and realistic desires -- and then figure out how to get hired by them.

That's right. Start with the desired outcome and work backward from there. We know it sounds harder than applying for an open position. Maybe a bit. But it's a lot more effective.

To begin blueprinting, ask yourself some basic questions:

- 1** What are my strengths and weaknesses? You need to be honest and realistic in answering this. Unfortunately, I've seen many job hunters over-value their qualifications to their own detriment. You have to calibrate yourself to market realities.
- 2** Where do I want to work, geographically speaking? If you don't want to relocate, then you're going to look at companies in your local market. If you don't mind relocating or have a good reason to move – like getting closer to family, or wanting a different climate – you'll need to research towns and cities to learn the opportunities for both work and lifestyle.
- 3** Do I want to stay in my industry, or a tangential one where my skills and experience will translate? Can you turn your portfolio management experience into a corporate treasury role? How about sales experience into customer service? Or take your engineering background and become a recruiter like so many of our FPC consultants.
- 4** Do I want to consider a complete career change?
Based on this self-Q&A process, start building a list of target companies for further research. Start narrow and go deep. Get to know each company and as many people as possible who work or worked there.

Once you've identified a solid list of 25 or 30 companies that you're interested in, you're going to create a blueprint that will help you find your way in through the most effective doors.



BLUE PRINT FORM

BLUE PRINT FORM		
Company Name:		
Public or Private:	Industry:	
Stock Symbol (public):	PE Parent (private):	
Main Phone #:	URL:	
Headquarters address:		
City:	State:	ZIP Code:
Annual Revenue: \$	Gross Profit: \$	
Market Cap: \$	Profit Margin:	
# Employees:	Total Cash: \$	
Leadership		
CEO:	CFO:	
COO:	VP, HR:	
Other:	Other:	
Other:	Other:	
Other:	Other:	
Main Competitors:		
1.	2.	
3.	4.	
Current Relevant Openings:		
1.	2.	
3.	4.	
5.	6.	

This is where the Internet will be a great resource. It will help you learn basic company information, identify hiring managers, find people in functions similar to or related to yours and people in your network who used to work in the companies – or better, currently work there. You can find reporting structures and other helpful information.

LinkedIn is a powerful tool for researching companies and people who work for them. You can search for companies and get basic information on their corporate pages. You'll also find updates with links to blog posts and comments. You'll often see job postings, but don't get lost in them – or respond, yet.

Next, bring up the basic LinkedIn search field again at the top of the page. Just to the right of it you'll see a link labeled "Advanced." It's amazing that few people ever use the Advanced Search tool in LinkedIn. It's a veritable gold mine for finding the people who can help you work your way into and through a company to a job. You can add keywords, for instance the company name you're networking into. You can also select which degrees of contacts you want to find, 1st, 2nd, fellow Group Members, etc.

If you also add the company you're researching as the current company, you can bring up only people currently working there. At some point, you'll also want to find former employees who can round out your understanding of the culture, specific managers and other factors. You can also do this in the Advanced Search window.

If you're willing to upgrade your account to a paid version, you can drill down to get people in specific roles and other criteria. See how you do using the free tools first. The Advanced Search screen is illustrated here.

The screenshot displays the LinkedIn Advanced Search interface. The search bar at the top indicates 148,766 results. The left sidebar contains search filters: Keywords (Finance), First Name, Last Name, Title, Company, School, Location (United States), and Postal Code (98058). The main search area is titled "Advanced People Search" and includes filters for Relationship (1st, 2nd, Group Members), Location, Current Company, Industry (Pharmaceuticals), Past Company, School, and Profile Language. The right sidebar contains filters for Groups, Years of Experience, Function, Seniority Level, Interested In, Company Size, Fortune, and When Joined. Several fields are circled in red: Keywords, Industry, Function, Seniority Level, and Postal Code.

Once you have a list of people who meet your criteria and who may be able to help you, you can peruse their individual profiles. What you're looking for in addition to how they're connected into the company is commonality. Look for people who went to the same university as you, who are members of the same fraternity or professional organizations, who share a hobby or interest with you. Commonality is what gets the phone calls returned.

Related Reading

To get the most out of the connections you'll make during your bare knuckle job search, we recommend that you read sales performance company Miller Heiman's book, "Strategic Selling" for more information on blueprinting. It will also help you to recognize four types of buyers -- or in this case hiring managers who are buying you:

Economic Buyer – Final decision maker. Can say 'no' when all others say 'yes' – and vice versa; usually a VP or higher

