



KEYCARD

HOW TO
OPEN DOORS
and
GET THE JOB
YOU WANT

by MONICA K. BRANTE

KEYCARD – *How to open doors and get the job you want*

By Monica K. Brante

Published by the Brante AS, President Harbitz' gate 19B, Oslo, Norway

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Cover and layout by Katarzyna Gołąb

First edition May 2021

Paper back ISBN: 978-82-692452-0-2

Hard copy ISBN: 978-82-692452-3-3 E-book

ISBN: 978-82-692452-1-9

Audiobook ISBN: 978-82-692452-2-6

*I dedicate this book to my son,
Christopher, who challenges me to do more. Please
never stop holding yourself or others accountable!
This book is because of you.*

I love you, and I am immensely proud of you!

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Introduction

How great would it be to get up in the morning, eager to get to work?

Since you have picked up this book, you are probably about to make some changes in your career. Whether you are a full-time job seeker, looking for new, exciting job opportunities, or dreaming of new and better employment, this book is for you.

KEYCARD is a practical step-by-step job searcher playbook that provides all the tools necessary to meet your career aspirations and goals. I have shared all my best principles and strategies collected throughout my 30 year+ career to ensure you succeed in job hunting.

You will find research-verified techniques and advice for every stage in your job search. Whether you need a job immediately, want to transform your career, or double your salary, there is information in this book that may be critical to your success.

KEYCARD can be read from beginning to end or used as a handy reference tool throughout your job search process. I have included numerous tips, and some repetitions may occur where I think they may be helpful. However, I have tried to keep my writing to the point, my examples short, and the techniques in steps that are easy to follow.

Though this book will provide you with easy-to-use tactics on what to do if you need a job immediately, its mission is not to give you a quick fix. You will have to put in some time and effort to reap the long-term career benefits.

To those who had a rough exit from a previous employer or feel drained by the battle and defeated by the lack of support, I will quote Vanessa Williams: “Success is the sweetest revenge.” I have countless clients that are proud and living proofs of this quote coming true.

We all have fears and stepping out of our comfort zone can be challenging. Do not worry. I have designed this book to help you build confidence as you go. I will work on your self-image and help you believe in yourself so you can show up as the best version of yourself when you need to.

There is a job and maybe your self-esteem too to reclaim, so let us get started. Trust the process. I've got you, and you've got this!

Warm regards,
Monica K. Brante





SECTION 4

EMPLOYERS

8. *How companies hire*

This chapter is a must-read to be efficient in your job search and fully understand how employers fill their job openings. Using this information will save you time, effort, and frustrations. According to the Cademix Institute of Technology's staff (2020), the hidden, unannounced job market may contain *as much as 75% of the opportunities*. Headhunters' studies and other substantiated studies estimate 70–90% of job openings are filled without being advertised or listed. Here are the processes for filling positions in most companies. There are six action steps taken to fill roles:

- » Step 1. Seek to have the tasks handled by the existing staff to avoid recruitment. (Can anyone step up to fill the position?) The hiring manager will make do or call a temporary service agency to get immediate and quick relief in these cases.
- » Step 2. Seek internal referral candidates. (Can we promote or reassign anyone to fill this position inside the company or corporation?) HR and hiring managers look for eager, movable people inside the company to fill these positions.
- » Step 3. Seek referral candidates from open applications, referral programs and the immediate network by word of mouth. (Do we know someone suitable that can do this job?) Employers may choose from a pool of referred candidates and not go through a painful, time-demanding, and costly recruitment process. There are multiple examples of referred candidates receiving offers of employment without any competition.
- » Step 4. Seek candidates in professional networks, groups, or associations. (Does anyone we trust know someone suitable for the job?)

The employer encourages people inside and outside the industry to drop names or submit referrals.

- » Step 5. Develop a job description and purchase search or selection assignments using internal or external recruiters. (Please find someone who can fill this position). The assigned recruitment agency will find candidates from existing networks, active talent search, and consider referrals sent to the hiring managers. It may take two weeks or even a month before the applications get back to the hiring manager.
- » Step 6. Advertise and purchase selection assignments using external recruiters. (Please select the best candidate for this position). External recruiters will search for candidates or choose their candidates from applications and referral pools.

Companies go through one, some, or all six steps to hire people. The chances of getting hired decrease and competition increases as the process progresses. It is, therefore, in your best interest to get into the process as early as possible. Be aware that some hiring managers start interviewing referrals immediately and may fill the position before receiving application resumes.

