

Daniel J. Troup

Pathfinder Edition - Guidebook

Selling You

THE ADVANTEDGE JOB SEARCH PROCESS™



Use the Power of Sales and Marketing
to Navigate the Job Search and Land the Job

Selling You

The AdvantEdge Job Search Process™

Pathfinder Edition – Guidebook

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Preview: Preface – Chapter 4

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Preface

*"I am not a product of my circumstances.
I am a product of my decisions." - Stephen Covey*

I do not believe there is such a thing as a standard career path. If you choose a formally licensed profession, such as becoming a doctor or a lawyer, the path to your work is predetermined. Undergraduate degree, medical school or law school, residency, or the bar exam, and then you are a full-fledged practicing physician or attorney. But, for most of us, choosing to work in business or non-profit, the path to our selected profession and the arc of our career may be full of unexpected twists and turns.

I started at the age of 17, wanting to be an architect. It was a simple decision. My grandfather was an architect. It looked interesting, and he made a good living. That dream ended on the Cornell College of Architecture admissions office floor on a beautiful fall day in 1977.

Admissions Officer: Can I see your portfolio?

Me: What is a portfolio?

Admissions Officer: That would be a sample of your drawings.

Me: But I do not know how to draw. That is why I want to come here.

Admissions Officer: All prospective students need to provide a sample of their drawings.

Me: Ok. Where is the exit door?

And that was the end of my dream of a long and successful career in architecture. From there, it was on to an undergraduate degree in Psychology. Then my first career in Human Resources as a personnel manager and a professional recruiter. Two years later, my brain had turned to oatmeal, and I was ready for a new intellectual challenge and another profession.

I completed graduate school with an MBA in Finance and a job as a financial analyst for Xerox Corporation. There was one small problem. It turns out I was quite possibly the worst financial analyst in the history of the company. After a year, one of my mentors came to me and told me: "You are not cut out for Finance. But you sure can talk! How about trying sales?"

From that inflection point, my career path merged onto an interstate highway filled with various sales positions and management assignments. Twenty-five years later, I was fortunate enough to

be financially able to retire early in my mid 50's and pursue a new interest. I chose to help others through career and job search coaching. That successful career in sales shaped and informed my view and approach to the job search process.

I believe that selling is like breathing. We do both every day of our lives. Whether you are talking about products, solutions, or services, you are selling. If you are talking about a debate or discussion, promoting your position or a set of ideas, you are selling. And when you are looking for your next job, you are selling the most important product in the world. Yourself.

I recently searched on Amazon for books on the job search process. There were over 2,000 books that met my search criteria. I found books written by CEOs, professors, Ph.D.-level counselors, and executive recruiters. It was an impressive, albeit somewhat intimidating, list. I considered the challenge in front of me with a single question. Who am I to add another book to that list?

I do not profess to be anything beyond a coach and a writer filled with practical, real-world experience. Over a 35-year career, I have completed over 3,000 interviews, guided, and mentored the careers of more than 200 professionals, and held 14 different jobs. When I combine that career with the heart, drive, passion, and experience of 25 plus award-winning years in sales, I believe I have a story and some lessons on the job search process to share.

We all have a sales rep hidden inside of ourselves. I will show you how to bring those sales skills to the surface and into your job search process. The result will be a quicker path to your next job.

Introduction

*"The only limit to our realization of tomorrow
will be our doubts of today" - Franklin D. Roosevelt*

To succeed in a job search, you need to start thinking and acting like a sales rep. That is my mantra. It is my worldview. This book will teach and guide you through a four-phase and twelve-step approach to the job search process built on a foundation of proven sales and marketing principles. I call this new approach the **AdvantEdge Job Search Process™** because it gives you an *advantage* and an *edge* over the competition in today's job market.

The AdvantEdge process is not a series of revolutionary resume, LinkedIn, networking, or interview tips. The internet is already full of content covering the tools you can use in a job search. Instead, the secret sauce of this book and the AdvantEdge process is a new perspective on winning the job search. More than just a book, this is, in reality, a guidebook for your job search. A systematic process with a step-by-step road map, tools, and templates to follow, all designed to help you land your next job in the shortest time possible.

I look at it this way. If you were to ask two architects to design a home built out of brick and wood, you would likely get two completely different structures. Each house is constructed from the same materials. One home you may want to purchase. The aesthetics, the design, and the value proposition appeal to you. The other? Maybe not so much. Same materials. Different results. Your job search is no different. With the AdvantEdge process, we will use a standard set of tools. But we will assemble these tools into a new strategy that will accelerate your job search.

Is the AdvantEdge Process for You

Let's start first with a fundamental question. Should you read this book? Is this the right job search resource for you? I designed the AdvantEdge process for a wide range of job seekers:

- ❖ Fully employed mid-career professionals seeking the next position up the career ladder.
- ❖ Recent college graduates searching for the first professional job post-graduation.
- ❖ The unemployed 50 and over job seeker, facing workplace ageism challenges in a new and rapidly evolving job search process.
- ❖ Professionals attempting to return to a career after an extended multi-year absence.

This book is structured to follow the AdvantEdge process, with each chapter as a logical building block for the work and activities you will complete in the subsequent phases of your job search. This book, the *Pathfinder Edition*, is designed to share information on the job search process and includes best practices and step-by-step instructions for each phase in the process.

Why Build a Guidebook

As a certified career coach, I designed a job search process complete with all the necessary tools that I could use with my clients in our one-to-one coaching sessions. Over the past several years, I continued to refine both the process and the tools based on feedback from my clients and the ever-evolving conditions of today's job market. The process works, but I had a problem with scale and available hours in the day. The need for assistance in the job search process (the number of prospective clients) exceeded the number of hours I could commit to the dedicated coaching sessions.

I enjoy working with my clients and take great satisfaction in seeing the AdvantEdge process and their hard work deliver the desired result, an offer for their next job. But my absolute favorite client is one that I like to call "Retired Dan." As much as I enjoy coaching, I appreciate my retired life even more. I keep my clients to a manageable number to continue to provide the dedicated focus and service they deserve and require.

From that time and capacity challenge came the idea for this job search guidebook. I love to write and had already developed a practical guide for my coaching clients. Perhaps I could expand the content and extend the reach of the AdvantEdge process. I set out on a journey to adapt the AdvantEdge process to a self-instructional model. With an expanded and self-paced guidebook, I now leverage the cloud (Box and Google Drive) to enable your access to my portfolio of job search tools, templates, and resources.

AdvantEdge Job Search Assets

As you move through the book, you will find highlighted links that take you directly to the AdvantEdge Box (Microsoft format and PDF files) and Google Drive (Google format and PDF files), established as a digital content library exclusively for readers of this book. These cloud repositories contain tools, templates, exercises, and resources designed to expand your understanding and utilization of the AdvantEdge process. Look for these Red and Green color-coded links throughout the book. With the Navigator Edition of this book, you have full access to all of these assets.

