

*"Over 70% of all jobs are never published. This book will help you discover and land these jobs!"*

—John Challenger, CEO, Challenger, Gray & Christmas, Inc.

# UNLOCK THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET



6 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL  
JOB SEARCH WHEN  
TIMES ARE TOUGH

Duncan Mathison and Martha I. Finney

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# The Job Market Is Tight: It's Time to Take Back Control of Your Career

Great jobs don't go to great people. They go to great job searchers—those who know how to navigate the job market and make it work for them. Huge opportunities are waiting for you in the job market. Opportunities to not just find a great job in a really bad economy, but to build your career over time, on your terms, with your timing, and where you want to live and work.

There are actually two job markets. The one that everyone knows about—all those millions of job searchers who go to the same places and fight for a limited number of jobs that are published on job boards and online careers tabs on company websites. And then there is the hidden job market, that secret parallel universe of opportunities that are waiting for anyone with the skill, curiosity, and energy to seek them out. The *hidden job market* (HJM) is where you'll find your control. The hidden job market is where people are hired every day in jobs that are never published, never posted on the Internet, never put on the company website, nor listed in the newspaper, nor posted on job boards. The hidden job market is that vast source of opportunities where all jobs get their start, before some go on to be publicly announced, while others are just quietly filled with no official posting. This is where you have the competitive advantage, because you have found your own way there, through your own wits, initiative, and ingenuity. After you find the opportunity that's right for you, you can actually influence the design of that job, including the salary and benefits package

that comes with it. That's the inside track that the hidden job market gives you. That's the control you're looking for.

Learning to navigate the hidden job market requires two things from you:

1. The willingness to take a more active role in your job search (which will be immediately more rewarding than sending out hundreds of resumés only to hear nothing from would-be employers).
2. The willingness to learn a new set of proven job search skills, which we call the HJM techniques, that you can put into *immediate* action (even today).

Sure, the HJM techniques will require more active effort from you, but it will be worth it! (You've probably already noticed that helplessly worrying is hard work, too. Wouldn't you rather invest your energies in activities that will actually land you a great job?)

## How HJM Techniques Work

Here are some real-life examples of how the HJM techniques can help you reclaim control over your career (real people, names changed):

- **The HJM techniques help you get back on your career track.** John had early success in retail operations. When he was in his early 40s, he took a job with a computer company that wanted to open direct retail stores. The initiative failed, and he was let go. Using the HJM search techniques you'll learn in this book, he landed a job as vice president of operations for a specialty retailer, winning the job over two internal candidates whom the company president had been considering.

- **The HJM techniques can leapfrog you into a dream job without a perfect match of education, experience, or background.** Growing up on the wrong side of the tracks, Sarah followed her parents' wishes and went into business after college. But, despite a successful career in banking, she felt unfulfilled; she wanted to get into community service and help others make the leap to a better life, just as she had. The trouble was that those jobs required people with degrees in social work or public administration. She used the HJM techniques to discover what candidate characteristics really succeeded in those positions. Convincing the employer that she had those characteristics (the HJM techniques actually got her in front of the employer in the first place), she was able to demonstrate how her background made her the best candidate. She got the job over dozens of more qualified hopefuls.
- **The HJM techniques can help you find a job on your terms.** Edward worked for a company generating new ideas for the car industry, which he loves. He was quickly promoted to vice president, where he discovered that he hated the politics of management. He used the HJM techniques to create a portfolio of several high-quality part-time jobs, custom-created to allow him to do exactly what he loves to do. He's making more money than he ever did before. And he's happier now than he's ever been.
- **The HJM techniques can get you in the back door.** John specialized in a certain software programming language. But the market for that skill had dried up in Southern California, where he wanted to stay. He had burned out his network, and the online job boards turned up nothing. Using the HJM techniques, he found his next job in the most unlikely of places—his mother's church sewing circle. (So actually, it's more accurate to say that *she* used the HJM techniques.) A

friend in the circle had a daughter who worked in a company that was looking for someone just like him. After getting over some initial, but terribly time-consuming, resistance against calling “the daughter of some church friend of Mom’s,” he discovered that this daughter worked in the division that needed him. He was hired within four days of making the call.

