



GET HIRED UP

**The Ultimate Roadmap for Career
Management for Executives
Navigating the Hidden Job Market**

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and Career Consultant



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Contents

| | |
|--|------------|
| HIDDEN JOB MARKET INFOGRAPHIC | ii |
| FOREWORD | iii |
| INTRODUCTION: A Case Study Familiar to Many Executives | 1 |
| PART 1: How to Find a C-Level Job That Isn't Advertised: Some Jobs Are in the Budget but Are Not Advertised | 3 |
| PART 2: Some Jobs Don't Even Exist Until the Right Person Appears | 5 |
| PART 3: Succession Planning – An Opportunity Given or Grabbed | 8 |
| PART 4: Some Employment Opportunities are Created by Private Equity Firms and Venture Capitalists | 11 |
| PART 5: Why Relying on Recruiters Solely is Like Putting Your Eggs in One Basket | 13 |
| PART 6: Stealth Searches by Recruiters | 16 |
| PART 7: Discover an Invisible Job That's Perfect for You | 19 |
| PART 8: Rather Than Start Over, Why Not Redesign Your Existing Job? | 21 |
| PART 9: You're Over-Qualified | 23 |
| AFTERWORD | 25 |

ADVERTISED JOBS

INTENSE COMPETITION

- 95% of job seekers are competing for 5% of available jobs
- 250 applicants for every 1 open corporate position

80 - 90% OF JOBS ARE NEVER ADVERTISED

HIDDEN JOB MARKET

- Redesign your current job
- Stealth searches by recruiters
- Private equity and venture capitalists generate opportunities
- Departing incumbents produce opportunities
- Some jobs are in the budget but are not advertised
- Some jobs do not exist until the right person appears
- Succession planning yields openings
- You're overqualified so the company creates a job for you
- Discover an invisible job perfect for you

IN THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET positions are never advertised so back door searches give you control. *Let me guide you.*

WESTGATE
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THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET REVEALED
Offering C-Level and Board Executives **VIP Access** to your next position.

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Foreword

by Robin Dreeke, author of *The Code of Trust: An American Counterintelligence Expert's Five Rules to Lead and Succeed, It's Not All About "Me"*, and *Sizing People Up: A Veteran FBI Agent's User Manual For Behavior Prediction*.

Throughout my career, as an FBI Agent, I've identified my own "roadmap" to career and business success by predicting behavior – especially in roles requiring inspirational leadership. It's my experience the most successful leaders are self-aware and understand the critical importance of human-to-human relationships to our collective survival. As tribal beings, we have a vested interest in being a resource for others, which, in turn, is critical to our own survival.

Times have changed, however, because we no longer gather around the fire to break bread, share a beer, or meet in person for job interviews (now and into the foreseeable future). During this digital revolution and considering the complexities of COVID-19, it's often difficult to meet people in person. Given these shifts, it's never been more important to be aware of your own behavior and others' behavior to build trust, rapport and to positively impact others in the absence of direct human contact.

I met Maureen Farmer during the height of COVID-19 when I was a guest on a number of podcasts. Maureen (an ardent consumer of business podcasts) reached out to me to seek my expertise on a tragic event that happened in her home province of Nova Scotia, Canada. Despite COVID-19, Maureen and I established both a professional relationship and friendship based on a shared interest in understanding people.

Maureen and I also share an interest in behavior analysis. Mine stems from my role as the Counterintelligence Behavioral Analysis Program's former leader of the Federal Bureau of Investigation and a recently retired FBI agent. Maureen, a certified DISC Behavioral Analyst, helps her clients profile employers, recruiters, and other decision-makers during the recruitment and selection process.

Even for the most successful and intelligent leaders, job searching can be a long and protracted affair, sometimes taking up to 24 months for the most senior-level roles. You can reduce this time by identifying the most appropriate organizations and evaluating their leaders in advance, using the behavioral analysis process.

Get Hired Up: *The ultimate roadmap for career management for executives navigating the hidden job market* helps. Having a solid strategy for a job search by understanding the marketplace, possessing iron-clad career marketing collateral as well as a clearly stated value proposition can shave months, even years, off a job search by saving time and money in unearned salary by landing in a new position faster. This is how Maureen's expertise helps.

Many business leaders struggle to transition out of the corporate world, out of their organizations, or transition into a new industry because they've been so good at their craft. Seldom have they had to work on their career because they've been so busy working inside their career. When it comes time to making a significant change, they often feel lost because they don't know where to begin or how to launch a complicated search.

Maureen's **Get Hired Up** is a guide through the hidden job market, and, like my own system for sizing people up, provides a predictable roadmap for the individual who's enjoyed massive success but now finds him or herself either struggling to find the right opportunity or to successfully close an employment offer.

The ultimate job search test is the employment interview where so much is riding on a short conversation with a stranger. Building trust and rapport is critical to this conversation and to closing the offer. When you find yourself time and again wondering what went wrong and why you didn't secure the position, it is likely not that you're not qualified, but that there was a failure to build rapport and trust during the recruitment process.

Similar to the perceived life of an FBI agent, the labor market is shrouded in mystery and complexity. There is a perception that so much has changed in the last decade relative to job search. **Get Hired Up: *The ultimate roadmap for career management for executives navigating the hidden job market*** offers a predictable route to the labor market, including roads not often traveled, such as consulting or entrepreneurship.

This book takes the mystery and complexity out of the executive job search (or board of directors' search). Leveraging a predictable and validated process for targeting the right opportunity builds clarity and saves time—a non-renewable resource everyone wants more of. Like my own process, this resource will replace the guesswork, luck, intuition and drama.

GET HIRED UP

I'm confident if you invest the time to plan your job search based on a proven method, you will land an opportunity faster, saving valuable money and time. With Maureen's track record working with high-profile leaders, politicians, CEOs and entrepreneurs, you will unveil a clear path to your next career, establish your personal brand, identify your value proposition and land in an organization that matches your personal values.