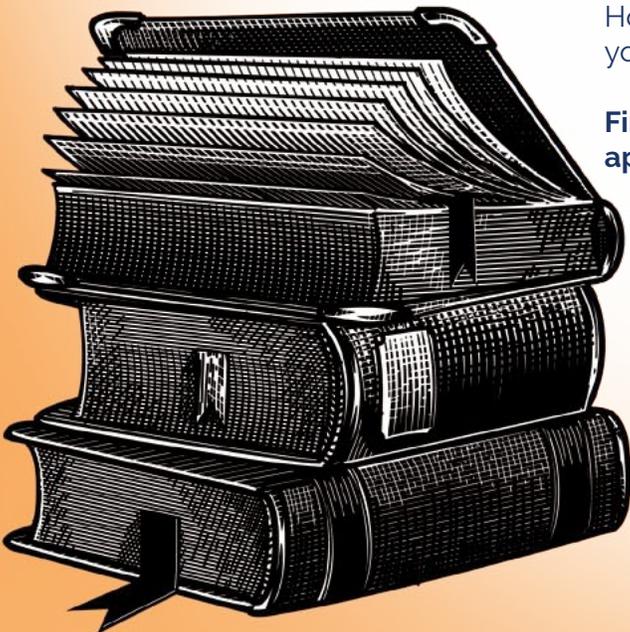
User Buyer – The choice impacts him/her personally. Can say or recommend a 'yes' or 'no'; often your potential boss

Coach – Can help you navigate the territory and is focused on helping you make the sale

Technical Buyer – Serves as a filter, based on general specifications and standards. Can't say 'yes' but can say 'no'; HR falls into the Technical Buyer category. Finding out which category the people you talk with in the job search, interview and negotiation process fall into is not only helpful, but key. More about this later.

What's important to remember at this point, Ms. or Mr. Hot Candidate, is that what we do for our job candidates, you can and must do for yourself.

Find the information you need online. Just don't apply online!!



Make a plan

We at FPC always follow the sage advice of Ben Franklin, "If you fail to plan, you plan to fail." Phone calling is what you must do if you want to be employed. The truth is, it's impossible to tackle if you don't have a plan. Here are some specific steps to include.

- 1** Make 10 to 15 calls per day. If you commit to 10, make 10 – not nine.
- 2** Research all of the companies you're going to call the night before. Don't research a company right before you call, and then repeat that process. It's inefficient. You're less likely to reach your daily goal of calls. If you research the night before, you can make all of your calls without interruption. You'll get better at it and get into a groove, using the learning from each call in the subsequent ones.
- 3** Call early and late. If you call before or after regular business hours, you're more likely to get the person you're calling on the line – rather than a secretary or other gatekeeper. The majority of my client relationships -- all hiring managers like your potential boss – resulted from phone calls before 8 a.m.
- 4** Have a good voicemail message ready to go. Yes you will get voicemail most of the time, even calling early and late. The message you leave will determine whether you get callbacks or not. Here's a sample that works: "Good morning, Jim. This is Jeff Herzog. When you get this please call me back at 212-555-5555. I'm a finance director with 'x' background at 'y' company and I have a quick question for you. My number again is 212-555-5555. Thanks and I look forward to connecting."
- 5** Be ready for the callback. Jim may or may not be the right person to speak with, but you'll find out: "Jim, thanks for getting back to me. As I mentioned on my voicemail, I am a CPA and I was most recently the director of finance for XYZ Company for five years. During that time I was able to reduce the month-end close to 3 days from 6 and reduce headcount costs by 20% for an overall savings of 100K per year. I have a strong corporate accounting background and am looking for the next step in my career. Who do you know who might be interested in speaking with me further?"

It is critical to then shut up...you are going to be tempted to say something else, but don't. Whoever speaks first after that loses the round.

If he/she says that they are not hiring right now, ask "What other companies in the local area do you know that may be looking for someone with a background like mine?"

- 6** Most important, be ready in the event that someone actually picks up his or her phone. In fact, every time you make a call, assume that you'll be speaking with a human being in the next few seconds. When that happens, quickly introduce yourself and of course add whatever commonality you've discovered with that person. Then use the same script from above. If you're speaking with the right person, he or she will let you know. If not, you haven't put them on the spot and they'll be more likely to point you in the right direction. At the very minimum you walk away with a contact to add to your personal database of potential helpers. Here's a longer term idea...When you do get a job, send a note to each person you spoke with along the way letting them know where you're working and what you're doing and thanking them for taking your call and for any help they gave you. You never know when you may want or need to contact them again.
- 7** Ask open-ended, rather than yes-or-no questions. Notice that in the point above we asked, "Who do you know?" rather than "Do you know someone?" This is a good example of why we ask open-ended questions. If you ask, "Who do you know?" they have to think about it and will probably give you a contact if it's someone other than themselves. If you say, "Do you know someone...," it's too easy to say, "No."
- 8** If you leave a voicemail and don't hear back, follow up. We generally limit our voicemail messages to three times per person. If you don't hear back after three tries, send a message through LinkedIn or an email. If you don't have the person's email address, it's surprisingly easy to figure out email structures within a company. If you still don't get a response, move on.



Tips for Successful Execution

As you go through the steps, here are some tips that will help to keep you focused and on track.

1. Be ready. Have two or three hot accomplishments in mind that you can pull up in the moment if appropriate

2. In researching your companies and making the calls, keep in mind that you're qualifying all the time and looking for opportunities to close.