9. Potential target employers

Going after unannounced jobs is worth your time. There is less competition in the unannounced job market, and the trick is not to wait for job postings to apply. In this context, you want to follow and proactively position yourself directly and indirectly to your target hiring managers and companies.

First, you need to look at where you want to work: What employers will welcome your credentials and provide the working environments and compensation you deserve? When choosing companies to target, it may be smart to pick future winners. There are often more job opportunities with these companies and having worked for them will look good on your resume.

Create a list of potential target companies. How many you need depends on the size and employee turnover of your selected companies. A good target list has usually about 10–50 organizations. Start with a list of 10 to

research and see if that gives you enough leads to keep you busy. Here is what to look for:

- » Organizations that you respect or feel a connection to due to their mission, culture, products, or services. You will find lists of the most admired companies online for inspirational use. To find great employers, you may also go to Great Place to Work, which keeps a list of the best companies to work for: <https://www.greatplacetowork.com/>. This organization has national websites and indexes where you can find good employers near you.
- » Subsidiaries and acquisitions of great organizations may also be smart to target. They might be merged in or branded to match

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the mother company at some point. Going through subsidiaries might also be a less obvious door into the best companies.

- » Growing organizations that hire because they are too busy to engage in long recruitment processes. Identify companies by googling for the fastest-growing companies in your area. Their surroundings often expand as well, and you might find opportunities with their suppliers, partners, distributors, or competitors. Ask around to find out what companies are doing well. Fortune also keeps a list of the 100 fastest-growing companies: <https://fortune.com/100-fastest-growing-companies/2020/>.
- » Businesses and organizations in your local community will give you a shorter commute and match your needs for an excellent work-balanced lifestyle.
- » You may also look for organizations offering openings in your line of work.

10. Researching a potential employer

*1 hour in planning may save you
10 hours in pre-projecting,
100 hours in implementations and
1000 hours in problem
correction.*

unknown

Research the companies on your potential target list that you may be interested in to learn about their culture and work–life balance. Doing the research will help you get more insight into whether you are a right fit for the organization and vice versa. Do not rely on company websites and advertisements alone. In the heat of competition for the best talent, some companies oversell their company’s culture and flexibility, employee career path planning, advancement, and learning opportunities.

You can evaluate your larger potential target companies at Glassdoor (<https://www.glassdoor.com>) by looking at employees’ ratings regarding career opportunities, compensation and benefits, work–life balance, senior management, culture and values, % that would recommend the company, business outlook, and CEO approval. There is an option to allow comparing companies with each other.

You may ask people you know who have experience with the company, either by working there or working closely with it. Investigate the company culture. Do they train their people? Do you like the CEO? By investing a little time getting to know a potential target company, you will find out if that employer deserves your attention, and may save yourself much work and precious time.

Make your investigative efforts guide you and enable you to compare the companies; take a few minutes to score the company from 1 to 10 (10 being the best score):

1. Mission and company brand: How clearly are the mission and brand communicated and how excited are you by the brand and mission of the company?
2. Match of values: What values does the company have and do the people working there live them? How do your values fit with those of the company? To get a sense, follow the company on social media to see how they market themselves to potential new talent. You may learn much about their culture by talking to people who work for or with the company. Ensure that the company never will make you go against your personal values or compromise your integrity.
3. Match of culture: Companies have personalities or cultures. A company can be extroverted or introverted, its focus can be on strategic issues or processes, it can be driven by values or financial results, or its work hours and work processes may be very structured or highly flexible. Does the overall culture appeal to you? Would you enjoy working in that kind of culture, or with the kind of people that such a culture attracts? If you are outgoing, you might not enjoy being in a more reserved culture and vice versa.
4. Personal development: Is this company ready to give you the professional and personal growth you believe you need to develop your career in the right direction? We become what we do and are influenced by our surroundings. Do you think the environment, your colleagues, and your new boss will help you grow?
5. Employee engagement and turnover: How much does the organization invest in employee engagement? What is employee turnover? What roles have the highest turnover, and do critical positions pop up consistently on a company's career site?
6. Employee health: Is the company committed to health, or do people working there have visual signs of unhealthy lifestyles and stress?
7. Work-life balance: How well does the company work with your personal preferences and your overall work-life balance? How supportive is the company about things that matter to you (flextime, home office, number of travelling days, commute time, insurance plans, family programs, and working hours)?
8. Ownership and leadership style: Who is in management, and what titles do they have? Who is on the board? What leadership does the company have overall, and does that appeal to you? Is the CEO respected, and

what management style does he cultivate? Is this the kind of leadership and management you thrive under, and that inspires you?