Having a sense of purpose doing work you enjoy for an organization you respect and a board (or boss) you honor, is the ultimate recipe for personal fulfillment, achievement and success.

Reading **Get Hired Up: *The ultimate roadmap for career management for executives navigating the hidden job market*** and then conferring with Maureen Farmer can help you arrive at your career destination with speed, clarity, and predictability.



Robin Dreeke is a best-selling author, professional speaker, trainer, facilitator, and retired FBI Special Agent and Chief of the Counterintelligence Behavioral Analysis Program.

Robin has taken his life's work of recruiting spies and broken down the art of leadership, communication, and relationship building into *Five Steps to TRUST* and *Six Signs of who you can TRUST*.

Since 2010, Robin has been working with large corporations as well as small companies in every aspect of their business. Whether it is newly promoted leaders, executives, sales teams, or customer relations, Robin has crafted his *People Formula* for quick results and maximum success.

Introduction

A Case Study Familiar to Many Executives

The story I share tells the tale of one person's career journey. What begins as a comfortable, successful starting point takes an unexpected turn, leaving our subject with little option but to leave a company where he enjoyed success and where he could see himself spending the balance of his work life. Too many of us have discovered that our future plans can be upended at a moment's notice. The trick to landing on your feet is to create a strategy that's yours alone and to plan the steps you need to take to secure your next C-Level position. Another essential element to future success is to understand and accept that you may need help of a professional guide through the hidden job market.

CASE STUDY

"Now I can walk to work and have lunch with my mother on Thursdays," says Elon happily, citing two job criteria he didn't even know he was missing.

Like many other executives in their late forties, Elon was happy. He had a loving family, a stellar career, and was looking forward to a bright future. The everyday challenges of leading a large company as the CEO kept him busy but engaged. In a highly regulated industry with never-ending change, Elon was proud to consistently deliver industry-leading results. The downside, which he never uttered to another soul, included the tight reporting schedules, constant travel, and industry realities. They tended to make him feel like he was running a marathon and sadly, with the long hours, he seldom saw his family.

On the bright side, Elon's firm was noted in the industry for employing a seasoned, closely knit, effective leadership team who thoroughly understood the impact and criticality of effective marketing strategies and robust business plans. Under his leadership, they enjoyed a strong internal communications culture with a dynamic philanthropic arm and corporate responsibility charter. The company was iconic in the industry. Elon worked hard for it – creating a culture of trust, inclusion, and healthy competition.

And yet no one, including Elon, could anticipate the effect the arrival of a new board member would have on the organization as a whole and Elon in particular. After a data breach left the organization vulnerable, the new board member was recruited for his expertise in cybersecurity. Closely vetted by the nominating committee, references checked, it was a majority vote to bring him onto the board.

To Elon it seemed as though his boss's outlook changed dramatically directly after the director was brought in and Elon felt immediately that it was going to be an uphill battle to win over "the new guy."

After an exhausting seven quarters of trying, Elon decided to resign from the company and to focus on a job search full time. At first, enthusiastic, Elon met with his network but after nine months of little progress, he changed gears.

Elon adopted a different approach to his search. Rather than allowing the very few positions that were actually advertised to occupy his attention, he turned inward and focused on his needs, his wants, and his values. Spending time with his family was very important to him so in order for the next opportunity to be a match the new company would need to align with his ethical values, understand and promote the importance of family life, and have a transparent work culture.

With the guidance of an executive branding and career consultant who knew the hidden job market intimately, Elon began to only meet with organizations who met his criteria, thereby saving valuable time by excluding the others. Over several months, armed with a focused message, a clear target market and excellent career marketing collateral, he was awarded six job offers. And yet, the sixth offer was still not quite right.

Elon declined the offer much to the dismay of his family.

As it happened about three weeks later, Elon was contacted by a company that had been on his A-list. The board hadn't dismissed his query after all. It seemed they had something else in mind. Rather than offering him a full-time C-Level position, Elon was invited to join their large, publicly traded organization to assist with a change management project as an hourly paid consultant .

That was over two years ago. Today, as the newly minted CEO in a large North American city, Elon is now at the helm where he is supported by a dynamic leadership team of seven. His relationship with the board is solid, and his future is feeling bright once again.

To make matters sweeter, his total compensation grew by \$127,000 USD – much to his family's delight.

Elon's journey is representative of only one of the many paths to career success that all begin with the hidden job market. Although the possibilities are practically endless, there are a few paths you can use to land your next opportunity with precision and clarity by putting yourself in the driver's seat.

This book is divided into nine short chapters that delve into the various paths that make up the mysterious hidden job market. You will recognize most of them.

Part 1:

How to Find a C-Level Job That Isn't Advertised: Some Jobs Are in the Budget but Are Not Advertised

I get many comments about our approach to guiding executives successfully to their next C-Level job. What seems to capture the imagination of executives most is my reference to the Hidden Job Market.



Although the name, the Hidden Job Market, is deliberately intriguing, intended as an attention grabber, it is not a gimmick. It is a proven system.

As the graphic shows, 80%–90% of positions are never posted. Remember this when you or a loved one are floundering, wondering how to go about finding gainful and meaningful work.

Indeed, the Hidden Job Market is very real.

Any mystique surrounding the Hidden Job Market ends with its name. Having it work for you takes determination and effort. But these are not new notions to the people I meet professionally. They have earned their reputations and their C-Level job of authority because they know how to develop and execute a plan. In this scenario, we examine the situation from a different vantage point where the client sees him- or herself as a product going to market.

I understand that navigating the job market is always stressful but when we roll up our sleeves and get down to it, most have reported back that they enjoyed the challenge immeasurably and found my process unlike anything they'd done before. That pleases me so much because I love to help.