Here's where it helps to keep the Miller Heiman Buyer Types in mind. It goes without saying by now that you're not going to call the "technical buyers" in HR. Focus on executives two to three levels higher than you, but make sure that they are high enough on the food chain to make a decision, but low enough to feel the pain of having an empty position.

When researching people in a company, try to find a coach. Fortunately, through social media, we can find out a lot about people. Look for people working within a company where you have commonality – the same school or fraternity, a company you both previously worked for, etc.

Remember to mention what you have in common with them in your voicemail message. They'll return your call. For example, a recruiter at my company built his entire business on connecting with people who went to his alma mater, LSU. When you contact these people, ask them about the opportunities, how they fit into the organization, who the hiring managers are in your area and other inside information. There's a good chance that they'll make the introductions you need.

Also try to connect with economic buyers. Listen carefully for their pain points and focus the conversation on how you could help them ease the pain.

Keep your motivation in mind: a job! Even I have a different emotional response when I'm hiring for my own company as opposed to for a client. Even though I know that making the right hire will move my business ahead eventually, it's easier for me to get motivated to go through 200 resumes for a client, where the payoff is more immediate – a handsome fee. Your fee for success is a job that will immediately help you pay your mortgage and send your kid to college.

The takeaway from this chapter is to deal with hiring managers – not HR – and over the phone or in person – not online.

Chapter 4: Networking vs “Notworking”

The first thing anyone will tell you about a job search is to network. True. But how you network makes all the difference.

The easiest thing you can do is to go hang out in a 'job search' group with a bunch of other unemployed people. But, once again, the easiest thing you can do is also possibly the worst thing you can do. This is how to approach networking if you want to keep 'not working'. By now, you know that we're not going to tell you the easiest stuff; just the stuff that works.

If you want to network effectively, go to high value events. We define these as events that attract corporate executives, people who are employed. These events often have speakers, so they can be educational to boot. They also usually have a price tag. Pay to go. It's a good investment.



How to 'work' networking events

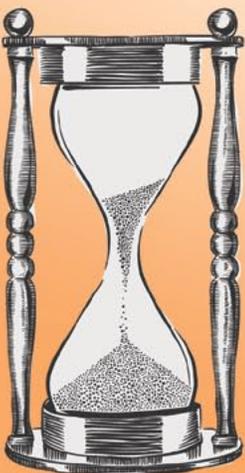
These kinds of events give you access to people who can really help you. Find out in advance who's speaking and who is going to attend to be sure you're making good use of your time. These days, many organizations are using online services like eventBrite where you can see who's invited, who's accepted and who's a maybe. You can also call the organization and ask for an attendee list. Some make this available. Cross reference attendees against your calling lists and research further to be prepared for a 'connected conversation'.

When you get there, seek out the organizers. Introduce yourself and ask who you should be touching base with. You'll likely find that they'll take you over and introduce you. Look for Speaker badges and have a few words with these folks who are usually industry leaders and experts.

There's nothing like 1:1 time – even if it's two minutes to introduce yourself, create some commonality, get their business cards and set the expectations that you'll email them to follow up and share your contact information. Also, please don't print up 'unemployed' business cards, something outplacement might suggest you do. You'll make a better impression by taking responsibility for continuing the conversation.

Being prepared will help you feel comfortable and project confidence. Have balance, though. There's a fine line between assertive and aggressive. In general, people prefer 'assertive'. Be enthusiastic, but not overly so.

I cannot emphasize enough the importance of finding commonalities in networking and calling. Recently I got a voicemail from a guy at the New York Yankees looking to sell me season tickets. He mentioned in his voicemail that we're members of the same fraternity – a fact that he took the time to research. I wasn't interested in buying tickets, but I called him back. Even though I didn't represent a sale, I became another node in his network – one who respects his professional abilities. I also got a private tour of the new Yankee Stadium out of it --which was not too shabby.



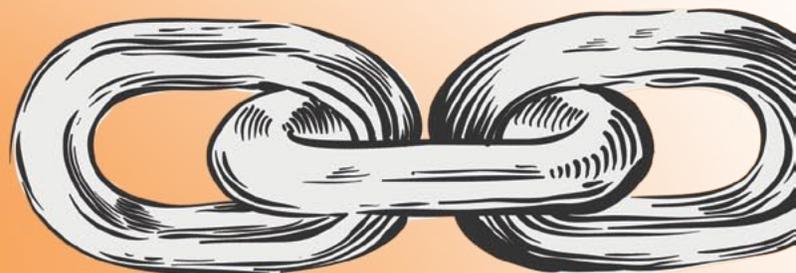
Be a connector to get connected

Don't expect to be found. You've got to go forth and introduce yourself to others in memorable ways. One of the best ways to get people to help you is to help them first.

When you're networking, be a very careful listener. One of the most important things to listen for is someplace where people are having problems that you can help solve or questions that you can help answer through your network.

Making introductions to others establishes you as a credible and generous human. Who wouldn't want to introduce you to their friends and colleagues to return the favor? Keep in mind that you can't do this with a quid pro quo in mind. People see right through this. Have no expectation of reciprocity. Be genuine and let human nature take its course.