9. Management profiles: Research shows that the best-performing teams are diverse. The best CEOs incorporate executives of multiple cultures and ages, and of both genders in their executive team. Are there people like you in the top management positions? If you aspire and want leadership positions, you need to know what kind of people are getting promoted, if any. Are outsiders filling key positions? What kind of background do you need to get ahead? Do any of the leadership profiles look like yours? If not, a promotion may be hard to get.

Get an overview and ensure that you evaluate every item separately by creating a scorecard. Feel free to download your complimentary JOB SEARCHERS ACTIVITY TRACKER. Are there other things that are important to you as well? You may want to include additional elements and remove the ones that do not matter to you. Adjust the scores and parameters to suit your priorities.



Companies (scores 1–10) 10 being best	CoolCorp	Hip LLC	OldInc
Overall score	61	82	61
Mission and company brand	10	10	5
Match of values	6	9	8
Match of culture and people	7	8	5

10. Researching a potential employer 115

Companies (scores 1–10) 10 being best	CoolCorp	Hip LLC	OldInc
Overall score	61	82	61
Personal and career development	8	10	5
Employee engagement and turnover	5	10	10

Employee health	5	10	8
Work-life balance	5	6	10
Ownership and leadership style	7	10	5
Management profiles	8	9	5
Other parameters			

Companies to avoid

When choosing companies to target, there are companies to avoid. Unless you have an excellent reason to join, you may want to avoid spending time pursuing companies with the following traits:

Companies consistently hammered on glassdoor.com: All companies may get a poor review. However, if former employees always trash the company, you might reconsider joining it. Unless you are a company turn-around expert or want to become their new CEO, that is.

Companies having excessively high employee turnover: Some companies have a high turnover that lasts for years, either because they are terrible at recruitment or because they are not good at managing their new hires' expectations. Most people do not sign up for companies to exit quickly. If they do in numbers, it is a reliable sign that it is not the right place to work.

Companies without direction: Steer away from companies that do not communicate a clear direction or plan. When leadership fails to convey a clear vision, employees fail to understand long-term goals, making it difficult to prioritize. The absence of direction is a clear sign of a disaster waiting to happen, and it appears on the inside before it becomes public.

The top-heavy companies: Some organizations have too many executives. That often means too much leadership and too few employees executing tasks. Unless there is extensive use of freelancers and outsourcing services, working for these companies is exhausting. There are just too many initiatives and too many people focusing on non-operational issues, and promotions are hard to get.

Companies with weak cultures: It is hard to work in organizations with fragile cultures. Unless you are the next chief and have a top-leader

sponsorship, there is not much you can do about it. Take a pass and move on to new opportunities. There are better places to join.

Mature companies with a start-up culture: Avoid companies that are not committed to the health of their workforce and balanced lifestyles. In these environments, people compromise their health and relationships by working around the clock on or off company premises.

Companies that never promote from the inside and always recruit leaders from the outside. As Jim Collins found and published in his book *Good to great* (2001), companies that value experience and promote from within do better over time.

Companies without a commitment to training and to an employee development plan: You benefit from finding a company that leaves you better than when you joined.

Companies that do not promote your type: Look at the senior leadership group. Are there any executives who resemble you or could be an older version of you? Is there anyone on the executive board that does?

Family-owned companies: These businesses are often not run as professionally as non-family employees would like. There is a thin line between business and family issues that may be confused, and there tend to be family-only privileges for compensation, advancement, and other benefits that may seem unfair and cause conflict and tension.

11. Hiring managers

Although supported by HR, your hiring manager or executive is ultimately the one who makes the hiring decision and is the one you need to impress. Executives and managers are not created equal, and you benefit from adjusting your approach to catch their interest. There is often much to be gained by reading about education and experience in their LinkedIn profiles. Besides education and experience, I get much from looking at their recommendations. When it comes to identifying what they value, the recommendations they give may tell you more than the ones they receive.

To get attention and start meaningful relations that lead to job offers, you need to understand how personal preferences, goals, and culture affect hiring decisions. Different departments have different KPIs (key performance indicators). By looking into these, you will get one step closer to understanding what your hiring manager wants to achieve and how to contribute *to his or her success*.