A misnomer I would like to clarify is that the Hidden Job Market is not code for networking – although networking is a vital component to success.

Instead, the Hidden Job Market refers to all the jobs that are never posted, but that are available and waiting for someone of your caliber to fill.

One little known fact in this market is that often – more often than you'd imagine – **executive positions exist but only on a budget line.** The organization wants and needs another senior member and yet the position remains empty for months.

Why? How can this be?

The answer is as simple as this: Time. Or lack of time, more the point.

CONSIDER: Filling a position within the upper echelon of an organization requires the attention of many senior members of that firm. Ensuring the description of the position remains accurate – from what was needed to what will be needed in terms of expertise, is time consuming. (Of course, the description of an executive position will contain a similar list of responsibilities shouldered by the person who last assumed the title, but with every iteration it will be revised to a greater or lesser degree.)

From there is the even more time-consuming process of recruitment. No matter if you've been on one side or both, you appreciate the sheer number of hours and days and weeks it takes to find and secure the perfect candidate. And you also can appreciate that time is a precious commodity too often assigned to other tasks in the run of a busy corporate workday.

The senior team can feel they're really only making do without their missing counterpart. What they really want is someone with all the qualifications to magically appear, someone who will make a smooth adjustment into their new position, someone who will assume the mantle and who will just get the job done.

Suffice it to say that a plum C-Level job may sit empty for some time BUT the Board, the CEO, the senior team, always have a budget for the right person. You're that right person.

The secret is knowing how to suss out a now-empty C-Level Job that aligns with your skills. In addition, you need to know how to build a customized, career plan tailored exactly for those positions. This is work we'll accomplish together, systematically. Approached strategically, you can be considered ideal for the job before it ever needs to be advertised.

Yes, there is a glaring hole in an organizational chart out there, and there is a seat at the executive table that is perfect for you.

Part 2:

Some Jobs Don't Even Exist Until the Right Person Appears

The hidden job market has many faces and many masks. Opportunities are advertised, but are earmarked for a specific person with a specific solution.

There are many misunderstandings about how roles are sourced – and although many are advertised on job boards and in some of the world's top journals, they are often advertised out of necessity.



IN THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET
positions are never advertised so
back door searches give you control.
Let me guide you.

My role here is to clarify fact from fiction – even when it sounds like fiction!

Here's a story – based on fact – of how some jobs don't even exist until the right person appears. It could be your story.

CASE STUDY: THE COMPANY'S VIEWPOINT

You've said YES to the generous offer made by a dream group for an ideal position. It's your first day. The company brass has gathered your new colleagues to welcome you. You're introduced as a lucky find. A best kept secret. Within the firm you're considered a happy discovery –

To your new employer it's all been an exercise in good fortune! The fact that the firm recognized that they needed your qualifications, that they were able to establish a substantial budget out of thin air for a new position, and persuading you to say yes to the challenge, was all serendipity.

That's their version.

Here's yours.

First, there was absolutely nothing coincidental about them finding you. You had your eye on that company for a while. You knew you'd be a great fit.

This is where your version of the story really begins.

There was no point in denying it – your current position wasn't a happy place for you anymore. From where you were sitting in your corner office, you knew change was coming down the pike. A career move was essential.

For the first time in years, you felt that quiver of uncertainty about your career. You had a few sleepless nights, worried about how change would affect your family, wondering where you could land that would provide a comparable lifestyle – or better. You asked yourself where you could find an engaging challenge: the questions seemed endless. The answers didn't present as quickly.

But you'd "lived in interesting times" before. Here's what you would do.

Like countless other business decisions you'd made over the years, you'd consult with an expert and, together, you'd develop a customized plan.

This time, however, it would be a career strategist and you'd be the product being brought to market.

During these rigorous strategy meetings, you examined yourself and imagined yourself as a product to be branded (if you will). You outlined the benefits of 'you' as a product – what new skills had you honed over your career (without realizing), what kinds of problems you'd solved (and enjoyed) and what centers of influence you'd formed (and their power).

This was all good stuff and worth the effort.

Although, during this consultative process, when you were informed that the Hidden Job Market consisted not only of all those executive level jobs that would never be advertised but, in some cases, the market included positions that didn't even exist yet, it's fair to say you viewed this idea with a bit of a jaundiced eye.

But you ran with it, as advised, and allowed your imagination to take over, also as advised. If the world were, indeed, your oyster, where would you like to work every day, and what solutions would you enjoy bringing to that organization?

Well - You knew of a company that had a serious problem. It was bleeding dollars! Perhaps to another person, it was not a good time to approach the CEO. But you knew you could fix the problem and in doing so, save the company untold resources. The idea excited you. You did your research. You gleaned all you could glean about that organization. You prepared. You were positioned right where you needed to be AND you knew the right thing to say to the exact right person. (See my blog on being tongue-tied: <https://westgatecareercoaching.com/executive-job-search/ever-tongue-tied>)

Presto! (except in this case 'presto' means countless hours of hard work!)
The idea that some jobs don't even exist until the right person appears
proved true. Your new job didn't exist until you were strategic and brought
a solution to an exhausted CEO who desperately needed a win.

*As for the company's version of how they found you, well that works just fine for you. You'll accept that you were a lucky find. Sure, why not. In fact, **you're the exact person they didn't even know they needed.***

Part 3:

Succession Planning – An Opportunity Given or Grabbed

The number of well-established organizations who don't do a good job of succession planning always surprises me. This is where you fit in. We continue to explore The Hidden Job Market – that legendary (but not mythical) place where 80%–90% of the most plum jobs in your world are never advertised. Nonetheless those jobs open and close with or without you.



A natural stop along the way through **The Hidden Job**

Market is most frequently referred to as Succession Planning. And succession planning DOES offer opportunities for you to be **next in line for a position** you've had your eye on or dreamed of, or both.