❖ **AC Toolkit**

Information in this highlight will link you to a numbered (ex. AC Toolkit_01) job search exercise, tool, or template specific to a step or phase in the AdvantEdge process. Completing the activity or adding the tools and templates to your job search library will enhance your ability to master the twelve-step process and secure your next job.

❖ **AC Resource**

Information in this highlight will link you to a wide variety of numbered (ex. AC Resource_01) job search best practices and learning resources that I value and recommend beyond the information already provided in this book and the twelve-step process.

Author's Note: By design, the hyperlinks to each asset (AC Toolkit 01-18 and AC Resource 01-07) are not active in the Pathfinder Edition. References to each asset remain in this edition so that you, the reader, can understand where each tool or resource plays a role in the AdvantEdge job search process. Additionally, if you desire, for a nominal fee, you can purchase full access to the complete set of AdvantEdge tools and resources to complement your Pathfinder Edition of this book. Information on access to these additional tools is available on the AdvantEdge website and from the Additional Job Search Services section at the end of this book.

Guidebook Structure

There are sixteen chapters in this book that guide you through mastery of the AdvantEdge job search process. Additionally, all the tools, templates, exercises, and additional resources covered in the book are summarized for you in the Appendix and Index sections located at the end of the book.

❖ **Chapter 1: Lottery Tickets and Your Job Search**

There is a myriad of ways to approach your job search. Examine an in-depth focus on today's job search strategies and techniques. Learn more about the expected return on investment for your efforts and the most effective way to align your job search process to how organizations seek candidates.

❖ **Chapter 2: Sales Skills and Your Job Search**

To land your next job, you must first change your perspective on sales and the job search process. Explore the interrelationship between sales skills, the selling process, and a successful job search.

Selling is not a bad thing, and when it comes to finding your next job, it could be the one thing that gets you the offer letter.

❖ **Chapter 3: Get Personal with Your Job Search**

Your job search is a very personal journey. Every successful job search has four distinct phases: Plan & Research, Personal Branding, Personal Networking, and Personal Selling. These four phases provide the high-level architecture for the AdvantEdge process.

❖ **Chapter 4: Twelve Steps to Your Next Job**

The internet is full of job search tips and tricks, but to win your job search, you need a systematic process to get you to the job offer. Get introduced to the twelve steps in the AdvantEdge process and how planning, research, preparation, and practice are essential elements for each stage of your job search.

❖ **Chapter 5: Always Have a Plan in Your Back Pocket**

Job Search Action Plan Development (Step 1). You need to find a job, and quickly. So, you create a resume and start applying for any job you discover. No plan, structure, or method to your search. Frustration is likely soon to follow your every move. A successful job search begins with the development of a comprehensive action plan.

Target Position & Company Research (Step 2). A job search is a lot like a cross-country journey. A successful trip requires coordinates and directions. Knowing what you want to be (your target position) and where you want to work (your target companies or organizations) are the "GPS coordinates" for your job search process. Developing those coordinates takes time and research.

❖ **Chapter 6: You Had Me at Your Elevator Pitch**

Elevator Pitch Development (Step 3). Just like Tom Cruise had Renée Zellweger at "hello" in the movie *Jerry Maguire*, your job search must start with a great elevator pitch. Examine the purpose, importance, and structure of the elevator pitch within the context of your job search. Learn how to develop and perfect an elevator pitch that serves as the foundation for every other step in your job search process.

❖ **Chapter 7: Open the Door with Your Resume**

Resume Development (Step 4). You cannot get the interview if you don't get through the door. You need a compelling resume to help open the door. Purpose, importance, and the structure of your resume matter within the context of your job search. Build a resume optimized for applicant tracking software, recruiters, and hiring managers in today's job market.

❖ **Chapter 8: Free Advertising and Your Cover Letter**

Cover Letter Development (Step 5). Think the cover letter is dead in today's job search? Not so fast. You can leverage your cover letter as a free advertisement designed to move your resume to

the top of the applicant stack. Learn how to stand out from your competition with a well-designed and executed cover letter.

❖ **Chapter 9: You Need to Live in LinkedIn**

LinkedIn Profile Development & Engagement (Step 6). LinkedIn is the center of your job search universe. Whether it is personal branding, networking, research, recruiting, or interview preparation, it all starts with LinkedIn. Like any cloud-based software platform today, you must learn how to use the platform to your best competitive advantage.

❖ **Chapter 10: Networking and Never Searching Alone**

Job Search Network Funnel Development (Step 7). How vast is your network, and how strong are your networking skills? 85% of all jobs are filled through networking and referrals. A targeted and engaged professional network is one of the most critical elements of a successful job search. Focus on the strategies and techniques required to build an effective job search professional network.

❖ **Chapter 11: A Cup of Coffee and Your Next Job**

Exploratory Meetings & Network Maintenance (Step 8). Exploratory meetings are not interviews, and you will see that it's a lot more than just a cup of coffee. Learning to master and execute the exploratory meeting is essential to building an effective professional network for your job search. The world is full of fascinating people. Learn how to meet them, learn from them, add them to your professional network, and successfully maintain a functioning network.

❖ **Chapter 12: Preparation and Practice Make Perfect**

Interview Preparation (Step 9). In life, preparation and practice lead to perfection. Winning the job interview is no exception to this rule. Start by reviewing the primary types of interviews you are likely to experience in your job search. Study the fundamental strategies to employ for winning each job interview. Each interview is a sales call with you as the product. You will not land your next job until you understand how to sell yourself in each interview effectively.

❖ **Chapter 13: Screen Door Interviews and the Job Search**

The Screening Interview (Step 10). Phone, video, AI-assisted, or in-person screening interviews come in all shapes and sizes, but the objective is the same. Also referred to as a recruiter interview, this first interview represents the door you must pass through to get to the ultimate buyer in this selling process, the hiring manager. With focused research, preparation, practice, and specific interview techniques, you can put your best self on display and advance to the next round in the hiring process.

❖ **Chapter 14: Win the Interview and Get the Offer**

The Hiring Manager Interview (Step 11). Also referred to as the decision-maker interview, this final interview is your chance at the plate. It is your opportunity to step up and swing for the fences and demonstrate why you are the best candidate for the open position. Dive deep into the best

practices, step-by-step instructions, templates, exercises, and resources to win this final interview and land the job.

❖ **Chapter 15: You Got the Job Offer! Now What?**

Job Offer Evaluation & 1st 90 Days (Step 12). The offer letter is the goal but not the finish line. Study the job offer process details, how to evaluate and compare offers, and how to accept an offer. Learn how to prepare for your first day in the new position and maximize success in your first 90 days on the job. With the best job offer possible in your hands, you can then accelerate your transition into the new position.