- **The HJM techniques can get you past the black hole of the applicant tracking system.** After spending a few years in high-tech, Bob wanted to return to the utilities industry, where he had spent the bulk of his early career. While he applied for a position through the conventional, published job route, he also used the HJM techniques to “get his foot in the door.” He kept receiving automated rejection responses from the applicant tracking system, even while he was successfully negotiating with the exact same company a job offer he had received as a result of his HJM initiative.
- **The HJM techniques can transfer military experience into top corporate careers.** Paul, a Navy SEAL, didn’t have to be told that the ability to land on beaches and blow things up was pretty much meaningless to the corporate world. He used the HJM techniques to identify the assets he did bring to the corporate world (innovation, the ability to get things done in highly uncertain environments, and building strong, cohesive teams). He also used the HJM techniques to bypass the automated applicant tracking system, which would have screened him out as having an irrelevant background. He went on to become a manager for a fast-track Fortune 500 company.
- **The HJM techniques can jump-start a dead job search.** Susan had been a highly respected specialist in organization development and was well networked in her town. After she was laid off, she had spent nine months and her entire

severance combing through online job postings and conducting an unfocused, very expensive networking campaign. With only 30 days before she was due to lose her apartment (and move into her car), she launched an HJM search. She found a new job just in time, one that is perfect for her and pays more than what she earned in her previous job.

Maybe you see yourself in one of these people (or perhaps in bits of each). Or perhaps you have a different story—one that's making you ask yourself whether the HJM techniques can help you, too. These techniques will help no matter where you are in your career, even if you're just starting out or if you have reached the age where you think you might be too, uh, "overqualified" to be an attractive candidate. Maybe there are too many gaps in your resumé when you didn't have a paying job at all. (You were a mom or dad taking time off to be with the family, for instance. Or you were taking care of aging parents.) Or maybe you're thinking that you were one of your company's most highly paid employees when you were laid off. And now you wonder how you could possibly pick up that kind of income in a new position, especially when so many others are available and willing to work for less.

You can take control of your search in just six steps. Each step will increase your opportunities, sharpen your focus, and improve your chances for that hard-to-come-by dream opportunity that will actually turn into an offer. Each step answers the most difficult questions of any job search and puts you in control and on the path to successful employment:

**Step 1: Make Five Mindset Fixes to Get Your Search on Track** identifies five mindsets to help you avoid the most common assumptions that derail any job search. This essential step answers

- How to measure whether you are on track in your search or just wasting your time

- Why being between jobs is actually an advantage when you conduct an HJM search
- How just a 30-minute daily investment of your time will actually shorten your job search
- Why hiring managers will choose to hire you over someone else when you don't have the exact experience they want

**Step 2: Connect Your Hottest Skills to What Hiring Managers Really Care About** shows you how to identify which skills will actually get you hired. In addition, this important assessment step tells you

- How to overcome a career setback caused by losing your job
- How to transfer your current skills to new industries and professions
- Practical steps to overcome experience gaps that stand between you and your dream job

**Step 3: Upgrade Your Networking to Get Better Results** will break you free of unproductive networking ruts and enable you to finally do networking right. This step shows you

- Why you're better off just skipping those expensive, fattening, and boring networking mixers.
- How to talk about yourself and your goals without sounding phony, lame, or desperate
- How to focus on the best networking opportunities
- How you will know that your networking is working and not just wasting your time

**Step 4: Power Up Your Job Search** gives you a new set of tools to organize and focus your search. These tools will transform and energize your search when you learn

- Why you should leave your resumé at home



- How to create a document more powerful than a resumé that will open doors, generate ideas, and ultimately introduce you to the person who will offer you your job
- How to find the perfect job exactly where you want to live
- How to discover the hot industry issues that create the hot new jobs

**Step 5: Get the Interviews That Count and Run Them Like a Pro** is a practical guide to get inside a target employer and conduct a powerful HJM meeting. You will learn

- How to get an appointment with the people who have the power to actually hire you
- How to discover specific job opportunities during an HJM meeting
- The secret to being treated like an accomplished professional instead of just another out-of-work applicant
- How to move an HJM meeting toward a job offer

**Step 6: Negotiate Everything** teaches you to get the most of any job offer by explaining

- How to custom-write your own job description
- When and how to nudge the hiring manager into making an offer
- How to negotiate *both* the salary and job title that you deserve

This book is about bringing the best of who you are to the best selection of job opportunities that are out there. It's not about playing games, having the absolutely perfect resumé, being phony, being ashamed, or being desperate. It is about being authentic, being confident, being curious, and matching your abilities, skills, and desires with the right job—with the compensation you deserve.

No matter what you think your barriers are to your next great job, the HJM techniques can work for you and put you back in control of your career and your future. If you follow the advice in this book, you will unlock doors you didn't even know existed, or that maybe you assumed were closed to you. The hidden job market approach is a journey where you will discover new possibilities and opportunities.

**The best thing you can do:**

Resolve to take back control of your career.

**The worst thing you can do:**

Let yourself become so overwhelmed by the frustrations that go with traditional job search methods that you just give up.

**The first thing you should do:**

Open your mind to the possibilities that these proven HJM techniques will help you land your next great job and reclaim both your career and your future.

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