Based on the following different departments' tendencies, I have given general guidelines to follow as precautions until you figure out your department's and leader's true nature. Note that this is general advice, and you will have to use your judgment as well:

- » Leadership
- » Operations
- » Finance and accounting Purchasing
- » Human resources (often abbreviated HR)
- » Sales
- » Communication and marketing
- » Research and development (often abbreviated R&D) These are the most common functions.

Leadership

The CEO will mold the organization's culture and power structure. Self-made owners tend to be very hands-on and might take the role of chairperson or CEO. Every day they build their fortune, and the sky's the limit. They will take more risks and make bold moves. Second- and third-generation owners and CEOs may or may not be as involved. Some have inherited the company and prefer to take a back seat and leave most management decisions to a professional chairperson who looks after their interests. Other owners look at their business as a stewardship for the future. They will be active in developing their company while avoiding risk. Since your salary comes out of their pockets, owning CEOs might bargain harder. Frugality is usually also appreciated. Other than these characteristics, self-made CEOs come in all types and are hard to define.

The formation of executive leadership groups leaves clues. Titles reveal how CEOs view and value their executives. Research the background and education to understand the mindset of a CEO. The primary discipline of the CEO might still drive or skew their interest and focus. One HR candidate interviewed with a high-tech company and assumed that the CEO would be an engineer. In her interview with the CEO, she spent most of her interview explaining the HR programs in detail. She argued that it was a critical function in the company for

which she was applying. Later, she found that the CEO had a master's in HR management.

The CEOs focus on contributing to the company's growth and the top and bottom lines in the short and long term. Unless it is a non-profit organization, they are interested in their overall total value, stocks, and company growth. They will want to know how you intend to maintain or increase such things.

To make it into the top management group, mere business management skills are not enough. CEOs are interested in people who will help them deliver strong results and support the company strategy and vision. They want loyal and above-average engaged people to be a part of their team. Ensure you understand what their goals are and refer to them in conversations and interviews. You will also need business savvy to make the business grow.

CEOs usually have gatekeepers, such as a personal assistant (PA), during office hours, so call after or before hours. Sometimes Twitter or LinkedIn may be the fastest and only way to get a direct connection. If networking, think offseason. CEOs may work during holidays and may be easier to reach outside the season. Ensure you talk to the right person. Some CEOs will concentrate on external activity and appoint a COO (chief operating officer) as a second in the command chain to handle internal operations.

Operations

Operations management (OM) manages the planning, organizing, coordinating, and controlling of all the resources needed to produce a company's goods and services. The COO supports the CEO by overseeing its day-to-day administrative and operational functions.

COOs may oversee top management and look for executives who think holistically about business. They prefer people who understand that all business functions need to work together to create a smooth operation and maximize profits. COOs identify and remove critical issues, and leverage initiatives that can give momentum. They develop the organizations and KPIs to support company goals, strategy, and mission. They understand that incentives drive people, and incentive plans must align KPIs throughout the organization to trigger wanted behaviors and collaboration.

They want executives who effortlessly can identify critical issues, while managing their responsibility areas. In the operation function project organization, COOs want people who see how things can be improved, and who can prioritize according to ROI (return on investment), and get things done. Candidates with analytical abilities and experience from multiple functions may have an advantage. Ideal candidates showcase excellent project management skills to get people to cooperate cross-function and take ownership to secure financial and operational gains. Successful COOs spot, fuel, and reward the best talent with the most complex projects and use their own people to optimize the company's productivity and impact.

These hiring managers may use cases to test the candidates' understanding of the separate business processes and the total value chain. The goal is to reduce costs, raise income, and improve the customer experience. That said, the typical COO may have little patience with nitty-gritty details unless tied to a bigger picture.

They may be interested in hearing quality business cases and unsolicited proposals from external sources to improve the business. Seeing opportunities and showing initiative are good ways to get these officers' attention. Referrals may help you get in the door, but make sure you are ready to highlight your achievements and initiatives.

Finance and accounting

Chief financial officers (CFOs), chief accounting officers (CAOs), and hiring managers in their departments tend to be introverted, pragmatic, logical thinkers, dedicated to perfecting established skill (King, 2014). They usually base their decisions on data, facts, and statistics. Accuracy and efficiency are essential in finance and accounting.

