

JUNE 2025 -

SUMMER OF GROWTH: CULTIVATING YOUR CAREER GARDEN

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"What you do makes a difference, and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make."
— Jane Goodall



This month, we invite you to embrace the summer season as a time of intentional growth, reflection, and renewal in your career. Just like a well-tended garden, your professional life flourishes with the right mix of planning, nurturing, pruning, and patience.

Inside, you'll find practical strategies for navigating change, authentically expanding your network, and aligning your personal brand with your core values. Whether you're launching a job search, building your influence, or reevaluating your direction, this issue offers insights to help you grow through every phase of your journey.

You'll also find tools to support your mindset, strengthen your communication skills, and make the most of real-life interactions, especially during the more relaxed rhythm of summer. From professional development to wellness and reinvention, our contributors share actionable advice grounded in real-world experience.

As always, our goal is to empower you with relevant, human-centered resources to support your success, no matter where you are in your career cycle.

Let's grow together.

For more career-focused information, insights, and inspiration, visit the Career Experts Group website at www.careerexpertsgroup.com.

We've got you covered wherever you are in your career journey.

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SEASONS AND CYCLES: NAVIGATING YOUR CAREER THROUGH CHANGE

The most resilient careers aren't built on static expertise, but on an intuitive understanding of the ebb and flow of industry cycles. Just as gardens transition through seasons of planting, growth, harvest, and dormancy, industries experience cycles of innovation, growth, maturity, and disruption. By recognizing these patterns, professionals can strategically position themselves for success regardless of where their industry sits in its current cycle.

THE REALITY OF CAREER CYCLES IN TODAY'S ECONOMY

The statistics paint a clear picture of how dramatically the professional world has changed:

- According to labor market research, today's professionals will hold an average of 12-15 jobs during their working lives.
- A World Economic Forum report indicates that 65% of children entering primary school today will work in job types that don't yet exist [1].
- McKinsey research shows that S&P 500 companies that excel at talent management generate 300% more revenue per employee, compared to median firms (mid-range financial performers) [2].
- According to Deloitte, approximately 80% of employees consider well-being programs crucial to their engagement and retention [3].

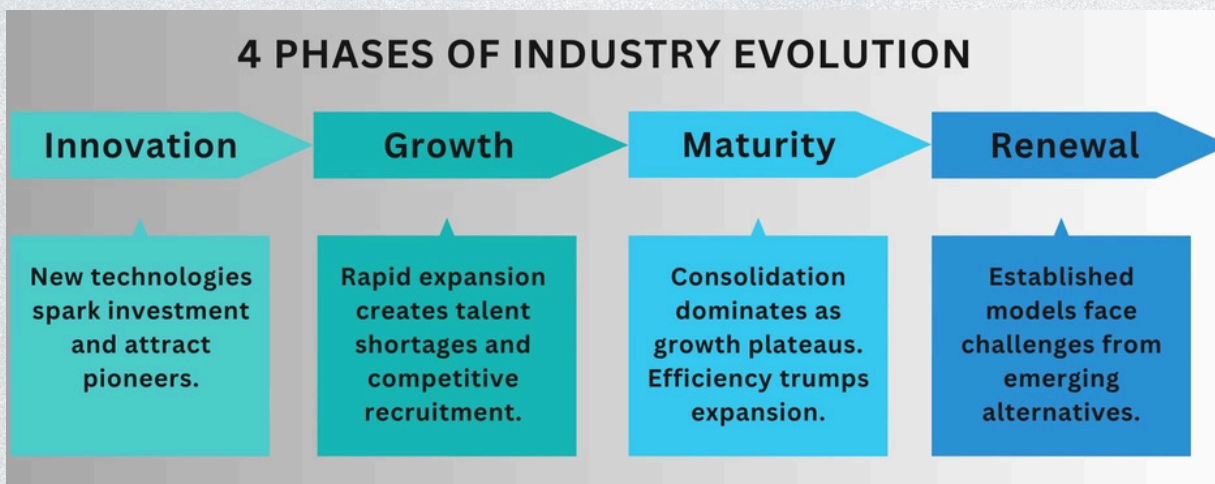
These statistics highlight a fundamental truth: career paths are no longer linear, but cyclical, requiring adaptive strategies and continuous reinvention.

UNDERSTANDING INDUSTRY CYCLES

Industries typically move through four primary phases:

1. **Innovation Phase:** New technologies spark investment and attract pioneers. Early adopters and specialists thrive as groundbreaking ideas take root.
2. **Growth Phase:** Rapid expansion creates talent shortages and competitive recruitment. Expertise commands premium value as markets flourish.
3. **Maturity Phase:** Consolidation dominates as growth plateaus. Efficiency trumps expansion, with organizations optimizing existing operations, rather than creating new positions.
4. **Disruption/Renewal Phase:** Established models face challenges from emerging alternatives. Workforce restructuring coincides with fresh opportunities for those positioned at the forefront of change.

Understanding where your industry sits within this cycle can provide invaluable insights for career planning, particularly when aligning with fiscal versus calendar year business cycles.



