

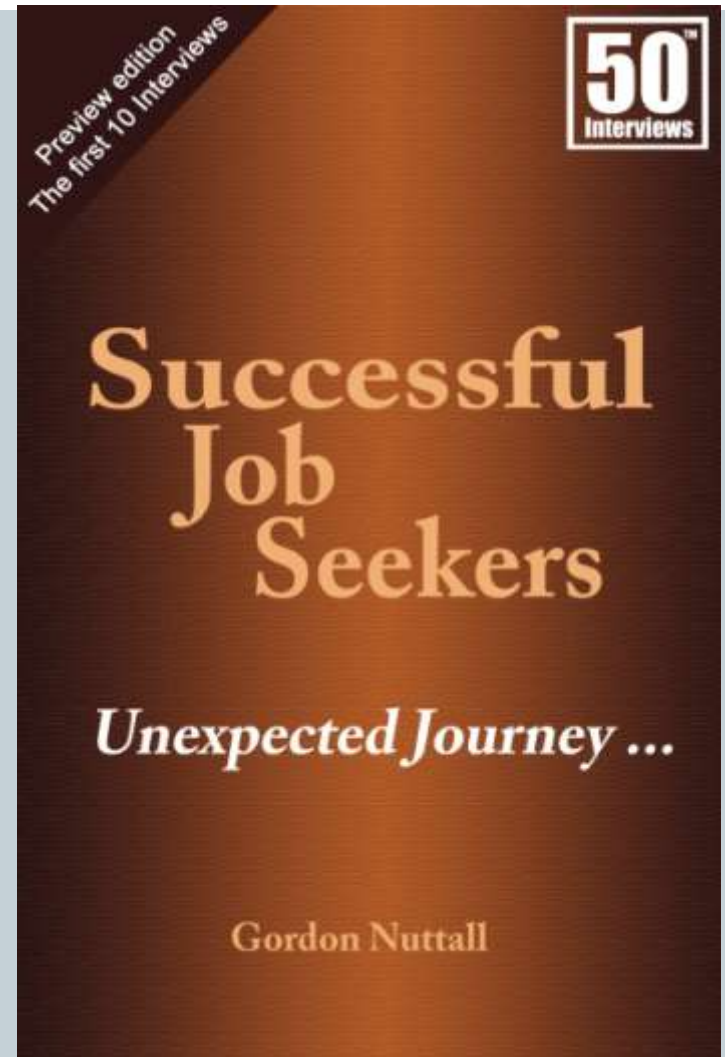
Insights from 10 Successful Job Seekers



50 Successful Job Seekers

It's an Unexpected Journey ...

- Excerpts from interviews and blog
- Anonymous



Project Manager #1



“Ride the wave you are on right now, and don’t quit until you find what you are looking for”

- Semiconductor procurement manager. Part of a company-wide downsizing.
- Previously aircraft industrial control and high tech. Some government.
- Now work for a food company as a project manager.
- Unemployed for four months.

Project Manager #1: Tips



- Look at all possibilities. With my contract position, I don't know when my current position is going to be eliminated. There is no a set time period and no guarantees. The deal is like this: "We will pay you as long as we need you." My goal is to make it through by starting each day and doing that day's work to the best of your ability, with quality and integrity

Project Manager #1: Tips



- After I was offered the job, I asked why they picked me. They said it was my response to the question they asked in the interview about when I could start. I had pointed at my watch and said “5 minutes”. It turns out the woman I was filling in for while she was taking parenting leave was leaving the next day to fly to China to get her newly-adopted child, and there was only 1/2 day for her to train the new person. So, be ready.

Project Manager #1: Journey



- For quiet time, I got into reading. It brought me closer to my spirituality and helped me become a more tender person.
- I belonged to a faith-based jobseekers group that met once a week and that gave a biblical basis to the job-seeker's journey.
- The legacy I strive to leave with my current coworkers, even if it is temporary contract work, is my integrity.

Project Manager #1: Journey



- My bad days came with emails that turned cold. No response. Then, I would think, "What is going on here?" The most impactful loss I have had was when I was laid off by one of my previous employers, a job that I thought was golden and that I would retire from. These things taught me to look for ways to help somebody else and lift myself up through my worship music.

Finance #1



“Dude, this is hard”

- Operations manager and an SEC "cop" for an office of financial advisors for four years.
- Layoff was the result of the financial industry's meltdown resulting in the closing of dozens of offices.
- Unemployed for eight months

Finance #1: Tips



- One of my job-finding tips is to not wait to take advantage of the people who are there to help. It's too hard to do this alone.
- Keep networking. Keep in touch with colleagues. Keep up on LinkedIn. Be more open to everybody and don't have tunnel vision. Take advantage of the people that are there to help.
- Use all of the resources that are available to you, including workforce centers and networking groups.