Traditionally, being *next in line* means waiting patiently for the “old suit” to leave, retire, or, sad to say, die. Traditionally, it's an exercise in patience.

Here's the thing... if a person is smart about it, they can watch companies they're interested in and then approach them when they get a sense the CFO (or whatever role) is planning to leave in a year or two.

However, this watching and waiting approach is seldom ever considered except by the savviest, patient careerists.

Taken from the point of view of the management team of a smart, well-rounded operation, recognizing the importance of succession planning is or should be an integral part of a C-Level position. The incumbent should have an eye on the next generation with a view to grooming that person, taking them under their wing, teaching them all they know, so that the company is in good stead when that new person assumes their mantle. A great senior manager is always thinking of what's best for his or her company.

Right. That's the ideal.

In management theory, it holds water – without a leak. We've learned that that's how industry was begun: the wise journeyman taking on the apprentice thereby ensuring an experienced and capable employee was at the ready when a role became available. And so, it went.

In management practice, however, you can bet your bottom dollar that, in today's world, when the selection committee completes a long, involved hiring process of determining the right fit for the organization's new COO as an example, part of the choice includes envisioning that same person succeeding the CEO – when the time is right. Of course.

Now, indulge me.

I want you to also imagine that the aforementioned CEO is, in actual fact, not the wise, traditional character, concerned with the company's future I've depicted. This CEO isn't leading the next generation. In fact, this CEO (or CFO, or COO as the case may be) is pure, unadulterated deadwood.

We're talking no vision, no energy, no plan, dead weight, at best. Yes, at best. At worse, this person is disruptive, a bully, a C-Level sociopath and perhaps even a sexist! No kidding. And s/he is holed up in a corner office, biding his or her time, enjoying the perks and status of the position but contributing little. Further, this free-ride attitude is only thinly disguised, if at all. In fact, this on-going behavior has caught the attention of other members of the senior team. Everyone knows just how wrong the situation is and, yet, so far, the watching and waiting is only causing heavy sighs from the boardroom.

The time has come. YOUR time? Could be.

You're an enterprising professional. You've got the smarts, the credentials and the brass. You've been watching from within the organization or even from the outside. You approach the company directly; perhaps meet with the chair of the board and, one pragmatist to another ...

It's over quickly. Out with the old and in with the new. That's the way one scenario plays out.

Sometimes the answer the board will choose is not so cut and dried. Sometimes the decision is to bring in a special advisor. You.

As I've indicated in my previous Hidden Job Market blogs, [How to find a job that doesn't exist](#) and [How to find a C-Level job](#) this special advisor or consultant position is created regardless of a budget line. Presto! There is a new person on the team. You. And there is an organizational chart with a line drawn from the special advisor position directly to the role that the incumbent currently holds.

I'm not trying to oversimplify. In my line of work, I have seen more combinations and permutations than you can shake a stick at (to be technical.)

As frustrating as it is to hard-working, resourceful, creative people, what often happens with these C-Level wastes-of-space, is that for reasons known only to them, the senior teams won't cut the

ties. Instead, they decide that our underperforming or sociopathic incumbent should be seconded (shuffled) into another position. Still you, as the new special advisor, are moved into that newly vacated role.

Different organizations make different decisions at different times. The fact remains that people often do not want to deal head on with other people's underperformance or instability directly. Yet – they need a solution.

As I've said, if you're smart about it, you can watch companies you're interested in, and, with my help, you can make your approach when the sense of the circumstance and timing is bang on.

The happiest occasion for succession planning is when our senior leader knows it's time to step away, and he or she is actually looking forward to what's next on their horizon. They're ready and they've prepared their replacement fully to take the reins.

More often though there are other reasons for succession planning and it's not always done by the incumbent. Cutting out the dead wood is very real and very difficult. When it is done, it happens quietly and, hear me, more often than not, that position is never advertised.

Part 4:

Some Employment Opportunities are Created by Private Equity Firms and Venture Capitalists

I'm not a person who's too quick to classify or categorize different types of people – although I readily accept that there are many types. I, myself, am one type and you, my reader, are another and so it goes. Some say we flock together, and others maintain that we attract because we're opposites. You be the judge.

However, for the sake of discussion about this next stop along The Hidden Job Market roadmap, I refer to a unique type of person who would be attracted to unearthing this particular type of non-typical, non-advertised position. An adventurer.

Remember, at your calibre, 80%–90% of jobs are never posted. They open and close with hardly a whisper.

My work centers on helping career people find their next C-Level job. For those among this executive group who love one challenge to be followed by another, who are enterprising and gutsy, who have an entrepreneurial streak that begs to be satisfied, then lend me your ear!

Have you ever considered working with private equity firms or with venture capitalists? Are you “that guy?” (And by “that guy” I am not referring to gender – rather I'm referring to that state of mind.)

There is a whole world out there where investors buy companies that are in trouble. They fix them, and they sell them. Well, that is to say, they don't fix them. They look for fixers to fix them.

Most of us are familiar with the idea of house flipping – yes? What I'm talking about is similar in concept – buy it, renovate it and sell it **for a profit** – but it's different in every other way.

Okay. Let me explain.

Let's create Moneybags Inc. Moneybags Inc. is a private equity firm. As such, they're on the lookout. Always. They've watched Company W go from bad to worse. And yet, W is a great idea. Moneybags has done its market research and that research shows clearly that W should be a success. So, the honchos at Moneybags make the owner(s) of W an offer they can't refuse. No! Not *The Godfather* kind of offer...an offer. (They are called Moneybags after all.)



Private equity and venture capitalists generate opportunities

A deal is struck. Now, guess what Moneybags Inc. needs? They need you. You appear on the scene and say, "Hey, I'm your guy" (even though you may very well be someone other than a guy) because just like the private equity firm, you've been on the lookout too.