❖ **Chapter 16: Beyond the Next Job**

Beyond successfully executing the job search process and securing that next job offer, what truly matters in your career? When you are at the beginning of your career path or deep in the fight, you have one set of priorities. At the end of a career, you can look back and see if those were the right priorities and what do you get to keep when you merge off the fast highway and onto a slow country lane. This final chapter discusses five career priorities with which we all can identify. Money, Title, Recognition, Knowledge, and Relationships.

❖ **Appendix**

This section summarizes the step-by-step instructions you should follow to move through the AdvantEdge job search process covered in this book. The appendix also includes direct links to the required content, resources, and tools within this book.

❖ **Index**

This section provides a hierarchical list of all the AdvantEdge process resources and tools included in this book, with direct links to each asset in the cloud repositories.

A successful job search requires planning, research, practice, and preparation. To win your next job, you have to believe in yourself, take the first step, and then eleven more. It is time to get started on the path to that job offer!

Chapter 1

Lottery Tickets and Your Job Search

*"I'm a great believer in luck, and I find the harder
I work, the more I have of it." - Thomas Jefferson*

I do not purchase lottery tickets regularly. If the weekly prize reaches stratospheric levels, I may venture to the convenience store and buy a ticket. The local news station features a story on what you could do with your after-tax winnings, and I rationalize my purchase thinking that you cannot win if you don't play. But I have absolutely no expectation of winning the prize.

I understand the odds are not in my favor, and the only return on my \$2 investment is the fun thinking about what I would do if magically I were to defy the odds and win the drawing. For me, the risk and reward tradeoffs are reasonably balanced. Despite the inevitable result, I can still meet my financial obligations, and the river of my life continues to flow down its usual course.

However, in my career coaching practice, I talk with many clients for whom the risk and reward tradeoff has far more severe consequences. I am not referring to participation in the Powerball lottery but rather the job search lottery. Each client approaches the job search process with a unique set of circumstances.

Some clients are considering leaping from one job to the next to advance up the career ladder. Other individuals may have lost their job recently after working for the same company for 10, 20, or even 30 years. And recent college graduates are searching for that first professional position post-graduation. Regardless of the circumstances, each of these clients shares a common financial risk. The wrong job choice or a prolonged period of unemployment will negatively impact future earnings potential, retirement savings, or the ability to service student loan debt.

Setting Expectations for the Job Search Process

Make no mistake. The job search process is difficult work. Finding your next job can be a full-time job all by itself. Do not assume that luck is your key competitive advantage.

In the late 1840s, the Gold Rush brought many people to California with dreams of easy money and striking it rich with little to no hard work. It turned out that panning for gold in the hills of Northern California was difficult and even hazardous work. Success was not guaranteed, and luck played a significant role in the fortunes of the participants. Flash forward to today, and I recently

saw an advertisement in my Facebook feed for a job search service that promised results in only two weeks. The tagline on the ad said, “Land a job at Google or Uber in only 14 Days.” I thought to myself that this two-week result is improbable and sets an unrealistic expectation for most job seekers. The myth and the lure of the California Gold Rush live to see another day.

Just look at this job search website proposition from the hiring company’s perspective. I know from two decades of corporate work in roles as a hiring manager, I could never fill a position in only two weeks. It would take me at least 30 days to get my job posting approved by the Human Resources department. Then another two to four weeks for candidate interviews to start appearing on my work calendar. Add on an additional four to six weeks to complete multiple rounds of interviews. Finally, another two to three weeks to generate an offer letter and present it to the final candidate for review and acceptance. Simple math from the hiring organization's perspective tells you that it can take a minimum of three months to fill an open position.

As the job seeker, you need to set realistic expectations for the level of effort you will need to invest in your job search and understand the length of time it will take to complete the process and secure your next position. If you believe you can find your next job only by investing five hours per week in the search process, you will likely be disappointed in the results. If you believe you can find your next job in only two to four weeks of searching, there is a high probability you will become frustrated, depressed and may even consider giving up on the search.

As you begin your job search, you need to budget the proper investment of time and effort in the job search process. If you are currently employed and looking for a new position simultaneously, you should invest at least 10 hours extra per week in your job search process. If you are unemployed, a recent college graduate, or attempting to return to the workforce after a long absence, you should plan to invest a minimum of 25 to 30 hours per week in a successful job search process.

Even with strong economic conditions and low unemployment rates, you should plan out an extended timeline for your job search to reach a successful outcome. Of course, the length of that timeline will vary based on which job seeker category most closely matches your current situation. On average, as you plot out your job search timeline:

- ❖ Mid-career professionals (currently employed) can expect a 3 to 4-month search.
- ❖ Recent college graduates should plan for a 7 to 9-month search.
- ❖ Over 50-year-old professionals should plan for the search to extend to 12 months or longer.
- ❖ After an extended multi-year absence, professionals returning to the workforce should plan for a search that can reach and exceed 18 months or longer.

Job Search Technology and the Lottery

The expression “both a blessing and a curse” is defined to mean something that is both a benefit and a burden, or that may seem initially beneficial but also brings unforeseen negative consequences. Today’s job search technology meets that definition. Job search technology and solutions are both a blessing and a curse for today’s job seekers.

A 2020 report by market research firm IBISWorld estimated that the online recruitment sites industry is growing at greater than 8% per year and will eclipse \$10 billion in revenue in 2020. There is a reason that we see an advertisement for Indeed on cable television every fifteen minutes. They can afford to advertise. It is a large and highly profitable business. As consumers, we live on the internet and our mobile phones every minute of the day. It is only logical that our job search process would follow this technology to the internet and our phones.

The prevalence of job boards such as LinkedIn, Indeed, and Monster are a blessing to job seekers because they significantly expedite the process of searching for and applying to an open position. What used to take weeks of searching and submitting your resume and application for a single opening can now be completed in five minutes or less. Powerful search engines enable us to filter our search opportunities by job title, geographic location, income potential, experience level, and company. Upload your resume once and then use any number of quick apply features to apply for a position instantly. The application of technology to both broaden and refine your job search at the same time is most certainly a blessing. Leveraging that same technology to shorten the application process from weeks to minutes must also be good.

However, too much of a good thing can also be a curse. That is where the law of unintended consequences comes into play. Spend all your time on these job boards, and you quickly start to believe that they represent the universe of all available jobs. The truth is that they are more like the Milky Way galaxy than the entire universe. Like a horse with blinders on, when your job search process establishes permanent residence on the job boards, you lose a line of sight to a large percentage of open opportunities.

There is an often-cited statistic from the US Department of Labor that 80% of all jobs filled in the United States each year are never advertised. That figure represents salaried and hourly positions, so the data is likely high for our focus here on just professional salaried positions. But that figure is more than directionally correct. For example, in my last corporate assignment, I filled at least ten open positions over four years. Not a single one of those positions was ever advertised on the online job sites. Each successful candidate for the position was identified and sourced through a standard networking and referral process.