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SEASONS AND CYCLES, CONTINUED

FIVE KEY STEPS TO MASTER CAREER CYCLES

1. Develop Cycle Awareness:*Pinpoint your industry's current lifecycle position.*

- ▶ Subscribe to industry insights.
- ▶ Join trend-tracking associations.
- ▶ Conduct quarterly assessments.
- ▶ Study companies at different cycle stages.

2. Build a Cycle-Proof Skills Portfolio:*Develop versatile capabilities that retain value across phases.*

- ▶ Distinguish between phase-specific and evergreen skills.
- ▶ Acquire emerging technical expertise.
- ▶ Strengthen universal human capabilities.
- ▶ Gain cross-functional experience.
- ▶ Pursue strategic upskilling opportunities.

3. Network Across Cycle Boundaries:*Connect with professionals in all stages.*

- ▶ Map your network's cycle diversity.
- ▶ Join cross-industry communities.
- ▶ Exchange mentorship across phases.
- ▶ Attend forward-looking conferences.
- ▶ Reconnect with colleagues who've pivoted.

**4. Implement Strategic Career Reviews:***Conduct regular career assessments aligned with fiscal and calendar milestones.*

- ▶ Schedule bi-annual evaluations.
- ▶ Assemble a personal advisory board.
- ▶ Create multi-scenario career paths.
- ▶ Sync development with planning cycles.
- ▶ Maintain an opportunity tracker.

5. Transform Disruption into Opportunity:*Don't just survive change. Leverage it as a catalyst for reinvention.*

- ▶ Prioritize learning during stable periods.
- ▶ Build a financial transition reserve.
- ▶ Practice scenario planning.
- ▶ Identify disruption-resistant skills.
- ▶ Reframe challenges as openings.



FLOURISH THROUGH EVERY SEASON

By mastering professional cycles, you position yourself to thrive amid constant change. The most resilient careers aren't built on stability, but on anticipation and adaptation. Your professional journey, like a well-tended garden, requires different approaches for different seasons, allowing you to flourish through whatever cycle comes next.

REFERENCES

- [1] World Economic Forum, [From classroom to career: Building a future-ready global workforce](#), December 14, 2024
- [2] McKinsey.com, [The critical role of strategic workforce planning in the age of AI](#), February 26, 2025
- [3] Deloitte.com, [The workforce well-being imperative](#), March 13, 2023

BRANCHING OUT TO NEW COMMUNITIES: A HUMAN-CENTERED APPROACH TO JOB SEARCHING

If you're not a fan of networking, you're not alone. For years, I resisted it, too, intimidated by the idea of forced conversations and superficial small talk. But just like a reluctant gardener who learns to love tending the soil, I discovered that real growth happens when you lean into discomfort and start planting seeds of connection. Over time, those seeds blossom into meaningful relationships that enrich your professional journey.

So, how do you nurture your network garden, especially if it initially feels unnatural? Think beyond the usual rows of career fairs and LinkedIn messages. Diversify your soil. Experiment with new spaces. Water the relationships with genuine interest. Learn to love the craft.

Why is this skill important? The more variety you introduce into your garden, such as diverse crops, industries, and locations, the richer your harvest. Many experts suggest that at least 80% of all jobs are filled through a professional network connection [1]. And the most successful job seekers often tap into their "weak ties": casual acquaintances and loose connections who can provide access to new networks and opportunities. This concept was first popularized by sociologist Mark Granovetter in his groundbreaking research on social networks [2].

BUILDING YOUR NETWORK

Here are 10 ways to grow your network organically, rooted in authenticity, curiosity, and a willingness to branch out beyond familiar ground:

1. Attend Local Job Fairs and Career Expos

Job fairs offer a valuable opportunity to meet multiple employers in person, explore a variety of organizations, and leave a lasting impression, something that's hard to achieve through online applications alone. Come prepared with a polished resume and a strong elevator pitch, and don't forget to follow up with the contacts you make.

I remember how intimidated my daughter felt before attending her first job fair... but that single event led to her landing a dream nursing role that's grown into an eight-year (and counting) journey of rapid career advancement.

2. Join Alumni Association Events

Reconnect with your college or university alumni association. These gatherings foster instant rapport and trust, and alums are often vested in helping fellow graduates succeed.

3. Explore City Event Calendars for Community Gatherings

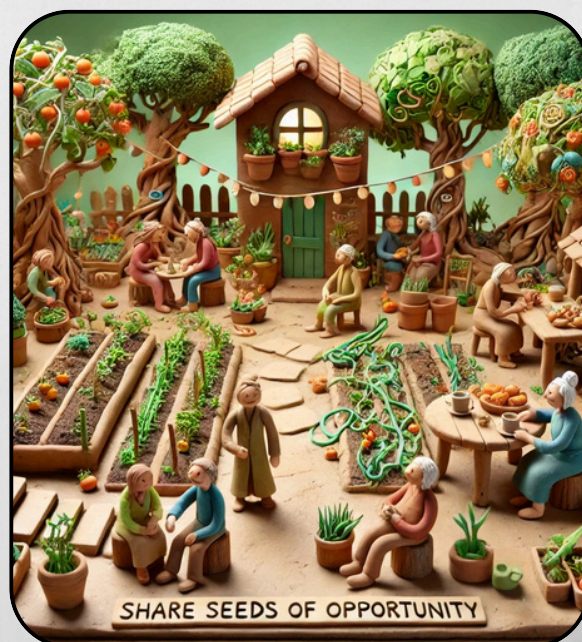
Check your city's event calendar for town hall meetings, neighborhood festivals, or business networking nights. These events attract a diverse crowd and can lead to unexpected professional connections.