You want me to stop right here and explain just how it was that you appeared so conveniently on the scene. How? You read the paper, notice mergers, watch the growth or stagnation of companies, and talk to your centers of influence. You consider who you know and what they know.

A good portion of it is really you. That's the kind of person you are.

Not only are you industrious, hard-working, enterprising AND have that certain entrepreneurial je ne sais quoi, you also love a challenge. And Company W is a challenge.

Another way this same type of person lands a living through the Hidden Job Market is to find Company W yourself and notice it's floundering or even just not flourishing. With the same market research under their belt, s/he – better yet – you pitch the idea to investors at private equity firms. With the right approach, facts and stats, they come on board with the money.

You've got your eyes on the prize and that prize is to reshape, recalibrate, refurbish, regenerate the company and get it into its best possible state. When you've accomplished what you set out to do, one of two things can happen.

One: You can ease on down the road, happy to have been well paid, and, very likely, to have received a substantial bonus. The challenge was the calling, and it was well met, expectations were surpassed, and your reputation is better for the experience.

Two: You are offered a permanent position. It could be that the offer is made at a particular time of your life and you find you can't refuse. You say yes and everyone is happy.

These scenarios play out far more often than you may ever imagine.

I have successfully championed people of that certain nature who seize the opportunity to shake things up – to mastermind change. Whether it's a new enterprise or the result of a merger, they love to roll up their sleeves and get right in there.

They measure their success by a boost in market share, the rebuilding of brands, the increase in sales, and the acquisition of new and retention of existing customers. Whether they're called integration experts, change management experts, turnaround experts, or a glossary of other terms, they're best described as interested in being interested. They enjoy being stretched and, let's face it, they produce results.

Part 5:

Why Relying on Recruiters Solely is Like Putting Your Eggs in One Basket

“Don’t Do It!” is a phrase I seldom say – to adults, at any rate. People who know me professionally have described me as a positive person, encouraging in my approach, and optimistic in my outlook.

But (and it’s a big but...)

There is one subject that makes me want to stamp my feet, find a cupboard door to slam and shout, Don’t Do It!

It’s this: Among people who are considering making their next career move, there is this constant, ever-popular, misleading, misapprehension that a recruitment firm is somehow going to target you in one of their stealth searches, airlift you from your current circumstance and then safely parachute you into your next executive position.

Stop thinking that! Please. The chance that it will happen is so slim as to practically be of mythical proportions. Listen – there are a number of reasons that many, many top-level executives have never been in the position to search for a job before and it’s a detrimental myth to perpetuate. There is no one-stop shop for those seriously engaging in a job search.



In fact, the efficacy of getting hired through a recruiter stealth search is about 1% to 3%. Pretty low, right? And so, you ask, why do I continue to include Stealth Search by Recruiters as a point of entry into an executive position on my Hidden Job Market infographic?

Good question. The reason is because for a very, very small percentage of executives a recruitment firm can deliver. (It is an avenue to explore but it should never be the only avenue.)

As I wrote in a blog article on [when to work with recruiters](#) a few years ago, recruiters can be an important partner for your job search under the following circumstances:

- If you are not looking for an industry change
- If there is no gap in your employment
- If the position you want is a logical move “up the corporate ladder” as in from Controller to VP Finance to CFO to CEO

- If you are ideally qualified for the opportunity with a clear line drawn between your value proposition and the needs of the recruiter's client

But let's face it, that list doesn't describe most of us. In reality, the majority of us have a work history that looks more akin to a doodle than a dot-to-dot puzzle.

We have:

- A zigzagged career path – not A to B to C
- A job history not all within the same industry. In fact, on the face of it some positions we've held are very dissimilar to others
- We began our work life in one area but now want to expand into another
- We never finished a degree

For most of us, recruitment firms are not the way to make a smart, calculated, strategic career change. And those who run recruitment firms would agree – wholeheartedly. Sure, we can introduce ourselves and ensure the top recruiting firms know we're in the market. That's part of a strategy, especially if the recruiting firm specializes in your field.

Yet, make no mistake. Recruiters do not work for you, the job seeker: they work at the pleasure of the company or companies they who pay them. And they pay handsomely. I can't emphasize this enough.

Employers will invest up to 35% of the first year's compensation of a new executive. This means for an executive earning \$500,000 per year, the recruiter earns \$175,000. The expectation by the hiring company and the recruiter is that the chosen candidate will be able to hit the ground running with very little training required.

With this in mind, it's easy to see why a recruiter WILL NOT even spend a moment recruiting a candidate who doesn't meet 99.9% of the hiring criteria.

There is too much risk for the recruiter in both earnings and in reputation.

I will never say that there is no place in your job search for a recruiter. What I do say is that being known by a headhunting firm is just one step along a very direct route. And I stress, there is a definite route to making a successful career change and there are definite steps to take that require much more than a spiffy resume.

GET HIRED UP

Before you make the mistake of dropping off your resume to a headhunting firm and then just sitting back, remember my words, Don't Do It!

To land a new position you have to be thoughtful, patient and tactical, (as well as smart and qualified.) And most often you need help – help to be patient, to be strategic.

If you could eliminate only six months from your search time, and you're earning \$500,000 per year, that is an ROI of \$250,000. Your investment is certainly a better return than the stock market, and it's a strategy only the most savvy business leader deploys.

Part 6:

Stealth Searches by Recruiters

Many companies never advertise to fill C-Level roles. There are many reasons for this phenomenon – from a collective shortage of time needed to search, interview and come to an agreement on a C-Level candidate, to the truth being deadwood currently occupies the position and covert actions are required to replace the incumbent to avoid unnecessary disruption to operations.

Another valid reason is needing to maintain confidentiality. The company may have a patent pending or be engaged in strategic discussions requiring the utmost discretion. In such cases, the timing of a widely known search to fill a key position is off as public exposure could potentially compromise critical deals in play and future business plans.