Human nature is like water flowing downstream. If available, we tend to take the path of least resistance. It is far easier to sit behind a keyboard and submit job applications online all day than to build a job search plan. It takes additional time and effort to research your targets, contact strangers, get out in the community, build a professional network and get referrals for the jobs you want. The easiest path, however, is not always the most productive path. In the sales profession, the most successful sales reps understand that time is a precious resource. They plan each week,

understanding exactly where and how they will spend their selling time each day. When it comes to your job search, you also need to think like a sales rep and consider time to be one of your most valuable assets. Specifically, plan where and how you will invest the time you have each day for your job search.

Let's look at that path of least resistance and see what the probability is for a positive return on the investment of your available job search time. On average, every online job posting receives more than 250 applications. Of those 250 applications, 220 of the submissions are never even seen by a human. The applications are eliminated automatically by applicant tracking software programmed to filter on a specific set of position criteria. The remaining 30 applications or resumes are reviewed by a recruiter or human resources professional for on average 6 to 10 seconds per resume. Now it starts to get interesting because a fortunate ten candidates then get contacted (by phone, video, or in-person) for a screening interview. Only the strong (and best prepared) survive, and maybe three candidates pass the screen to advance for second or final round interviews. And, of course, only one applicant gets the job offer.

Consider those statistics for a moment. Only 30 of 250 resumes get viewed (12%). Only 10 of 250 candidates get invited for a first-round interview (4%). And only three candidates out of 250 make it to the final round (1%). Your odds of buying a winning scratch-off ticket in the state lottery (8% for a \$10 winning ticket in New York) are better than getting an interview through the online job posting process.

What if, instead, you took the more difficult path and used networking to find your next job? According to data from LinkedIn, the number one method that job seekers utilize to discover a new job is through a referral. An analysis of LinkedIn recruiter data shows that companies expanded the candidate pool for open positions 10x by recruiting directly through their own employees' professional networks. The data does not lie. Create a proactive job search plan, take an inventory of your talents, build a brand around those talents, and develop a professional network. Your odds of winning the job search process will increase exponentially over a passive online job board search strategy.

Imagine for a moment that you like to fish, and you have your choice of where you want to spend your time fishing today. Do you want to spend all your time passively fishing in the little pond where only 20% of the fish live (the online job boards)? Or do you want to take your boat and spend your time in the big and well-stocked lake where 80% of the fish are swimming and actively searching for your hook (the job search referral network)? The answer is clear. Build your job search network and go to the lake!

Align Your Job Search to the Buyer

If a job search is a sales process, then the buyer in that process is the hiring organization or, more specifically, the hiring manager. A critical step in any sales process is to align your selling approach with the customer's buying process. Be sure that your product or solution is available

where and when the buyer is doing research. Make certain that your value proposition is clearly articulated and presented to the buyer. And make it as easy and efficient as possible for the buyer to make the purchase.

As an example, think about how the process of purchasing a car has changed in just the last ten years. If you are like me, you first spend hours on Edmunds or Kelley Blue Book researching the vehicle, reading reviews, and determining fair market value pricing for the car. Only then do you visit the dealership for a test drive and final negotiation and purchase of the vehicle. The days of physical visits to multiple dealerships, collecting brochures and business cards from auto sales reps, and long hours waiting for pricing are now distant memories.

Now let's think about the buyer in your job search process. What processes and procedures do companies and organizations use to fill their job openings? It costs a lot of money to hire recruiters, use job search sites and advertise for open positions. Remember that \$10B in sales companies like LinkedIn, Indeed, and Monster make every year? It is not just you paying those bills. The hiring organizations have budgeted financial resources to source candidates for their organization's personnel needs each year. The lower the annual recruiting spend, the more profit the company produces and the less risk the organization assumes in the hiring process.

Despite even the most sophisticated and well-planned sourcing process, by definition, the organization ends up taking a chance on an unknown commodity when they choose to source a new hire from outside the company. So, companies always start by trying to hire from within using internal candidates. If no internal candidates are available, they use referral programs and networking to find candidates known or recommended by current employees. And finally, as a last resort, they spend money and time using recruiters and online search services to expand the pool of potential candidates as needed to fill open positions.

But most job seekers spend virtually all their time searching for jobs using online job postings. That online search process is the exact opposite of where and how your buyer, the hiring manager, wants to purchase in the job search sales cycle. You need to flip your job search process 180 degrees on its head. You need to align your job search efforts to how organizations are most frequently sourcing candidates. That means you need to get referrals. And to be the one that gets referred, you first need to build an effective professional network.

Chapter 2

Sales Skills and Your Job Search

“I have never worked a day in my life without selling.

If I believe in something, I sell it, and I sell it hard.” - Estée Lauder

My father was a physician, but more importantly, he was a teacher and an academic. I was scared to tell him that after receiving an undergraduate degree from an Ivy League university, and then an MBA in Finance, I had voluntarily elected to pursue a career in sales. Would he think less of me and that I was settling for a vocation not worthy of consideration? Why not pursue a more reputable and established profession like Finance or even Marketing? If only I had taken a moment to reflect on my father’s upbringing and family history, I would have understood sooner.

My father grew up in a large but lower-income class family in Minneapolis in the early 1900s. He was the one child in a family of five siblings that they selected to go to college. His father was a traveling clothing salesman who spent long weeks on the road in the Upper Midwest selling his wares. My father’s older brother and his hero, Uncle Shy, also learned to sell anything not nailed down over his very own long and successful business career. Many years later, as I traveled the country for my career, I would stop in Minneapolis and have dinner with my sales mentor and my favorite Uncle Shy. Even though he was well into his eighth decade, over shared dinners at the Lincoln Delicatessen, he would regale me with pearls of sales wisdom and strategy from a life well-lived.

I should have given my father more credit. He came from and grew up with sales professionals full of character and business expertise. He understood that my new career direction in sales was an actual profession worthy of equal weight and respect to any other chosen career path.

Change Your View of Sales

What do you think of when you hear the word “sales” as in “She is a sales rep” or “He sells for a living.”? Does the image of a used car salesman with his hair all slicked back come to mind? Maybe you think of Vin Diesel and Ben Affleck in the classic sales movie *Boiler Room* or Alec Baldwin in *Glengarry Glen Ross* telling us that “coffee is for closers.” If you want to laugh, you imagine Chris Farley and David Spade in *Tommy Boy* traveling the Midwest attempting to sell auto parts in one bad sales call after the next. No matter the movie, it is not a positive image.