Finance #1: Journey



- I got great recommendations from my prior colleagues. They couldn't understand why I couldn't get a job right away. There is a disconnect between someone who has never lost a job and someone who has. It happened every day. I wouldn't hear anything back from them, like a black hole. The networking groups helped pull me out of that. I leaned heavily on them. They would say, "Oh, you'll land a job right away," and that was the attitude I had myself

Finance #1: Tips



- Don't let your pride get in the way. It took me a while to get over just thinking, "I'm great at what I'm doing," and realize I wasn't getting any traction doing it all by myself. I was arrogant about some things people recommended, like customizing the resume.

Finance #1: Journey



- This journey included swapping roles with my wife as the caregiver for our two young boys.
- I now have a renewed sense of empathy for others and connection with my family that before was focused on climbing the corporate ladder.

Finance #1: Journey



- At times I would avoid conversation. I was evasive. My wife and I took a break from having people over. She was pretty supportive about it as long as it didn't affect relationships, but at some point, she said that I had to get over it. With my mom, there was a disconnect between the reality of unemployment and her perception. She would say, "Why don't you just go out and get a job?"
- I didn't want to let fear be my motivation for taking a job. I had one job offer where there was nothing positive about it. The job was not about me and what I was bringing to the table. Putting the fear aside was important.

Finance #1: Journey



- I spent some time volunteering with The Mission from the Catholic Church for the homeless. It was freezing cold. There were families with nothing. How could I feel sorry for myself when there are others in much worse conditions? That was huge. How dare I take all I have for granted? When I got back in my car, I cried in remorse about feeling sorry for myself. It was a rediscovery of service for me and a recommitment to my faith

Finance #1: Journey



- The nuts-and-bolts of a job search are resumes, cover letters, LinkedIn, and staying organized. But there's also a whole emotional aspect to it. It's tough on a day-to-day level to have those emotions of anger – they can be like bullets – but you just need to embrace the whole experience.
- Whatever is difficult now looks great in the rearview mirror. It's temporary. These things will pass. Being unemployed is hard to do at the time, but it's a lot easier if you focus on the blessings that you have. I focus on what I have to be thankful for.

Finance #1: Journey



- When I'm again in a position to hire someone, I think I'll be a little bit more tender and certainly more responsive.

Finance #1: New job



- It's almost too good to be true! It is a local job with an up-and-growing company. It's a sales job in a niche industry and it's pretty fun. I enjoy making a difference. Then, on Friday afternoon, I can get out of the suit-and-tie, grab a beer, and spend a couple of days with my boys. When job searching, I didn't have that. Every day was a work day, regardless of what day it was. It's awesome having weekends again and not having to deal with the emotional issues of Wall Street.

Marketing #1



“You are Your Best Cheerleader”

- An accounts executive at a huge marketing agency that downsized due to the economy
- Handled claims, projects, designers, writers, the budget, and time line schedules. It was all up to me.
- Did a lot of event planning as well.
- Now a sales rep. I answer phones all day. At the end of the day, my job is done and I go home.

Marketing #1: Tips



- Some of what this jobseeking experience has taught me was to be able to adjust my expectations. My tip is to be kind to yourself and remember: nothing is guaranteed.
- At one time I was interviewing as a project manager at a job where I would have had to change my home schedule and everything else just for this new job. I can't do that. You just have to wait for things to balance out.

Marketing #1: Journey



- This new role is lower scope than before, and I'm enjoying my ability to spend quality time with my young children.
- At the beginning of my job search, I went to the work force center and took an online class called creative career options. It kind of brought me out of my comfort zone and also taught me what my true talents were and where I should be at this time in my life. That class gave me some confidence.

Marketing #1: Journey



- I met this woman who was so overly passionate about her work and her goals. She prompted me to figure out what defines me, because I had never figured that out for myself.
- I learned that I don't want to be that kind of Mom. I don't want my kids seeing me freak out all the time. They don't need that in their life. They are 3 and 5.

Pharmaceutical #1



“Run to the difficulty and not away from it”

- Clinical Research Professional (Medical Devices & Biotechnology).
- Had multiple job transitions, and in those I was recruited by headhunters, sometimes weekly. In this new economy, though, that dried up. I landed a contract job through an agency after 5 months.

Pharma #1: Tips



- Do not make decisions based on fear.
- I now greatly enjoy my newly-uncovered skills in networking.

Pharm #1: Journey



- In the past I would run away from difficulties because I did not know how to help people in that way. But now I do because of my church's networking group. One person from our church group brought another person to my attention who was having a hard time after being laid off. This gave me the opportunity to help someone else besides myself. Our group kept praying for him. Most of these things I have plugged into have really helped me to open up to helping someone who is in need.