**Stealth searches
by recruiters**

But that doesn't mean there aren't deliberations and specific actions taking place behind the scenes to find the perfect candidate for the position.

What role does a recruitment agency play?

When a company does not have the time or perhaps the collective skill to delve into searching the market for Mr. or Ms. Right, it's common to hire a recruitment agency to bring the best people forward to the executive management team to assist and expedite the hiring decision.

Recruiters understand this. They silently, systematically and proactively monitor the industry who's who for prospective talent to present to their clients as an essential part of their own business development strategy.

Recruiters are always on the hunt for the best executive candidates to present to clients!

And, when given a formal request for assistance in a C-Level search, the recruiter often has the necessary information on the perfect candidate(s) already tucked in a file folder at their fingertips and ready to present to their clients.

Having your record of success in that recruiter's possession, ready to send out immediately, greatly increases your chances of being presented as a front-runner candidate for the position.

CASE STUDY: A CANDIDATE'S STORY – Meet Cory Cratchit

Cory Cratchit was the first CFO for Ebenezer Enterprises, a hedge fund founded in the mid-nineties. Not long after his debut, the board appointed him CEO the very minute the incumbent left. Quite a coup for young Cory.

Cory's unique abilities were not limited to his data analysis, people skills, and exemplary client relations skills. He quickly produced profitable results for investors and was seen as leading that rarest of shareholder dreams, a unicorn!

His ability to unite the back, middle, and front office staff earned him the nickname "*The Candyman*" after the 1972 hit song of the same name. His staff, investors and board of directors all loved him and sang his praises.

Cory didn't merely weather the financial storms of the 90s and 2000s – especially the darkest years of 2008/2009. Instead, Cory proved gifted at spotting opportunity where others saw only risk.

He was the golden one. Until he wasn't.

Cory's belief he would retire in glory at a ripe old age from Ebenezer Enterprises suddenly turned to dust. He was blindsided when, after bringing on a new board member, the company abruptly changed direction.

It quickly became clear he wasn't meant to be part of it. And time for Cory to leave.

What does Cory's story have to do with you?

Cory had been approached by many recruiters over the years. Though flattered by their interest in his future, he saw no value in engaging with them. He expected to be with Ebenezer until he retired and had no desire or plans to ever leave.

But when Cory's one door closed he needed to find a way to open other doors. Fast. Going directly to hedge fund companies wasn't an option – they use recruiters exclusively to fill executive management roles.

In hindsight, Cory realized the importance of forming solid relationships with recruiters long before needing them.

Recruiters can be critical to opening doors in the hidden job market. Which is why you need to be thinking about them now.

It's a smart career move because many companies don't have the time or the skill to recruit, select, and vet C-Level candidates. They leave that to the professional expertise of recruiters they know and trust.

When you're happy in your current position, spending time establishing and building relationships with in demand recruiters may feel unnecessary.

But, in all industries and geographic regions, the executive recruitment world is small and intimate. Most recruiters are extremely well connected. When you least expect it, you may well need to leverage these connections to open doors that otherwise would remain closed to you.

Most recruiters are extremely well connected. At some point in your career, you may need these connections.

For instance, if you seek a CEO role in the hedge funds industry, a recruiter in the private equity world may not be able to be of direct help, but more than likely will know a hedge fund recruiter s/he can refer you to.

Because there are niche recruiters and recruitment agencies specializing in a certain field, you'll never know who can help you, and, almost as importantly, who knows someone else who can assist. Investing in building strong relationships with recruiters is vital throughout your executive career, not just potentially for yourself, but also for the companies you lead.

And, if Cory's story resonates because after years of enjoying well-earned success, you suddenly find yourself needing a customized career plan to position yourself for that next executive role, **Westgate** can help.

Why Westgate?

You might not know what executive career services you need or even where to start. We'll work together to articulate your career story – honestly and accurately.

Westgate does all the work needed to create a professional portfolio and personal brand that accurately reflects you and your executive career accomplishments.

When you can clearly showcase your achievements, illustrate your professional reputation and distinguish yourself from your peers, you'll stand out from other candidates competing for the executive management role you most want.

And **Westgate** won't stop there. We'll guide you to and through the hidden job market. This includes acquainting you with the skills and strengths of professional recruiters and providing access to our specialized CV distribution service to ensure your next professional door is opened to you.

Part 7:

Discover an Invisible Job That's Perfect for You

Trying to envision your next step on the corporate ladder is daunting for most – especially when change is not necessarily what we wanted.

When, in truth, change was foisted upon us. Being made redundant or laid off, even, being dismissed, makes climbing the corporate ladder feel more like walking the plank.

Stepping off between the devil and the deep blue sea.

Let your expertise create an opportunity for you, on your terms!

BUT, before anything else comes clear, you must believe me when I tell you that 95% of job seekers are competing for 5% of available jobs. This means that there are in the vicinity of 250 applicants for every one open corporate position!

Another leap of faith I ask you take with me is that the job I'm going to describe to you is all but invisible and yet the perfect elements are right here, taking shape:

- you
- your unique skills and talents
- reliable internet accessibility
- a decent phone connection and
- some place to hang your hat – where you set up shop is up to you

No doubt you've caught on by now that what I'm describing can be mundanely known as self-employment. Yet with a strategic approach to capitalize on your past achievements, you can find yourself quite happy doing consultancy work. For some, the "better yet" scenario is that your expertise could lend itself quite nicely to an advisory capacity at a Board of Directors level.

In this world, a very real and lucrative world, you can take what may appear as an initial setback as an opportunity to retire into your own company. Define your own way of doing things. Finally.

I can hear your doubt welling as you continue reading. Could this actually be a possibility? Indeed, it can.