We have been conditioned most of our lives to view sales and the act of selling to be a sub-standard profession. Popular culture, literature, and even life experience have shaped how we react to the sales approach. If you don't believe me, go to any mattress store on a Saturday and just people watch. Observe the customers' body language as they react to the sales rep's initial approach and the typical "Can I help you" query. Whether it is a body turn, a head shake, or a quick "just looking" response, the reaction is always the same. We assume a defensive posture. It is a standard fight or flight response. Our brain is telling us that the sales rep wants to take from us something of value. Money, time, information, or even personal space.

I am not sure if this adverse reaction to selling is hard-wired into our genetic code. I may have missed the natural history class in high school where they talked about the Neanderthal caveman as a sales rep. But I am pretty sure that when Christopher Columbus discovered America, he was in the final stages of the world's most extended sales call. The act of selling, the sales profession, and sales reps have been around for a long time and will still be here after we are gone.

To win in the job search process, you need to change the way you view sales. Selling is not an all take and no give transaction. Selling is not lacking in integrity. Completing a sales cycle can be a balanced transaction where both the buyer and the seller believe they have gained uniformly in the process. We need to cast aside a lifetime of conditioning on how we view the act of selling. Perception does not equal reality in this case, which has significant implications for us in our job search process. The act of selling is essential to a successful job search.

Power Up Your Sales Skills

My first sales job was selling copying and printing services for Xerox Corporation in Dayton and Columbus, Ohio. Three months of intensive classroom training, and then they threw me out into the field with real customers. Those first few weeks, knocking on doors, I was petrified. I felt like I was starring in a reality television show called "The Stumbling, Bumbling, Mumbling Sales Rep." I was dressed professionally. Still, I felt naked and afraid with all my insecurities available for public viewing. New city, new home with a mortgage (10% 30-year fixed-rate!) and a new baby, so failure was not an option.

With time and practice came increased confidence and success. Over that first year in sales, with excellent mentors and managers to guide me, I started to understand and genuinely believe my refrain that selling is like breathing. We do both every day of our lives, and when we stop one or the other, this beautiful ride we are on is over. I came to realize that my early years of pushing positions, ideas, and proposals in meetings and classrooms were nothing short of sales. Selling copying and printing services to strangers was not that much different.

Most importantly, success came to me in ever-increasing frequency when I learned to move around to the other side of the desk or the table. Instead of talking "at" my customer, I learned to speak "with" my customer. Sales is about understanding your customer's pain point and how you can eliminate that pain and create a positive business or organizational outcome. If I first researched

and prepared for customer conversations and presentations, I could successfully close more business orders than I lost. Investing the time upfront in understanding the customer's challenges and then applying my solutions to eliminate the problem was the key to a balanced transaction. You may call it selling. I view it as a partnership.

When you are looking for your next job, you are selling the most important product in the world. Yourself. In a job search, your customer is the hiring manager for the position you are seeking. The pain point is the open position. There is a job to be done, and no one is doing the work right now. Revenue is lost, targets missed, and customer inquiries are going unfilled. You name the problem. No one is there to solve it. You can be the solution. Your task is to demonstrate to your customer, this hiring manager, how you, more than anyone else, can solve their problem and close the gap. You need to convince the hiring manager that the pain goes away if they offer you the position, and good things will follow.

I want you to start viewing your job search through this sales lens. Understand that finding your next job is the most important sale of your career.

Your Job Search is a Sales Funnel

We all have used a funnel at some point in our lives. Most likely, we used the funnel in the kitchen. Some of us may have used one at the age of 17 to add a gallon of gas to our car by the side of the road because we were confident that "E" on the gas gauge did not really mean empty. In either case, a funnel serves its purpose to efficiently guide its contents from the wide top through the narrow aperture at the bottom. Initially invented to work with liquid and physical materials, the funnel concept has expanded to encompass the management of data and the flow of information.

Sales reps think about their business in terms of a funnel. They need lots of prospects at the top of the funnel. Not every prospect will want to buy, so as potential customers move through the sales cycle, some drop out, the funnel narrows, and at the bottom of the funnel out will come the winning deals. It is a simple matter of mathematics, and you begin with the end in mind. For example:

- ❖ I need to sign 5 contracts to make 100% of my sales quota.
- ❖ I win 50% of the proposals I present, so I need to present 10 proposals.
- ❖ 25% of the prospects I meet will request a proposal, so I need to meet with 40 prospects.
- ❖ 10% of the prospects I contact will agree to a meeting, so I need to identify 400 prospects.

Assuming I have a quality product to sell and have practiced and refined my sales skills, success is a function of applying a disciplined sales process to my sales funnel. Fill the funnel at the top with potential prospects, work those prospects down through the bottom of the funnel, and ultimately collect the orders.

A successful job search can function in the same manner. It is a process-driven numbers game. One of the most critical steps in your job search process is to build a professional network. Think about that network in the same manner that the sales rep looks at the prospect funnel. Remember that we will learn to think like a sales rep, act like a sales rep, and in that manner find our next job.

Here is how your job search funnel will work when you base that search on the development of a professional network. Our end goal is one winning job offer. Let's start at the top of the funnel this time:

- ❖ You will need to identify somewhere between 300 to 450 potential network contacts for your job search network. These are not necessarily going to be your current connections. So, if you look now at your LinkedIn connection count and see that you have, for example, over 500 connections, do not sit back and relax. The 300 to 450 potential network contacts you need in the funnel must be directly connected to the industries, organizations, and positions you target in your job search.
- ❖ My rule of human nature is that a third to half of us are good and decent people open to helping and mentoring others. So, if you use effective networking techniques, you will succeed in connecting with 100 to 150 of your targets through exploratory meetings and informal conversations. That will put up to 150 contacts in your corner, on your team, and into your job search professional network. These professionals now know you, your value proposition and are looking to refer you for job opportunities.
- ❖ With an established network of over 100 targeted professionals that you continue to develop and nurture, you will secure approximately 7 to 10 job opportunities and subsequent interviews on average.
- ❖ With 7 to 10 interviews, you will secure your next job offer if you practice and refine your interviewing skills.

These numbers may seem large and intimidating. Four hundred fifty potential network contacts. 150 meetings. Ten interviews. The key is to break the numbers down into manageable quantities over an established time interval for your job search. Successful sales reps break their targets down into required activities by quarter, month, week, and day and then consistently apply their sales process to manage the funnel. You will learn to use the same level of structure and discipline in your job search, and the result will be your next great job.

Chapter 3

Get Personal with Your Job Search

*“The secret of concentration is the secret of self-discovery.
You reach inside yourself to discover your personal resources,
and what it takes to match them to the challenge.” - Arnold Palmer*

When I was a sales rep in Ohio, my office hosted a customer golf outing. It was a best-ball tournament. Each sales rep hosted three of their customers as a foursome in the tournament. Five hours of golf, food, beverages, and the opportunity to bond and strengthen relationships and our partnership. I hosted three executives from a large multinational automotive manufacturer. After the round, as we walked off the 18th green, one of the executives said to me, *“Dan, you must be one of your company’s best sales reps and hardest workers because you sure don’t play a lot of golf.”* No more accurate a statement was ever spoken.