Administrative Assistant



“Just Keep Going”

- Human resources manager.
- Didn't want to be a manager anymore so went back to learn about computers.
- Was with that company for 8 1/2 years before moving.
- Took the job here but was laid off after 4 months.
- It was a shock to have worked for someone for many years, choose to move, and then get laid off so soon.

Admin Assistant: Tips



- Get good at interviewing. Do it over and over. Rehearse the behavioral interview questions to the point where they are automatic. Even though they don't ask it of you, it's important to be prepared. It helps you to be more confident, and maybe you look better because you now have the answers, can direct them yourself and control the interview.

Marketing #2



“Be Faithful”

- 16 years of experience in graphic design and a bachelor’s degree in graphic design.
- Moved to Colorado in college in 1993 and started working as a contractor. More interested in graphic design, but kept falling into the field of an in-house designer.
- Last job was a marketing manager. I was there for about five years. The positions I did as a contractor were a little bit of both short-term project manager and member of technical staff.

Marketing #2: Tips



- I did a lot of volunteer work. That is how I got a lot of my freelance jobs. I kept touching base off-and-on with this one company. I had done some volunteer work for this one lady who told me every once in awhile they would hire through the city for small projects here and there. It was 2 months when I got back with this lady. She said “Congratulations. You got the job” and all I had to do was pass the drug test.

Marketing #2: Journey



- Obviously, you've gotten this far in your life, so always look for the positive.
- Look for the 'haves'. Don't concentrate on what you don't have.
- It's also a time to know that money isn't everything. I have learned that it's not the salary or the job you have. Those just make the ends meet.
- There is a purpose for everyone. You just have to trust it. When making a change in your career path, it helps to always remain faithful, knowing that there is purpose. When you know your purpose, it is a gift.

Pharmaceuticals #2



“Know how to Prepare”

- 7 years of experience in my previous job.
- One was a medical device company and was my only job out of college.
- I got another job working on medical devices again. I feel somewhat comfortable, but it's a very different product so it's a lot to learn.
- I had about 2 months that was unemployed so I was one of the lucky ones.

Pharma #2: Tips



- What really pulled me out of the funk is staying interactive with people. Going to the networking group and just getting out meeting people really help me out. Having a reason to get up early to put on business clothes was something. I tried out a couple of groups.
- The thing that got my resume read for this position was something from my past experience that was not listed on the job description. It made the difference. I had no idea that piece of information was needed.

Pharma #2: Tips



- Know how to prepare. Go to the library and check out interview books. As silly as that sounds, it helps. On one of my interviews, it went from being a three hour interview to a one hour interview because they didn't have any more questions to ask. You know that's a good sign
- Keep Networking. The good take away that I got from job-seeking is that now I know I have the experience to hold my own. At first I had a hard time going outside the industries. I was in starting over in different industries. But now, if I have to make a transfer again, I know what to do in that position

Pharma #2: Journey



- There were a couple of weeks when I dreaded the phone calls from my family because they would ask "How are things going?" and "How is the job search?" It just made me feel awful, so there were times I screened family calls. Even though they were trying to be supportive, nothing came out right. I just felt like I was a failure, so it was difficult.
- The hardest thing was when one of the companies I had applied for wanted to push me right into a corner right away. I didn't feel like I was valuable. It was depressing at that point and I had a mortgage, so that was really stressful.

Project Manager 2



“Success is going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm.”

- Most recent position has been as a project manager.
- Previous careers in teaching math, business management as a boat dealer for ten years, and as an assistant manager in a large grocery store chain.
- Engineering career in aerospace started as a digital hardware designer and moved up to a project-engineering manager.
- Master’s degrees in Engineering and business (MBA).

Project Manager 2: Tips



- Networking needs to involve people with a variety of interests and job situations. Balance your participation in job-seeking groups, charitable organizations, domain knowledge groups (IEEE, Alternative Energy, AMA, PMI, etc.), online (LinkedIn), and social groups.
- Take advantage of the free, expert advice you get through the LongsPeakNet speakers and the Workforce centers. Although the experts don't all agree, I was able to see different styles and decide which ones were right for me.

Project Manager #2: Tips



- Persistence Pays! People are getting hired all the time, even in a bad economy. You will not be a job-seeker forever. This is an opportunity to build relationships that will continue regardless of job status.
- There is plenty of advice for job-seekers available. Don't try to use it all or just the flavor of the day. Decide what fits your personality and go with it wholeheartedly. You want your style to match that of your new employer so be who you are.

Project Manager #2: Tips



- Assume that you will be out for a long time and set up your tracking systems. Thinking my new job was just around the corner initially made the first months very inefficient.
- Use the negative news to reassure yourself. It helps you recognize that you shouldn't take your lack of a job personally. No one really knows the future so ignore the doom-and-gloom predictions. Whatever happens to the economy will happen no matter what your attitude is. We all feel better looking at the upside of things.