Building networks and relationships is a process, so when you go to networking events, don't expect magic to happen. Just feel good that you've taken an important first step and keep building on it.



Tips for networking with recruiters

Recruiters can be among the most productive of all groups to network with. Here's some insight right from the source.

Avoid generalists. Find recruiters who specialize in your industry and/or functional role – or if you're a career changer, the industry or role you're shifting to. Specialization is one way to assess professionalism. The best recruiters work in an area that they know inside out and where they're very well connected. This is what leads to their success and will also lead to yours. For instance, I specialize in Finance/Accounting and Supply Chain in Pharmaceutical, Biotech and Medical Device companies. Pretty specific, huh?

Recruiters really appreciate your making referrals to them. However, if you make a referral to a recruiter, make it a good one. Show interest in knowing about positions they're trying to fill and only recommend people you know who are truly good prospects. Tell them to feel free to put you on their mailing list for that purpose. If you send unqualified referrals, it will come back to haunt you. Don't send them all of your friends who you met networking or "notworking" – unless they are a good fit for a specific job. Worry about yourself and the reputation poor referrals will create for you.

Like any other successful networking, you're building a long term business relationship. Keep that in mind as an objective.

Understand that when it comes to your job search, you're the only one who cares about you. This is when 'do not call' is our advice to you. Don't call a recruiter every week or so to see if anything's come up. If you've introduced yourself and your capabilities to a high quality executive recruiter, he or she will call you when the right potential position for you comes up. Do contact them with qualified referrals that will help them make placements in order to stay top of mind. Keep an eye on the websites of recruiters you introduce yourself to and reach out to them when they post a job you may be interested in.

Also, one last thing. Recruiters are not psychologists or lawyers. I have had far too many candidates air their dirty laundry on a call with me, but promise me they would never say something like this to a hiring manager. Present yourself to recruiters just as you would present yourself to a company.

The key takeaways from this chapter are to only spend time on high value networking and in the words of Dr. Ivan Misner, founder of the international professional networking organization BNI: Givers Gain.

Chapter 5: Why the road to a job often bypasses HR

Please don't get the idea that we de-value the contributions and professionalism of the HR department. In fact, we often work with people in HR. But in your bare knuckle job search you have to know where to land your punches to score a knockout.

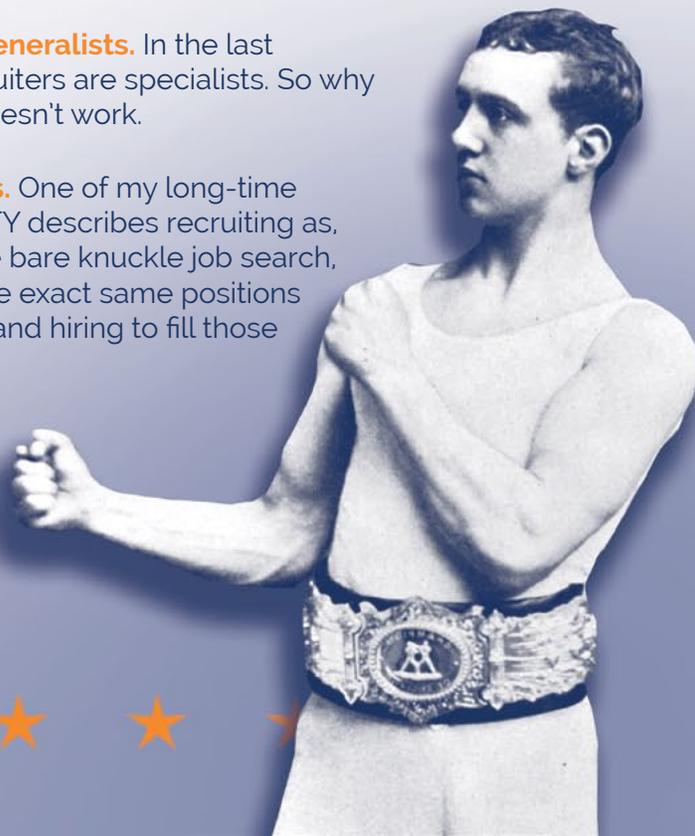
The reality is: HR and recruitment are two different things. They have different mindsets and require different skills.

When I was at Careerbuilder, I flew the VP of recruitment at a Fortune Global 100 company, a client, into NY to speak on our behalf to a international bank, where we had a business opportunity. One of the most important points he made in his talk was that companies make a mistake when they bake recruiting into HR. Recruiting is a sales job, he said. HR is what you do after someone is hired.

HR is process driven. Remember that as a technical buyer, their job is to try to figure ways to filter out resumes and callers based on sets of rules that have nothing to do with understanding a human being and how their unique qualities can contribute to a particular hiring manager's success. Their goal is to make sure that only the 'perfect' candidates get through to the hiring manager. This generally is based on a subjective or superficial reading of submitted resumes – not the way to find well-qualified, well-matched people.