I was, and am to this day, a terrible golfer. My most significant contribution to the game is that I own a set of golf clubs. But on that day, on that golf course, I knew exactly what I was, and that was an excellent sales rep. I knew that it was acceptable to put my personality on full display. I knew when to keep the conversation light and when to inject my understanding of the customer’s business and current challenges. And I knew that humility and self-deprecating humor are underappreciated sales qualities and also two of my superpowers. My golf game may have been terrible that day, but the selling was strong. I got personal, and the contracts and orders that followed made my year.

To win the job search, you must know yourself better than anyone else does. You need to understand your strengths, your weaknesses, and your value proposition. You need to build a network that cares about you, the person, and your future career. And to land your next job, you need to master the art of personal selling. You need to be able to sell yourself and win every interview.

Like many things in our lives, a successful job search strategy requires a process, discipline, and a dedicated focus. I developed the AdvantEdge process on bedrock foundational principles of winning sales strategies. You need to approach your job search as a systematic progression of four key phases that cover the twelve steps in the process. It all begins with the Plan and Research phase. From there, things get personal with the remaining three phases of Personal Branding, Personal Networking, and finally, Personal Selling.

Personal Branding

What is a Personal Brand? The phrase “personal brand” first appeared in 1997 in an issue of Fast Company Magazine. The author was Tom Peters, a well-known management consultant famous for his book *In Search of Excellence*. He said, “*We are CEOs of our own company: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You.*” Now that is a company that I want to work for because it is going places!

I would like you to consider your personal brand as the image and the message you present online and in-person to your network contacts and potential employers. Your brand makes you different and unique and enables you to stand out from other job seekers with a compelling value proposition for a future employer. Your personal brand, if developed correctly, is one asset that will give you a competitive advantage in the job search process.

Brands are not a laundry list of features and specifications. The best and most recognizable brands in the world tell a story and use that narrative to create a lasting and emotional connection with you, the buyer. If you build your brand correctly and with an authentic voice, your customers will not forget you. Think about the Nike brand for a moment. I cannot remember a single Nike advertisement selling me on the specifications of their athletic shoes. But in five seconds, I can tell you the story of [Justin Gallegos](#), a runner and the first athlete ever with cerebral palsy to sign a professional contract with Nike. That is a story that connects with me and one that I will never forget.

In our job search, I am not saying that we will be able to develop a personal brand on par with Nike. I will settle for a minimum level of emotional connection and memorability. For 30 years, my brand was “*Sales Executive. If you have a quota to make and a deal to close, then I am your guy. The hunter and the closer.*” Now, many years later, my brand is “*The Job Search Mechanic. I can’t repair a car to save my life. But when it comes to your job search, I can diagnose the problems and get you running smoothly on the way to landing your next job.*” Thirty-plus years of sales, marketing, and job search expertise. If you need to find that next job, then I am your guy. If you want job search advice served up with a helping of humility and pop culture references, you might remember me. You purchased this book, so that is a start.

If I asked you today, what is your personal brand, how would you answer the question? It takes work to define and message your brand. There are four primary tools in the AdvantEdge process that you will leverage to articulate and communicate the brand to your network and hiring organizations:

- ❖ Your Elevator Speech
- ❖ Your Resume
- ❖ Your Cover Letter
- ❖ Your LinkedIn Profile

Each of these four assets will help tell the story of who you are and why you matter across multiple communications channels. Online, in print, and face to face, we will use these tools to consistently present the most compelling and memorable impression of your brand in the search for your next job.

Personal Networking

Once you have defined your brand and have the necessary tools to support it in person and online, you will be prepared to share that brand and story with your professional network. The third phase of your job search process is Personal Networking. Remember that networking and a primary output of networks, referrals, are the most important source of qualified candidates for professional job openings each year.

Think of the professional network as your very own public relations firm. When we were young, our worldview was home-bound. Our network was parents, extended family, and friends. As we ventured out into school, community, and career, the breadth and scope of that network naturally expanded to include professors, coworkers, and even mentors. These are your first-degree network connections or what I call your Easy Network. The word “easy” does not diminish the value of these connections. Instead, it means that these connections came to you naturally, typically through your daily life experiences.

To find your next position, you need to build a new network that I call your job search network. This specific job search network will be laser-focused on the industries, groups, organizations, career path, and position titles you are targeting for your next job. For sure, a subset of your Easy Network will be included in this new job search network. But I could also call this new network the Hard Network. Not hard as in mean or angry. Hard as in hard work.

To build this new job search network, you will need to reach out and connect with strangers. You do not have to go six degrees of separation from Kevin Bacon, but you will need to build your new network from second and third-degree connections. That work requires some heavy lifting:

- ❖ You will need to research and develop a database of potential network contacts. This database is the 300 to 450 targets that I referenced in Chapter 2.
- ❖ You will need to draft and perfect a phone and digital outreach strategy to approach and secure meetings with your new network contacts.
- ❖ You will need to learn to conduct quick and efficient exploratory networking meetings.

Building your professional job search network is only one step. Once established, you need to maintain and nurture the network. In my home, my office is the place that house plants come to wither and die. My interest in Okinawan karate drew me into the world of bonsai plants and trees. That was a miserable failure for me, but especially for the bonsai plants. I did not have the patience

required to feed and maintain each plant. But when it comes to my network, that is a different story.

With networking, I have a green thumb. I view my professional network as a living, breathing organism. I constantly maintain that network. It is a two-way street. I feed it daily, investing the time to help others in my network. I know that investment will be returned in kind when needed in the future. You can learn to be a sustainable farmer of your own professional job search network. With the proper development, care and feeding, it will return referrals to that next position you are seeking.

Personal Selling

With a personal brand and a robust professional network to communicate that brand in place, you are ready to begin the process of Personal Selling. The definition of Personal Selling in the twelve-step job search process is interviewing. The interview process is where you get to “sell” the most important product in your portfolio, specifically yourself.

Can you imagine a professional football coach failing to prepare his team for the following Sunday’s game? He stands up on Monday and tells the players, “*Guys. We have a game next Sunday. Be sure you are here by 1:00 PM with your uniforms on and ready to play. See you Sunday.*” No practice. No film review. No playbook preparation. That would never happen. But it occurs in the job search process every day. Candidates get called for an interview, and they show up and wing it. No preparation and no practice. The results are what you would expect. They lose the interview and any chance for a job offer.