Do not call CFOs and CAOs. Since they tend to be structured and organized, they have usually planned their day and resent being interrupted by surprise calls and visits. As introverts, they also prefer SMS and email over calls. Both CFOs and CAOs tend to be turned off by drama, prominent personalities, and cover letters that are too personal, busy, warm, or hearty. If extremely introverted, they may even dismiss you from the recruitment process if you talk too much.

Responding to emails from external sources that are not related to their needed outcome may be judged as irrelevant. It comes at the end of their detailed to-do list, if not ignored altogether. Their focus will be on their duties, and they usually spend little time on social media. A LinkedIn message might not be read within the week or at all.

Being inventive or creative is not necessarily a plus in this department. These hiring managers are usually conventional, hierarchical, risk averse, and not prone to take orders or suggestions from anyone except their direct boss. To enhance your chances, ensure you know the methods and software programs the company uses. If necessary, take an online course to get on top.

To look for an opening in the accounting department, you may write an open application. To ensure answers to non-technical questions about the position, you may be wise to contact the HR department. Since recruitment is not the CFOs and CAOs primary domain, they may leave the job to HR.

CFOs and CAOs focus on their tasks and make their decisions based on experience. They are less prompt to do what others think they should do and prefer concrete facts to testimonial references. They dislike selfpraise and want to see documentation such as certifications of your skills and value grades more than likability. Ensure you have documentation and written letters of recommendations on request. They are prepared for meetings and resent people who are not.

Procurement

Procurement supports the company and operations by ensuring that the company gets the right supplies and services at the best prices and maintains sustainable relations with partners and suppliers to ensure future deliveries.

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The procurement function used to be about cutting costs and ensuring supplies and deliveries at the right time at the right quality. It is a new world, and consumers demand that companies have full transparency, visibility, and accountability for their deliveries to the market. In recent years, procurement has become a more value-added process in adopting so-called strategic sourcing to meet environmental demands.

In many countries, procurement has become a part of public concern and an intrinsic component in a company's brand-building. Consequently, this function is becoming more holistic and proactive in its approach and recruits strategic people who see the total picture and take more initiative. Having experience from other functions and a firm understanding of the entire value chain is favorable.

As Thor Solberg, seasoned procurement specialist, puts it: "Big companies often have a supply chain function that consists of material

planning, procurement, and warehouse.” Within procurement, there are different ways of organizing it. One way is to split the function into sourcing and supply. Another way is to have either project-based buying or category-based buying.

If searching for a leading position within procurement or supply chain in a more prominent company, you should have some knowledge and experience from different ways of organizing the function. This function appreciates candidates who have documented experience and can showcase through examples the ability to learn from mistakes.

Procurement officers tend to be good communicators, pragmatic, logical thinkers, and more analytical than people-oriented. They usually want facts, figures, and statistics but may be persuaded by good references or testimonials. To assess your knowledge and overall problem-solving skills, they may give you a relevant case.

Showcasing superior negotiation skills and excellent communication abilities are a plus in this department. You will gain an advantage by documenting why you deserve a high salary without pricing yourself out of the position.

Human Resources (HR)

When the HR department is looking to hire, your personality, motivation, values, and drive count more than your credentials and GPA (grade point average). The chief human resources officers (CHROs) need people equipped to infuse the company mission, strategy, culture, and values into the workforce to succeed.

CHROs usually prefer focusing on what is to come and often have a gift for understanding how occurrences, programs, or incidents will play out. They love ideas, talking about development in abstract terms and appreciate people who are able to stay on the page with them. CHROs and their people are also talented at picking up other people’s emotions. They look for people with engagement, excellent people skills, and the ability to feel the organization’s ongoing vibes. Candidates also need to be robust and emotionally secure people who can assist in conflicts, layoff processes, and unpleasant incidents. Though most HR hiring managers are people-

oriented, they may come across as harsh when meeting people with noncompatible values.

HR will hire for attitude and train for skill. When pursuing HR opportunities (except the CHRO role), it is all about getting a foot in the door and getting in front of the hiring manager. This department prefers getting referrals, and people having connections will get interviews. The one that connects the best with the hiring manager *and* team will land the job.

Be prepared to share (not too) personal stories and allow the interviewers to get to know you. You may get a mountain of behavior questions linked to your behaviors around people incidents and HR tasks. To see how well you align with current HR strategies, they might ask you hypothetical questions tied to the company's future development. Some CHROs are more strategic than hands-on, appreciating project management skills when rolling out company initiatives and programs. You may earn points for track records showing ability to see things through.