When it comes to evaluating resumes, they're generalists. In the last chapter we discussed that the most effective recruiters are specialists. So why go to a whole department of generalists? It just doesn't work.

Recruiting is a people – not a process – business. One of my long-time clients, John Rorick, VP of talent acquisition at NBTY describes recruiting as, "the sloppy art." While there has to be a plan in the bare knuckle job search, it's definitely not a science. You can have two of the exact same positions at the same company and the process for finding and hiring to fill those jobs is completely different for each.



One thing is certain, though. At least one step in the process is that someone has to pick up a phone. This is less likely to happen in an HR department where the folks are often overwhelmed trying to get through stacks of resumes while trying to deliver on other job functions assigned to them, like employee benefits. But you can't do business that way. You have to talk to people.

Here's an even more important reason to bypass HR. Often, HR doesn't understand the real hiring budget, because it's not their budget. HR is a cost center, often external to the department that's hiring. That's why you have to find out who does understand the budget. Is it the C-Suite, or the Economic Buyer who may be the hiring manager?

Find out who knows where there is discretionary budget for additional head count. HR often has no idea when this is the case. Sharp executives at companies you want to work for understand when they're presented with skills and talent that can help them meet goals – announced or unannounced. They know that the right talent helps them either make or save money and more than pays for itself.

The key takeaway from this chapter is that you may get a little bloody in the process, but to win your bare knuckle job search, you have to get into the ring with a contender, not a sparring partner.



Chapter 6: How to become your own recruiter

Here at FPC we recruit for a fee. We're showing you how to do it for free. This is one additional benefit you bring to a company thinking of hiring you.

Following are some over-arching principles we keep front and center to be successful for our client companies, job candidates, our own companies, ourselves and our families.

- 1** Have confidence in yourself, energy all the time and passion about the value you can bring
- 2** Planning is non-negotiable. We covered this earlier, but it bears repeating.
- 3** Persistence is what makes a winner. Don't get discouraged. Think of Rocky Balboa.
- 4** Be professionally persistent. In the final analysis you win because you help people understand that your persistence is for them as well as for you. As recruiters we win when we bring good people to the table. The same is true for you.
- 5** Be a 'make it happen person' rather than a 'let it happen person'. This is my personal key to success. Nobody owes you anything. You have to develop the self-confidence to go and get what you want and need to feel successful and happy by your own definition. To preview this guide, I wrote a blog post that has much more to say on this subject.



**Key takeaways from this short but important chapter:
just re-read points 1 through 5.**



Chapter 7: Interview tips you probably never heard before

We're in your corner. If you follow the advice in the previous six chapters, before long you will find yourself in an interview situation that has some real potential to get you hired. Here's some 'corner talk' to help you get to a 'unanimous decision' in your favor and give your poor, bare knuckles some well-earned relief!

Bare knuckle interview preparation

You've already learned a lot about the company in researching your lists. You can and should review this information. Perhaps, based on preliminary conversations with the hiring manager or an inside Coach, you may do some more research. But there are other steps you can take to prepare that will set you apart. I am not talking about what you should wear, what time you should get there or that you should make good eye contact and a firm handshake. That's basic stuff you'll find anywhere. What I'm going to share with you is unique, and more often than not, my candidates thank me for the information.

- 1 Based on what you know, anticipate questions and develop specific answers and examples to have at the ready.
- 2 Role-play with your spouse, a friend or colleague to get you ready to respond on your feet and to be sure you sound genuinely interested and confident.
- 3 Feel lucky. This is a preparation step you're not likely to hear elsewhere. It comes from Bob Montgomery, the former CEO of Careerbuilder.com. He says, "Only hire people who feel lucky." To him, this means people who communicate how fortunate they feel for the opportunities, the experience and the learning they've had that has brought them to this moment. Feeling lucky is the opposite of feeling entitled. When you feel lucky for what you've had, it projects that you'll also value the new job in ways that others won't.



Differentiate yourself from the first moment

When you arrive for the interview, the receptionist will undoubtedly tell you that the interviewer will be with you soon and to have a seat in the waiting area, or in the conference room they show you to.

Don't sit! We tell people to stand and be ready to greet whoever comes to get you. When you sit, you tend to let your guard down. You take your coat off, you check your phone and you sink back into that cushy couch that they have in the lobby. This is one time when you want to be fully awake and at the ready. You don't want to stand up and be wobbly in the knees when the interviewer arrives. From a standing position, firmly balanced on two legs, you meet as equals. This gives you the opportunity to focus on delivering that good firm handshake and a big smile on your face.

Also, make sure to thank the receptionist when you're walking away. In fact, be nice to everyone you encounter. I always say, "Everyone is somebody's someone." A candidate I know of was interviewing at a company in Cleveland a couple of years ago. He had excellent experience, but made it utterly clear that he only cared to speak with people who he perceived as "important." The security guard who welcomed him to the facility happened to be the hiring manager's niece! She told her uncle how rude he interacted with her. Guess what happened? The hiring manager said he loved the candidate until he talked to his niece afterwards, but did not hire him because he was rude.