Project Manager #2: Journey



- Since I think in terms of concepts instead of stories, behavioral interviewing is very difficult for me. Although I understand its intent, it feels very confrontational to me. I had a couple of interviews after being unemployed for four months where I came home absolutely convinced that I had nothing to offer anyone. I couldn't think of the appropriate stories. I went home and didn't leave the house for two days.

Project Manager #2: Journey



- Emotionally, I went from disappointment at losing my job to optimism about a new job. As time went on, I started to question my abilities – maybe I didn't have any marketable skills? I sort of put my life on hold. Finally, I got to a place where I decided that I needed to move forward and live my life as a person, not just as a job seeker

Project Manager #2: New Job



- I'm a Project Manager both managing projects and developing process in a research environment. It's an opportunity I would likely have pursued even if I had still been working. This is a new full-time, permanent position. The work is expected to be 75% project management and 25% project management process development. It is a great job fit for me! It also has an unexpected perk-it is less than 2 miles from my home!

Customer Assurance Executive



“One Interview, One Job !”

- Very diverse background. Educated as an accountant.
- Controller for a food company for over ten years and got bored with that.
- Sales of a refrigerated food product in a five-state territory. Promoted to general manager.
- Then formed a new company. First in sales area, then operations and a member of the senior management team. Part owner.

CA Executive: New Job



- I will be managing a staff of four to six people and working closely with the managers of sales, marketing, and operations. They are consolidating their operations from several different locations in Canada and the US.
- I have a diverse range of responsibilities. In some respects I thought it was a detriment to be so diverse, because it was hard to focus on a particular job category to go after. As it turned out, I found a perfect job. I just didn't know that position would be titled 'Customer Service Manager'. Although the pay isn't as much as before, this is a perfect fit for who I am.

CA Executive: Tips



- I never would have gotten this job if I had not hand delivered my resume and followed up every few days! My new boss told me that he reviewed the online resumes for the second time on a Sunday evening. He left very discouraged, only to see my plain envelope on his desk the next morning. He told me that the cover letter and resume was exactly what he was looking for.

CA Executive: Tips



- Take care of your mind and body.
- Concentrate your time on the 80% “hidden jobs.”
- Put a plan together and implement it; be politely persistent.
- If you stay positive and persistent, miracles do happen! Keep the faith!

CA Executive: Journey



- I got the call Monday morning, interviewed Monday afternoon, and was officially offered the job on Wednesday. I started work on Thursday!

Market Research



“Be Confidently Authentic”

- I started doing operations analysis work almost right off the bat when I became a professional. I have been a market research professional for over 30 years. I love it. I get a kick out of going to work.
- It was four months from the time that I was unemployed until I landed my new job.

Market Researcher: Tips



- The biggest learning was probably the “STAR”. Every instance that I was involved in my career was written out in STAR format, including the good, bad, and ugly. Learn every bit of it. It took me four days – and I ended up having 32 pages of writing. I was able to greatly improve my resume from that. From that point on, not only had I relived my career and seen all of the things that I had forgotten about.

Market Researcher: Tips



- I made a portfolio, and a Powerpoint with audio to go along with it. That carried over into the interview because I only had a limited amount of time to pack a lot of information and you've got to do it well.

Market Researcher: Journey



- I developed incredible confidence. I walked into every interview after that realizing all the things that I had done in my career and understanding the value I was bringing to any potential company. It just motivated me and it gave me a lot of strength of courage to stand up for myself and be proud of what I have done.
- If you know the value that you have, you can speak intelligently about it and forthrightly without making yourself bigger than life. I had a track record that was better than just my resume said. I had specific examples and really demonstrated that I had the goods.

Market Researcher: Journey



- During this time, I learned how giving people are. I think being a part of the networking group made me realize how much people give to each other. It's hard; I really would like to continue with the group, I just don't have time right now! They are such giving people and I don't know that I ever experienced that same level of giving in a business.

Market Researcher: Journey



- The fact that the other jobseekers are so talented. That just drove me crazy to sit amongst all of that talent and realize that it was kind of out to pasture for the moment. I felt like there was an accountability thing with other people working hard that had as much proficiency as you did and they were working hard at it. I'd turn around and look at the other people and hope that they don't spoil on the vine and that I needed to be an example.

Market Researcher: Tips



- Stay focused. It really paid off for me.
- And make good wine!

Themes



- Confidence
- Authenticity and Integrity
- Don't try to do it alone
- Network
- Persistence, focus, ...
- Balance
- Follow through
- Take care of yourself
- Be organized
- New definition of "success"
- Deeper understanding of self
- Reconnect with family, faith, and outward-focus
- More caring and empathetic

Others have made it - in their own way. There's no "silver bullet. The outcome is likely to be different than what you first sought, oftentimes better