Be aware of what you say when chatting informally outside the typical interview format. Hiring managers may probe your ability to be discrete and keep sensitive information to yourself.

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Sales

Salespeople come from all walks of life. This profession is about your personality, personal brand, and ability to close. There is little formal education that certifies you for this profession, although some schools have introduced sales programs. Most salespeople regard selling as if it were driving: To become skilled, you need to perform. Passing the theory will not make you an excellent driver, nor give you sufficient sales skills.

It is not only about how you relate to the contact people, understanding their issues, and what the client needs to accomplish. Salespeople tend to have formal training which matches that of their potential clients. Nurses in purchasing may prefer talking to former nurses, engineers like discussing things with sales engineers.

CSO (chief sales officer), sales directors, and managers rely heavily on referrals when recruiting salespeople. They will take tips from anyone in

their personal and professional network to find new talent, so engage all your relations to set up an interview or call for you. They need interaction to evaluate you. Avoid sending lengthy introductory emails! If you cannot get a referral, use your sales skills to get a meeting.

Sales hiring managers are confident and can be quite direct and intimidating, so rehearse your USPs (unique selling points) for why they should hire you. Nothing qualifies you more than excellent sales results to a relevant customer network over time. These hiring managers know the value of relations and strive to connect with you if judged capable.

Employers will want to let you sell your skills in several interview settings to “test drive” your sales skills. Therefore, you may go through a more extensive interview process, and you might be required to hold a sales presentation.

To be considered for a position in the sales department, you benefit from showing initiative and not taking no for an answer – in a charming and customer-friendly way. You will find more ideas on how to get in the door in the next chapter.

Note: Ensure you are receptive and not defensive about feedback. It may be a test to see if you are coachable. You may have to do the sales pitch again, and the interviewers will judge you on improvements.

Marketing and communications

The marketing and communication department develops, positions, and owns the brand and communication strategies. This department consists of high-performance individuals with excellent communication skills working collaboratively cross-department, cross-function, and across organizations to produce PR, campaigns, and content in all formats and events. Everything must tie together and support the business strategy.

The chief marketing officers (CMOs) are usually value-oriented and want to get an exact feel of who you are. You need to be motivated by the company mission and have a passion for the company brands. CMOs look for intelligent, intuitive people with strong analytical abilities, solid values, and commercial and technical savviness.

The marketing departments have become the most technical and analytical departments, continually adapting to new platforms, marketing tools, and ever-changing online algorithms.

These departments are more hands-on, outsourcing less than before as tools are becoming more user-friendly. To thrive, you need to be an avid proactive self-learner making a conscious effort to stay updated and ahead. Journalist-level writing skills, video editing and production skills, and a sharp eye for graphics and text are appreciated or required, depending on the position. The ability to collaborate with internal and external resources, ensuring alignment to strategy and accurate delivery, is a must. To land a marketing or communication position, it also helps to be curious, flexible, and a high-quality media producer with an excellent command of all aspects of social media.

Prepare for interviews by going through the company history, strategy, storytelling, and target markets, and engage with their customers. Study

the company's overall communication cross-platforms to understand the positioning, branding, and communication strategies. You need to understand the brand and show how you translate the feel of the brand to target audiences on different platforms.

Your expertise, analytical abilities and practical, hands-on skills may be tested. A recruitment process will usually include a practical business case to assess analytical, functional, or technical skills, depending on the job position. Recruiters will also look at your social media presence for examples of your work.

Research and development (R&D)

Chief technology officer (CTO), chief digital officer (CDO), chief business development officer (CBDO/CBO) are all titles for the executive managing the organization's business development and research and development (R&D). Sometimes "business development" is a fancy term for sales. In this section, I am using it as a term for developing products or services inside the company.

The CDOs have problems with people being too technical and not understanding basic marketing. They need people who understand the market conditions and how to make a value proposition. What problem will this invention solve? Is it marketable, and how big is the market? When will the market mature and accept this product or service?

As Marianne Lefdal, a former business development executive in hightech puts it: “Many companies have brilliant technical people who have limited insight of what the market wants or needs, which is a challenge. Business development requires good insight into the fundamentals of analysis, marketing, positioning, and competitor overview. Also, you will need to know the meaning of the word “no”. People come to you with ideas. Some may make it to the next level or the next decision gate: some should be dropped before spending money. Using good insight, analysis, and a balanced judgment are skills that are required (or the ability to fail fast and move on).”