Never come across as someone who has been wronged by circumstances, the economy, a previous supervisor. Be someone who has a plan and creates their own career circumstances. And remember, feel lucky for being who you are and for the opportunities you have in front of you. A candidate I interviewed recently told me that his family "deserved more." I asked him to elaborate, but he wasn't able to. Whether you believe they deserve more or not, NEVER show it. I know this is hard to do, but it will be even harder when you don't get the job because you talked negatively about your previous boss or complain that you weren't given the opportunities you needed to be successful.



Interview Imperatives

The following is a series of tips I use to prepare every one of my candidates -- whether they are a \$250,000 vice-president or an \$85,000 engineer. I learned early in my career that it makes no difference. Everyone needs to follow some basic, but not always obvious, rules. In fact, I generally know how well a candidate is going to do on the interview based on how they absorb my preparation tips. I cannot emphasize enough how important it is to be humble. Some people think being humble is being passive. According to Jim Collins, author of two of my favorite books, "Good to Great" and "Economics," personal humility is a core quality of business leaders who put ambition for their companies' success ahead of their own. You can imagine why humility is an attractive quality to display in an interview. Also, being open to learning and improvement are critical traits for success. So please take this advice seriously. Remember, I do this for a living. Hopefully, you haven't done this in a while.

Come across as a "Make it Happen Person" – As mentioned earlier, never come across as someone who has been wronged by circumstances, the economy, a previous supervisor. Be someone who has a plan and creates their own career circumstances. And remember, feel lucky for being who you are and for the opportunities you have in front of you. A candidate I interviewed recently told me that his family "deserved more." I asked him to elaborate, but he wasn't able to. Whether you believe they deserve more or not, NEVER show it. I know this is hard to do, but it will be even harder when you don't get the job because you talked negatively about your previous boss or complain that you weren't given the opportunities you needed to be successful.

Interviewing is all about balance. Here's what I mean: Balance between being confident, but not arrogant. Being over-confident destroys your credibility. I once asked a candidate for a controller role I was working on to share some examples of when she had created financial statements from scratch. She looked at me with this sort of snide smile and said, "Oh Jeff, that stuff is so easy for me." I knew immediately she had never done it before. I didn't ask her if it was easy or hard. I asked her for some examples and she couldn't provide them. I'll share a better way to answer a question like that in a little while. Also, make sure not to use superlatives such as fantastic, amazing or outstanding. This also brings your credibility into question.

Balance between being assertive, but not aggressive. There is something called the assertive/aggressive curve. It clearly shows how being assertive has a positive impact, but how it turns negative once you get too assertive -- or worse -- aggressive. There are some positions that you may interview for -- sales jobs, for instance -- where leaning towards aggressive may help you. But I believe it's best to use strong examples of situations where you were professionally assertive and were able to close the deal.

Be positive at all times. Don't speak negatively about any past situation or person. The interviewer will not want to be the object of your future negative comments. A candidate was recently interviewing for a chief accounting officer role. He was having a conversation with the CFO, who asked him, "Why would you leave your role as corporate controller of a \$7 billion company to be the chief accounting officer of a \$2 billion company?" The candidate proceeded to tell the CFO a sob story about how he was passed up for a promotion at his company and that the person put into the role was only three years older and not nearly as technical as he was. My client the CFO said: "Right away I was done. He was sour grapes and I no longer had any interest in considering him for the role."

Be self-aware. The interviewer should be the one who talks more. When he or she speaks you have an opportunity to learn information that will help you when you speak.

I once had a situation where a candidate I was representing had a lunch interview with a VP in his office. Their sandwiches were delivered right away and she began talking about her background. Forty-five minutes later she finally finished speaking. The VP had finished his entire lunch and she hadn't taken a bite. The VP said to her that he loved her energy. Her reply? "Yeah, but I know how to control it." Clearly she had no perception of how she looked from the interviewer's perspective. Certainly, she hadn't demonstrated any sense of control at a moment when it was critical to do so. Despite the fact that she was very well qualified for the role, they decided to pass on her.

It is important to be cognizant about what you look and sound like from an outsiders' perspective. Don't ramble on. When you do speak, offer clear, well-conceived ideas. Keep it short to focus attention on your key points. If you are in the process of answering a question and something better pops into your head, quickly determine whether to add the new idea right then, or to wait until the next opportunity to talk. Picture the difference between one person hitting a tennis ball against a wall versus two people volleying. Make it a conversation – not a monologue.

Ask not what your company can do for you...Keep your answers focused on what you can do for them. The better job you do of selling them on what you can do for the company, the better job they're going to do of selling the company on you.

Ask questions, but not to appear smart. Ask questions because you genuinely want to know the answers as part of your decision making. A couple of my favorite ways to ask questions are: "Talk to me about..." and "Help me to understand..." These phrases take any question and make it open-ended. Here are two ways to ask the same question, but get drastically different results:

- "Are there opportunities to move up in the company?"
- "Talk to me about the company's perspective on succession planning?"