Think and act like a sales rep. Keep telling yourself that expression at least once per day. Your job search is a sales cycle, and the interviews are sales calls. Multiple times over my sales career, I worked with sales reps that had the opportunity to present a \$100,000 or greater proposal in a sales call. We would work together for weeks in advance of that call, researching the customer, customizing the proposal, and preparing the presentation. Now see yourself receiving an invitation to interview for a position with a \$100,000 base salary. Average job tenure is approaching three years. Thinking like a sales rep, that interview represents a \$300,000 proposal. Are you just going to wing it and hope for the best?

Interviews today come in all shapes and sizes. Phone interviews, video interviews, face-to-face interviews, panel interviews, and even artificial intelligence (AI) assisted virtual interviews. With the AdvantEdge process, we focus on three critical areas for interview success:

- ❖ Basic interview skills and preparation to win in any interview situation.
- ❖ The Screening Interview to get through the front door and into the final candidate pool.
- ❖ The Hiring Manager Interview to win over the buyer and get the job offer.

In the interview process, fortune favors the prepared candidate. I worked many years for a CEO who always said that *“Hope is not a strategy.”* If you want to win the interview, research your buyer, and refine your pitch, stories, and answers to align with the target position. And practice like you have a big commission check riding on the outcome because you do!

Chapter 4

Twelve Steps to Your Next Job

“When you're in the day-to-day grind, it just seems like it's another step along the way. But I find joy in the actual process, the journey, the work.” - Cal Ripken Jr.

After our oldest son graduated from college, we helped him move to Washington D.C. for his first job post-graduation. With a limited budget, that first weekend included a mandatory trip to IKEA for inexpensive but functional furniture for his apartment. The word “functional” may have many definitions, but easy assembly is not a phrase that I would use in the same sentence with IKEA furniture. Fortunately, in the interest of family harmony, each piece of furniture came with a detailed set of assembly instructions. Those instructions were, in effect, a step-by-step process to follow to get to the finish line with a completed piece of furniture.

I do not believe that a Myers-Briggs personality type labeled “tool challenged” exists, but if there were such a characteristic, that would be me. The best tool in my toolbox is my checkbook. I am not a wing it and build it kind of person. I cannot imagine completing any complex task without a process that guides me from start to finish. Even my career in sales was driven and supported by a process. It started with six weeks of intensive offsite training where we learned the Xerox sales process. The SPIN sales process, imparted by Xerox, teaches you to ask your customer questions on Situation, Problem, Implication, and Need-Payoff as you move through the sales cycle. That process is so hard-wired into my brain that I use it to some degree even today, three decades later. Your job search is no different.

Resumes, cover letters, and interviews are not new to the job search. For example, the history of the resume dates to 1482. That year, Leonardo Da Vinci wrote a letter to the Duke of Milan to secure his backing and financial support. The letter detailed a profile of his skills, qualifications, and experience that would have value to this potential supporter. The employment cover letter can trace its origins back to 1956. The New York Times included a job posting for an industrial chemist requesting a resume and a cover letter to be submitted when applying for the position. And you can thank Thomas Edison for inventing more than just the lightbulb. Add the interview to his list of accomplishments. In the early 1920s, he developed a 146-question test for job applicants.

Today, on the internet, you can find many career-based websites with excellent content, tips, and tricks for all manner of job search tools. A couple of my favorite sites include [The Muse](#) and [The Balance Careers](#). But a successful job search requires more than isolated tips and tricks from your favorite website. You need a set of “IKEA instructions” to build and execute your job search. You need a process that weaves all the job search tools together into a logical step-by-step methodology that leads you to your next job.

Before the Beginning. You Need to Know Yourself.

When you approach your job search like a sales rep, you understand that the product you are selling is yourself. To win in sales, you need to know and understand your product better than anyone else. Before you start your search process, you need to look yourself in the mirror and do an honest self-assessment. You need to understand your personality traits, sources for motivation, strengths, and weaknesses. Before starting the job search process, you should complete this self-assessment and use it as a checkpoint before every step. It can be challenging to answer questions about “you” if you do not first know yourself.

The first step in this job search self-assessment process is to get a solid reading on your specific personality type as it relates to a potential career. You do not need to spend a fortune or complete an entire series of therapy sessions to get a basic handle on your personality type. There are several free or inexpensive options on the internet that you can complete in a short time. With the AdvantEdge process, I assembled an essential list of some of these options for you to review.

❖ **AdvantEdge Job Search Asset: ACR01**

AC Resource 01_Online Career Search and Personality Tests

Personality tests are an excellent starting point for your self-assessment process. But the test results are not cast in stone and only serve as one data point or guidepost in your job search journey. To complete the self-assessment process, you also must answer some more complex questions. Understanding the destination for your job search (the target position) is the first step to take before you complete the self-assessment exercise.

Alignment is the operative word for this activity. Take the time to understand if your answers line up with what a hiring manager would be seeking in a candidate for your target position. If there is no or a limited amount of alignment, you should reconsider the target position or invest in additional skills training or activities to acquire the required experience.

As part of the AdvantEdge process, I developed an initial self-assessment worksheet designed to ascertain the alignment between your value proposition and your target position and career.

❖ **AdvantEdge Job Search Asset: ACT01**

AC Toolkit 01_Self-Assessment Worksheet (MS Word)

❖ **AdvantEdge Job Search Asset: ACT01A**

AC Toolkit 01_Self-Assessment Worksheet (Google Docs)

AdvantEdge Process Overview

To this point, we have referred to the job search process as a series of disparate phases and steps. It is important to view the AdvantEdge job search process in its entirety. It is a systematic and logical progression of twelve steps over the four phases of Plan and Research, Personal Branding, Personal Networking, and Personal Selling. The steps you take in each stage of the AdvantEdge process are logical building blocks for the work and activities you will complete in the subsequent phases of your job search. The AdvantEdge process is shown graphically below and then sequentially, from start to finish, in this [table](#).

AdvantEdge Job Search Process™



Beyond the Last Step

If you follow the AdvantEdge process, set realistic timeline expectations for your job search, and attack the search process like another job, you will be successful. The measure of success is landing your next position. With victory in your grasp, what do you do next? Dive into your new job and forget all the work you accomplished throughout your job search process?

A sales rep with a good product and rigorous application of an effective sales process will also be successful. More orders won than lost. Quotas and sales targets achieved and even exceeded. Large commission checks cashed. Awards received, and fun sales trips to tropical beaches on the horizon. But then the clock strikes midnight, and a new sales year begins. The quotas increase and your

performance reverts to zero all over again. The selling process never ends if you want to stay at the top and ahead of the competition.

Think like a sales rep and act like a sales rep. Your job search and your career are no different. The average job tenure in today's economy is less than three years. Whether it is planned advancement to a new position or unforeseen economic and employment circumstances, your job search clock will reset to zero sooner than you had planned. Better to have a fined-tuned AdvantEdge process in the garage and ready to go than to have to begin all over again.