How these departments find people differs. A PhD from a reputed college, published research, and granted patents may all be prerequisites to get into the better high-tech companies. Relevant research and a business case can get you in the door. Find positive, non-annoying ways of engaging with the department. However, some companies have discovered that not all great talent has education and therefore do tests or offer problem-solving as ways to qualify for interviews.

Rocket science is R&D, but not all R&D is high-tech rocket science. There is an array of service-oriented companies that require high EQ and totally different skills, where expertise in M&A (mergers and acquisitions), or design thinking and sprint process expertise may be of value. Business development is all about helping the company adapt to market conditions and being ready to take on new growth opportunities, either by organic growth or by M&A. In any case, you need to be creative and analytical in developing the organization or the kind of products or services the company needs.

It also helps to understand the brand, the strategy, and the market. Ensure that you take at least one course in marketing.

12. Recruitment contacts

Hiring managers involve others in the hiring process. Knowing your interviewers may help you understand what kind of people you will meet and help you connect with them. Look up the interviewers on LinkedIn and social media. Calling mutual connections could give you valuable insights. Who are they, and what kind of backgrounds do they have? Do you have anything in common with them? Did you go to the same school, do you share a hobby or know the same people? What can you appreciate, like and respect about them, and how can you best connect with them?

HR business partners and talent acquisition specialists

The HR business partners, and talent acquisition specialists support the hiring managers in the recruitment process and are considered the people specialists. They are measured on employee engagement and assess your motivation, soft skills, and overall cultural match.

They will ask you behavioral questions to determine how you collaborate with the rest of the company. They will probe to see if you have the right values and might want examples of situations that showcase how you live your values (use the START method). HR also oversees the compensations of the entire company. In larger organizations, titles are usually tied to a given salary band.

Specialists

Your potential manager may be or involve a specialist. This person will assess if you have the necessary skills to work with them. Specialists are often there to evaluate your expertise or technical skillsets. They will also assess or determine if your personality is compatible with teams inside or outside the organization. It helps if you are skilled as well as likable.

Getting along with and gaining respect from specialists are a must. Be sensitive to their position in the company. They are usually listened to and will have the right to veto. You need to connect well: If you're good at what you do, they might feel threatened by your competencies if there is no connection. If the connection is great, they think of you as a resource that will make them better.

Your potential new team

A hiring manager may want to include the team when assessing your cultural fit and ability to collaborate with potential team members. Often, team members are sensitive to attitudes and to the minor details that a hiring manager may miss: Are you there to selfishly exploit the organization's opportunities, or will you contribute with your networks, special skills, and insights? How will you be greeted as a colleague, what role will you play in the team and do you like that role?

A team-setting interview may also give you insights and help you understand more about the company culture and figure out what it takes to thrive in the company. In these situations, it is more important to be interested in your team rather than trying to impress your future co-workers. In addition to making you more likable, this will also help you assess what they can teach you and if you will enjoy hanging out with them in the foreseeable future.

Managers from other departments may join the conversation to ensure that you are a good fit and can contribute to good teamwork. They are mostly looking at your attitude towards collaboration and service.

Some companies will have people involved in recruiting their own replacement. It may make your life easy or hard, depending on their personality, position, and ego. Some want to leave a legacy and want to help their soon-to-be former employer. Others might have a chip on their shoulder. Stay humble. If people are ambiguous, do not be afraid to ask if they have what they need in more detail.

13. The recruitment process

Before we dive into what strategies to use to get in front of a hiring manager, we need to look at how the recruitment process works. Recruitment processes vary and while one process may include one interview with an offer over the table, other processes may include as many as twelve interviews with thorough credit, drug, and reference checks and CV verification.

Usually, the formal process goes something like this:

1. Searching for candidates with a suitable profile (usually on LinkedIn) or selecting from received applications. This is the so-called first cut.
2. Setting up an initial list of candidates worth contacting.
3. Call screening candidates verifying interest, intensity of search, notice period, salary expectation, and qualifications. This is the second cut.
4. Formal Interview. Getting to know you: evaluating cultural fit, personality, and experience. Meeting with recruitment specialists who subsequently decide who make the third cut.
5. Performing relevant assessments, usually ability and personality tests and readback.
6. The final candidates are presented to the hiring manager. This introduction may include a case or technical interview.
7. Final selection followed by drug, credit, and reference checks to qualify a hiring decision.
8. Offer, negotiations, and signing.