The first step to make this a successful shift is for you to redefine yourself. To do that you don't have to change in any way except in your concept of who you are and what skills you have to offer. This is a shift. Not a change, per se.

Remember, you've been tucked away safely in a glass tower now for some years, working for one organization and putting all of your knowledge back into that firm. Proper thing.

But, as they say, **That was then. This is now.**

With hard-to-find expertise, there are many companies willing to invest in specialized services they cannot get in their own workforce or in the market in general. When you consider that that marketplace can be close to home or in a different country – or even several countries – warm countries – it begins to put a whole different light on your situation (COVID-19 aside).

When you stand back and take a third-party approach to analyzing your own skill set as a product to be prepared for the marketplace, you'll begin to see yourself in that different light.

You may need some help to lose your preconceived notions – to shake that 'little ol me' view of yourself and really see your own success. Being just an IT guy (or gal) for the last 20 years may seem a little 'aw shucks' when you tell it, but it can be worth a fortune to companies struggling with cyber security. Being a policy writer and analyst can be a breath of much-needed fresh air to groups that are laying the groundwork any country. Finance, human resources, legal, communications, operations – you get the picture. Really – the world can be your oyster.

It's true that being laid off, or being fired after years of faithful service can feel more like walking the plank than taking another step on the corporate ladder. But imagine this. Being strategic, showcasing your own accomplishments, leveraging your reputation and creating your new, career story will make stepping off the plank more like diving into a warm Caribbean sea – or any exotic location of your choosing.

Part 8:

Rather Than Start Over, Why Not Redesign Your Existing Job?

You're an achiever. You've always been excited by challenge and eager to get the job done. Your reputation states that in getting the job done, you've always exceeded expectation.

And yet...

Suddenly, you've found yourself slightly dissatisfied, restless and disenchanted in the position you've held for years. You can't really admit to being unhappy, but your mind has started imagining very green grass on the other side. You've found yourself wondering, is it time? Should I stay or should I go? Big and life-altering questions.



After consulting those in your life whose opinions matter, you're really the only person who can answer. The decision is yours entirely. But – unless you've been offered another position to directly walk into – I implore you: Don't be hasty.

Hasty is not your style. Your style is being strategic! You derive your satisfaction from building something that will last. In this case what you're building is your career so take your time and weigh the pros against the cons.

There are a number of ways you can evaluate your options like speaking to a professional career strategist (ahem...). However, to get started why don't you just grab a pencil and paper. If that's too old school I'm sure there's an app out there ready to be downloaded.

Among the pros and cons – you decide what goes on which side – is time. Know this: it takes months to get to the handshake for a new position. Further, depending on the circumstance, it may take another month or two before you actually take a seat at your new desk. The formula I use for helping clients plan their move is most often this: it takes 4 weeks of looking for every \$10,000 of compensation you are seeking.

Speaking of which, at the top of the list of pros and cons is salary and other compensation like bonuses, commissions and shares. As one of my clients said during her period of contemplation, "My transition date is key as my annual bonus is contingent on me being with my employer at least 50% of the year."

This reality makes a transition to another organization a bit tricky because the timing of a job offer in conjunction with the bonus payout period seldom align, although it's not an impossible feat.

And don't undervalue your existing relationships with your boss, your board, your clients, your suppliers, your colleagues and other associates. If you have the luxury of enjoying solid relationships, then appreciate that they're invaluable and difficult to replace.

Beth Benatti Kennedy, my friend, colleague and author of *Career ReCharge: Five Strategies to Boost Resilience and Beat Burnout*, emphasizes the importance of human connection as the key to resiliency. It is easy to get into a rut and not realize how important it is to nourish present and past relationships. Her research points to the fascinating science of human connection through the production of oxytocin and dopamine. These hormones from the brain reduce stress and provide energy when we connect and reconnect with others in our network—people in our office and throughout the organization.

Whether job searching or focusing on our leadership - we need to have a connection plan, so we keep key colleagues and friends who inspire us close to us.

Because we all have the basic need to connect with others, we must be proactive throughout our career to ensure we stay connected.

Sometimes by looking inside your current organization, you can find new opportunities to refresh your position, purpose and your networks and not have to start all over again in a new environment.

What I suggest is perhaps you take a look at your existing firm with fresh, less uninspired eyes. From your unique vantage point on the inside, actually review what your position offers the organization. Ask yourself, if the ins and outs of your job were offered by a competing organization would you be interested? Now, reshape your position slightly to allow its responsibilities to encompass new and important work that is a) currently lacking at the firm, and b) that you are eminently capable of offering.

Think it through carefully. Time is on your side. Build a strategy that breathes life into your current position, that infuses it with challenge and chases away the overly familiar (chances are it was a sense of tedium that was causing your malaise.)

When the time is right, pitch your idea to fill that gap. This plan is likely to be seen as a huge ROI for your boss and your board, solving a problem, filling a gap – without the cost of recruiting and training a new employee.

Part 9:

You're Over-Qualified

You've heard an opportunity has opened in a company that you're very keen on. The firm has a sound reputation, low turnover, and, by all accounts, great benefits – all pluses. You feel your skills, talents and management style could fit well. The only negative issue you know of is you're at least a level higher than the job they're offering: You'd be leaving a C-Level position for a vice-president role.

But you tell yourself, it's time to move on from your current position. The reasons are legion, and you know in your gut if you don't make a move soon, the change at the board level may just make the decision for you. Time is at hand.

You secure an interview. You invest the time to prepare for it. Solidly. The hiring committee greets you warmly. You ace the questions – you feel it in your bones. The questions you pose are answered candidly. You feel a positive chemistry, a sense of trust and mutual respect. The lengthy meeting ends with handshakes all 'round and a promise of a formal response soon.



You're overqualified so the company creates a job for you

You almost click your heels as you approach the elevator. You can't wait to talk it over with your spouse.

And then...nothing. Days go by. Not a word.