My favorite question to ask a hiring manager is: "What would you hope for me to accomplish in the first six months?" Ask the question in exactly this way. Not, "What are you looking for in this person?" The objective is to get the interviewer to picture you in the role -- not just anyone. This gives the interviewer the opportunity to consider the accomplishments on your resume that are unique to you and that could be helpful to the company. It's a way to help them recognize that you're the right person for the job.

Be a S.T.A.R. When an interviewer asks if you've ever had a particular experience, use the S.T.A.R. technique to quantify your actions, put them in context and demonstrate your solution. This is the method that many companies look for in interviews. It means: Situation. Task. Action. Result. This is a great acronym to remember when you are asked a situational or behavioral question. Here's an example.

Interviewer – "Have you ever been in a situation where you knew you were right, but your boss thought you were wrong and you had to change his or her mind?"

Answer 1 (what not to do): "Yeah, that's happened to me several times in the past.

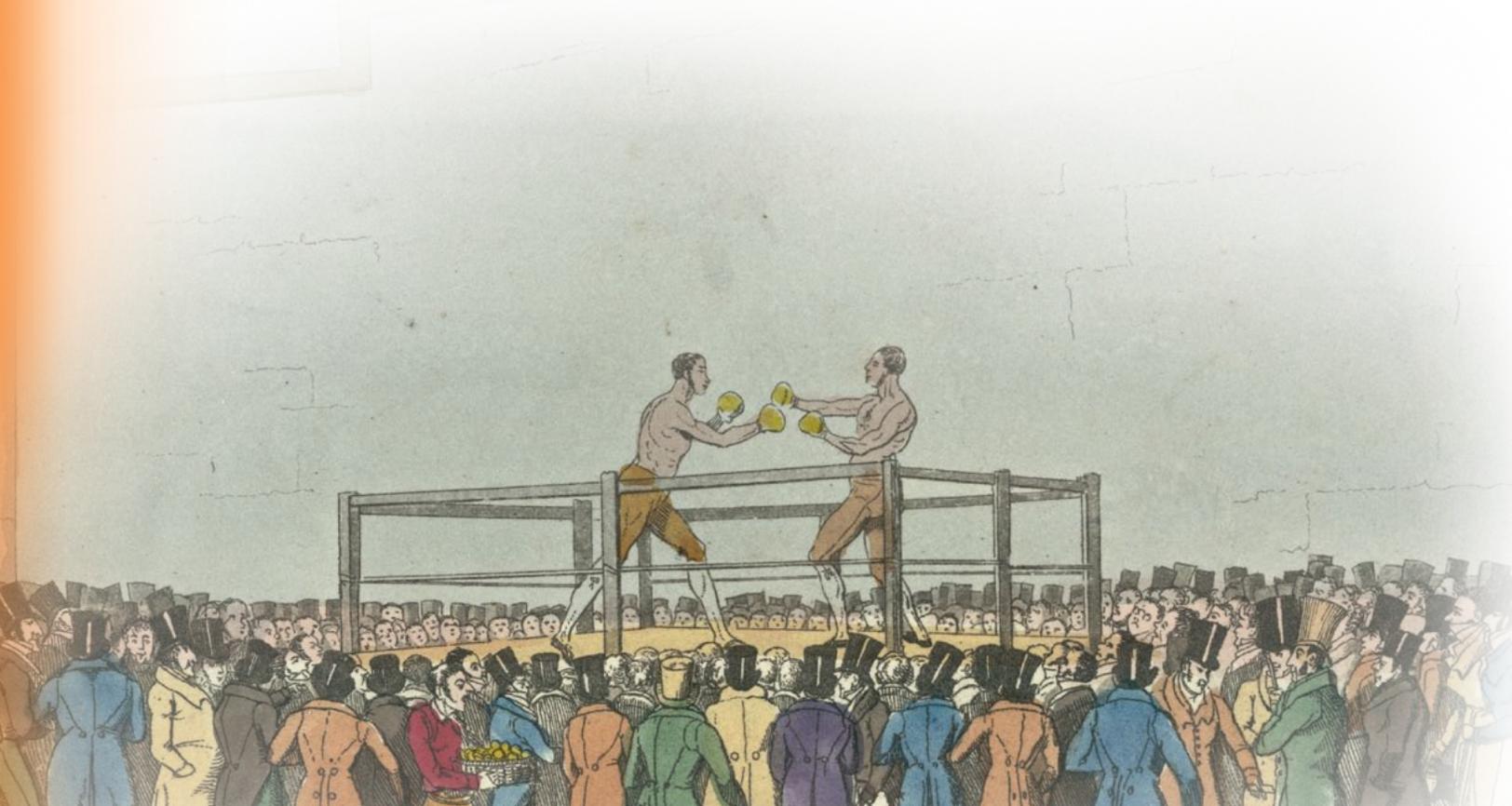
Answer 2 (what to do): "Yes, as a matter of fact, that has happened on a few occasions in the recent past. Let me give you an example: The Situation was, the Tasks involved were, the Action I took and ultimately the Result to the business was."