Your personal brand needs constant maintenance and updates. You have a new position and new responsibilities. A new job means incremental opportunities to create additional stories and enhance your elevator pitch and all the associated branding materials. And you never stop learning, so you must continue to add new skills and certifications to keep pace with an ever-changing career landscape.

Your network is a living, breathing organism. Networking does not stop just because you have a new position. You need to continue to maintain your existing network with regular outreach to key contacts and always maintain focus on delivering as much value to that network as you receive in return. And with a new job comes the opportunity to expand your network both inside and outside your new organization. Be sure to carve out time in your weekly calendar for a continued focus on your networking activities. Keep the network alive and healthy, and it will be there for you the next time you need it.

Finally, never stop selling. Remember that selling is like breathing. We do both every day of our lives. Just because you have a new job does not mean that you stop breathing. And just because you have a new job does not mean that you stop selling. Keep your interview skills sharp. Your new organization acquired an excellent product from Me Incorporated. It is your job to keep the product up to date and continue to have the confidence to sell it at every opportunity.

Index

AdvantEdge Resources and Tools

Note: Links to resources and tools are not active in the Pathfinder Edition. For a nominal fee, you can purchase full access to the AdvantEdge Toolkit to complement your Pathfinder Edition of this book. View a detailed visual overview and explanation of all tools in the AdvantEdge Toolkit [here](#).

- ❖ Complete AdvantEdge Job Search Process Toolkit & Resources (MS Office & PDF File Formats located on Box Cloud Repository): ACBOX
- ❖ Complete AdvantEdge Job Search Process Toolkit & Resources (Google & PDF File Formats located on Google Drive Repository): ACGOOG
- ❖ Online Career Search and Personality Tests: ACR01
- ❖ Resume Content Example_Recent College Grad: ACR02
- ❖ Resume Content Example_Career Professional: ACR03
- ❖ Baseline Resume Customization Process: ACR04
- ❖ LinkedIn Profile Development Checklist: ACR05
- ❖ Job Search Funnel: ACR06
- ❖ Social Selling Network Development Process: ACR07
- ❖ Self-Assessment Worksheet (MS Word): ACT01
- ❖ Self-Assessment Worksheet (Google Docs): ACT01A
- ❖ Job Search Daily Scheduling Tool (MS Excel): ACT02
- ❖ Job Search Daily Scheduling Tool (Google Sheets): ACT02A
- ❖ Target Job Title Research Tool (MS Excel): ACT03
- ❖ Target Job Title Research Tool (Google Sheets): ACT03A
- ❖ Job Search Executive Summary Tool (MS Word): ACT04
- ❖ Job Search Executive Summary Tool (Google Docs): ACT04A
- ❖ Baseline Elevator Pitch Template (MS Word): ACT05
- ❖ Baseline Elevator Pitch Template (Google Docs): ACT05A
- ❖ Custom Elevator Pitch Template (MS Word): ACT06

- ❖ Custom Elevator Pitch Template (Google Docs): ACT06A
- ❖ Action and Success Verbs (MS Excel): ACT07
- ❖ Action and Success Verbs (Google Sheets): ACT07A
- ❖ Resume Template_Recent Grad (MS Word): ACT08
- ❖ Resume Template_Recent Grad (Google Docs): ACT08A
- ❖ Resume Template_Career Professional (MS Word): ACT09
- ❖ Resume Template_Career Professional (Google Docs): ACT09A
- ❖ Baseline Cover Letter Template (MS Word): ACT10
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- ❖ Network Contact Development Database (MS Excel): ACT11
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- ❖ STAR Story Template (MS Word): ACT15
- ❖ STAR Story Template (Google Docs): ACT15A
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- ❖ 90 Day Action Plan Template (MS Word): ACT17
- ❖ 90 Day Action Plan Template (Google Docs): ACT17A
- ❖ Job Offer Calculator (MS Excel): ACT18
- ❖ Job Offer Calculator (Google Sheets): ACT18A

About the Author



In his dreams, Dan Troup is a best-selling author. In reality, he is a happily retired sales executive who enjoys helping individuals successfully navigate the job search process. He is The Job Search Mechanic. Dan can't repair a car engine to save his life. But he can diagnose a stalled job search and get it running again smoothly on the way to landing a winning job offer.

For years, Dan's mother encouraged him to spend more time writing. At the tender age of 57, he finally listened to her suggestion. He now writes extensively about the mechanics of the job search process. In his first book, "*Selling You: The AdvantEdge Job Search Process*™," he delivers a complete guide with step-by-step instructions and tools to take your job search from "Where do I start" to "When can you start."

Leveraging his superpower of self-deprecating humor and an interest in music and movies, he has also published more than 75 articles covering job search strategies and careers on his AdvantEdge [blog](#) site. A lifelong friendship with his barber offers insight into ways to advance your job search. The Scarecrow and the Wizard of Oz hold tips to improve your resume. And a walk with his dog shines a light on how to find satisfaction in your work and career.

Throughout his writing, one lesson stands above all others. The job search is a sales cycle and securing that job offer is all about process and execution.

Dan holds a BA in Psychology from Cornell University and an MBA in Finance from the University of Rochester. He is a Certified Professional Career Coach and a member of the Professional Association of Resume Writers & Career Coaches. When not writing or coaching his clients, you will find him enjoying a quiet life on the lake with Susan, his wife of 35 plus years, and his dog, Rigby.

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Additional Job Search Services

❖ **AdvantEdge Toolkit**

The AdvantEdge Toolkit is an extensive cloud-based repository of job search tools, templates, exercises, and resources designed to help you accelerate your job search and land the job.

As a companion to the Pathfinder Edition, the toolkit is complete with 25 tools all available on Box (MS Office and PDF file formats) or Google Drive (Google and PDF file formats).

For pricing and to learn more, visit the AdvantEdge Careers website [here](#).

❖ **AdvantEdge Tune-Up**

Schedule a Job Search Consulting Session with AdvantEdge Careers. With an evaluation of your current job search process, strategy, and tools, we can collaboratively get your search running more efficiently on the way to landing your next job.

A one-hour session that includes: Job Search Plan Review; Resume Analysis; LinkedIn Profile Assessment; Networking Strategy Appraisal; Detailed Post-Session Report; Guidebook + Toolkit

For pricing and to learn more, visit the AdvantEdge Careers website [here](#).

❖ **Navigator Program**

The Navigator Job Search Coaching Program is a customized four-session process guiding you step by step through the AdvantEdge Job Search Process™.

The Navigator Program includes:

- Session 1: Action Plan and Elevator Pitch Development
- Session 2: Resume and Cover Letter Development & Optimization
- Session 3: LinkedIn Profile Development and Network Expansion
- Session 4: Interview Essentials and Job Offer Process

For pricing and to learn more, visit the AdvantEdge Careers website [here](#).