Worry sets in. If you don't secure the position, did you overshare, as people say? Did you give too much away about your current proprietary processes and intellectual property? That information can only help them and do you no good at this point.

As a career consultant for executives, I know there are any number of reasons for the radio silence and most have nothing to do with you on a personal level – although, I understand, from your vantage point it certainly feels that way.

Most often the delay stems from the complications of it being a committee decision. There is the problem of time itself – just getting the selection committee together once again can be onerous. And when they do reconvene, it could be they can't decide on the best candidate (although for the

sake of this article, you have many votes in your favor.) Other reasons can be administrative. Budget issues are a big obstacle. Or it could be your background check is taking longer than expected. Never forget, that security clearance is mission-critical, and you wouldn't want it any other way. A purely annoying reason is that HR or the recruiter assigned is too busy to make the call.

But one very real tumbling block is this: You're over-qualified pure and simple. And as I (and others of my ilk) often say, if you're over-qualified, you're not qualified.

You're a professional in every sense of the word. You know your vast experience and the C-Level position you've held could, and likely will, be the reason you won't fit with this firm. Bolstered by your spouse's positive outlook, you do your best to keep an open mind during this seemingly interminable waiting process and, as any professional would, you follow up.

You're prepared for a polite but firm dismissal but are overjoyed that the company has invited you in once more. They were so pleased with your experience and your natural connection to the corporate culture they foster, they created a new C-Level position for just for you.

This may seem like a bit of pie in the sky, but it happens more often than you may think. It wasn't the position the firm advertised and yet the selection committee decided the qualifications and the qualities you'd bring was worth a shift in the corporate structure.

Although I will add it is not always wise to apply for a position you're over-qualified for, I've worked with dozens of executives who by keeping an open mind, a focus on their value proposition, and knowing their worth have landed excellent opportunities, often with an exponential increase in total compensation.

Afterword

As an executive branding and career consultant, the C-Level clientele, business leaders, and politicians I've met in my line of work – those I helped reshape, retarget their key statements and then transition successfully into their next executive position – all shared one characteristic.

Where they were decision makers of the highest echelon, opinion leaders among their peers, and were regarded as experts in their field, nationally and internationally, they each had a reticence about blowing their own horns.

They may have been comfortable relaying corporate successes and boasting about their team's ability to surpass expectations, but they were not keen on waving their own flags. No matter the circumstance that led to them wanting or needing a professional change, I found them humble and unassuming about their own accomplishments.

Many times, I feel like a cartoon character holding them upside down by the heels and shaking them gently until little gems of information dropped from their pockets and landed neatly on their newly designed resume. It conjures a funny picture, I know, but it is so true in the metaphorical sense. They could sell anything, create anything, get any product to market on time and on budget but they choked when asked about their own success stories.

But then, that's why I'm here.

At Westgate, we've helped thousands of executives, world-wide, tell their story, open doors to new opportunities, and make decisions that have made them and their families happier. We focus on each person individually and their needs and the needs of their families – too often overlooked.

We are 100% independent, and our services are entirely coach-led. What that means to you is that we're not part of a larger organization where you might feel your confidentiality is in jeopardy and we don't foist you off on webinars or another kind of e-course. We write every word for you but in collaboration with you as we prepare your state-of-the-art career marketing collateral and clearly articulated value proposition.

So, whether you merely thumbed through or whether you perused every word I hope your tour through this handbook helped pique your interest and stimulated your intellectual curiosity.

I would feel I'd reached my goal if you wondered at all—about the steps along the Hidden Job Market and if one is the key to a different future for yourself and your family. Perhaps you wondered about

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having a confidant to strategize with you about a change you feel is pending and, finally, if you wondered about how to even begin to sell yourself as though it were you who were a highly prized product in great demand.

Another fact to consider is the significant opportunity cost of the status quo. What if things remain the same? The following words have shaped my own career and I believe deeply in this message:

“The only way to do great work is to love what you do. If you haven’t found it yet, keep looking. Don’t settle.” – Steve Jobs

If you’re hungry to do great work and love what you do but don’t know how to begin the search, we can help you with that. Please feel free to reach us directly at maureen@westgatecareercoaching.com.

“In our conversations I remember us talking about the hidden job market. Much as I believed you, I didn’t have a concept of how it would happen. Well, it just did! I went from interviewing for an SVP position to becoming the manager of SVP’s – my mind is blown.”

Chief Information Officer
Financial Services
San Francisco, CA | USA

GET HIRED UP

Maureen Farmer is Founder/CEO of Westgate Executive Branding & Career Consulting, and since 2011 has offered branded career management services for next-level executives and board nominees around the world.

She is also the host of *Get Hired Up! A Podcast for Next-Level Executives and Board Appointees* who are planning to up-level their career or business.

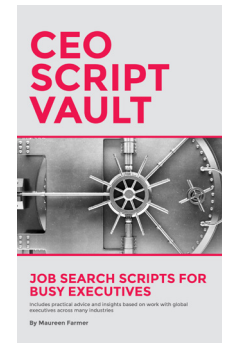
She is a:

- Certified Personal Branding Strategist
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- Certified Résumé Strategist
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Author of *CEO Script Vault: Job Search Scripts for Busy Executives*, Maureen believes that when you are doing work you enjoy with people you respect, everyone wins.

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- Member of International Coach Federation – ICF (New York City Chapter)
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- Career Thought Leaders (CTL)
- Career Directors International (CDI) (to 2021)
- Career Professionals of Canada (CPC)



Maureen holds the following certifications and is a member in good standing of several professional associations.



(to 2021)

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- *Best Canadian Cover Letters*, Second Edition | Sharon Graham | Career Professionals of Canada | 2013

If you're anxious do great work and love what you do but don't know how to begin the search, we can help you with that. Please feel free to reach us directly at maureen@westgatecareercoaching.com.