The ABC's of interviewing – In the movie *Glengarry Glen Ross*, a must-see film if you're in sales – even temporarily for your bare knuckle job search -- The main character, played by Alec Baldwin, is brought in to motivate a group of rag-tag real estate salespeople. He writes the letters 'ABC' on the whiteboard. The acronym, we learn, stands for Always Be Closing. Close the deal! Ask for the job!! This is the one place where too many candidates take a fall. Few ask for the job. Here's a final interview wrap-up that I like a lot: "I'm really glad that we had the chance to meet. I'm excited that I can bring x,y,z to the company and I'm looking forward to continuing the process. What do you see as next steps for me?" Say specifically, '...next steps for me.' I once had a candidate ask, "What would next steps be?" The interviewer told him what the next steps would be. When I spoke with the interviewer later and said, "Hey, it's great that you like Joe and are going to be bringing him back in to meet more people." He said, "We are absolutely not going to be bringing him back. He asked what next steps would be. We told him what they would be if we were interested in him, and we're not." Language is important.

If you're doing well in the interview, at some point it will turn into a 'tell and sell', that is, the interviewer will begin to realize that you are a strong fit for the role and start selling you on the company; why it's a great place for you to work. When that happens, it's a strong signal that you have your job search on the ropes!

Put on your championship belt – and get to work!!



Conclusion

We wrote this guide, "Your Job Search is a Bare Knuckle Fight: The FPC Recruiters' Guide to Winning!" to empower you to take actions you might not ordinarily be comfortable with or that you may not have known about. The ideas and techniques we've shared with you work! We know this is true because we use them every day in our FPC executive recruiting offices to help companies hire the best talent for them and to help job candidates to take positive steps in their careers. The steps we've outlined are designed to get you in front of more opportunities and, ultimately, to get you hired. You may not think of yourself as a sales person, but you can do what sales people do to succeed if it means getting a job, can't you?

Now you know what to do. If it makes it easier for you to imagine yourself using bare knuckle job search techniques, just think of yourself as a human being who understands how to take a person-to-person approach. After all, that's exactly what we're proposing. We explained early on that our approach is actually more traditional than revolutionary. For example, using the telephone is the way people found jobs before the Internet came into play. Picking up the phone still works, especially because your conversations are better informed through Internet research.

If you now find yourself saying, "So that's what I do to get a job!" – and if you're starting to feel excited about following our advice, then you have the stuff that champions are made of. Just try it. Take off the gloves and start swinging. Once you become your own recruiter and know how to K-O the interview, you'll have a much better chance at that next job!

Get in the fight! Stay in the fight! We know you'll win!!



About FFC & FPC National

FFC is the franchise entity for F-O-R-T-U-N-E Personnel Consultants – known as FPC -- a leading national executive search network comprised of a family of independently owned and operated firms. This well-established brand was founded in 1959 and has been franchised since 1973.

Executive Search – or Recruiting -- is a professional consulting role that helps companies find and hire the right talent to fill key management positions. FPC owners fulfill this role for many of the top corporations in the world – including a significant portion of the Fortune 500.

Choosing FPC ownership creates a positive and productive transition from corporate years to retirement, while establishing a valuable business asset that can be sold or passed along to the next generation. In addition to building successful businesses that allow for work/life balance, FPC owners have the added reward of contributing to the success of those they place in new jobs.

If you're interested in exploring options other than finding a new job, an FPC executive recruiting franchise might be the right next move for you. By the way, if you enjoyed reading this guide, keep in mind that it demonstrates the quality recruiting techniques that differentiate FPC from its competitors and give our owners a marketplace advantage.

Learn more at www.fpcfanchise.com.





About the Author

Jeff Herzog is executive vice president of F-O-R-T-U-N-E Franchise Corp (FFC) and President of FPC of New York, a franchise office of FFC.

Jeff has more than 16 years of varied experience in the recruitment business and has developed a unique perspective on what it takes to build a career today – as a corporate employee and/or a small business/franchise owner. He began his recruiting career with Update Legal Staffing in New York. He also managed the New York office of Careerbuilder.com and was the director of recruitment and real estate advertising for Newsday, both Tribune Corporation subsidiaries, before starting his own firm, FPC of New York City. After five successful years of running the franchise, he joined FFC as Vice President of Business Development. In 2012, Jeff became an owner and EVP of FFC. In his role as President of FPC of New York, Jeff actively recruits top professionals for several different manufacturing industries. His responsibility for hiring for FPC of New York gives him insight to hiring managers' needs and thinking. He speaks frequently to industry and university groups on job search and career management. Jeff is an authoritative voice on the unique role of the executive recruiter in identifying, presenting and advocating for job candidates. His expertise is incorporated into FPC Franchise recruitment processes and training programs, which differentiate FPC offices in the search franchise marketplace.