4. Participate in Industry-Specific Seminars and Workshops

Industry seminars and workshops offer direct access to peers and leaders in your field. Engaging in discussions and Q&A sessions can help you stand out and build relationships with key influencers.

5. Attend Chamber of Commerce or Local Rotary Events

Local Chambers of Commerce and Rotary Clubs regularly host mixers and business breakfasts. These are ideal for meeting entrepreneurs, hiring managers, and professionals from various sectors in a relaxed, welcoming environment.



BRANCHING OUT TO NEW COMMUNITIES, CONTINUED

6. Network at Professional Association Meetings

Professional associations often hold monthly or quarterly meetings for members and guests. These gatherings are rich with people eager to share knowledge and referrals within their industry.

7. Volunteer at Community Events

Volunteer at charity galas, fundraising runs, or local community projects. Search for high-visibility events where you'll often find community leaders and business owners who appreciate initiative and collaboration. My own experience volunteering with a church career ministry led directly to my first paid role in the career management industry, proving that service can open unexpected professional doors.

8. Attend Open Houses or Info Sessions at Local Businesses

Many companies host open houses or informational sessions for the public. These events are opportunities to learn about organizational culture, meet employees, and express your interest directly.

9. Join Local Sports Leagues or Fitness Groups

Recreational sports leagues and fitness classes bring together professionals from all walks of life. These informal settings often lead to genuine conversations and referrals.

10. Visit Co-Working Spaces and Attend Their Events

Co-working spaces frequently organize networking breakfasts, speaker series, and after-hours socials. These events attract freelancers, startups, and established companies, creating fertile ground for new connections.

THE HUMAN TOUCH

Most importantly, remember to focus on building genuine, human connections. "Don't ask for a job," says career strategist and LinkedIn Learning course creator Jenny Foss. "Ask for advice, insights, or introductions. Show curiosity. Show up human." [3]

What starts as a conversation about photography or climate policy might lead to a job that better matches your purpose than a third-degree connection on LinkedIn. As you branch out and nurture new communities, you'll be planting seeds for long-term growth.

RESOURCES

[1] Forbes, [Networking: It's Not What You Think](#), October 15, 2020

[2] Stanford Report, [50 years on, Mark Granovetter's 'The Strength of Weak Ties' is stronger than ever](#), July 24, 2023

[3] LinkedIn Pulse Steer Your Career, [How to Ask for \(& Make the Most of\) an Informational Interview](#), August 30, 2022

CAREER EXPERTS GROUP RESOURCES

"Your Career > Your Future" Newsletter Articles:

- [Opportunities Expand When We Expand Our Circle](#)
- [Powerful Job Search Networking Resources for Diverse Job Seekers](#)
- [Circle of Influence](#)
- [3 Strategies to Free Yourself from Fear in the Job Search](#)

BUILD YOUR NETWORK WHILE GRILLING AND CHILLING: SUMMER NETWORKING MADE EASY

by *Elyse Pipitone*

Ah, summer: time to relax, kick back, and enjoy some sun and fun. While summer often gets a reputation as a slow season for job search and hiring, it is actually one of the best times to build your network in casual, low-pressure ways.

From weddings and graduation parties to backyard barbecues and neighborhood block parties, summer events offer ways to connect with people authentically. With the right mindset and the following strategies, your social gatherings can open doors to a new career.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUMMER NETWORKING

- **Graduation Parties:** While celebrating with students and proud family members and friends, conversations tend to flow naturally.
- **Weddings and Receptions:** It's easy to find people who are friendly and in good spirits. Starting conversations with your tablemates is an easy place to start.
- **Barbecues and Block Parties:** Casual environments always help to lower the pressure. Connecting with neighbors or friends-of-friends can feel effortless.
- **Outdoor Concerts, Festivals, and Art Fairs:** Creative and cultural events often attract a diverse crowd. You can meet interesting people from a variety of interests, talents, and work experiences.
- **Alumni Events and Summer Class Reunions:** Social gatherings featuring your former college or high school classmates offer the perfect combination of social and professional interactions.
- **Volunteering Events:** Beach clean-ups, community gardens, and other outdoor activities are a great way to meet other values-driven people from different industries or professional stages.
- **Recreational Leagues or Hobby Groups:** Interest groups like adult sports leagues, hiking clubs, and summer classes offer multiple informal interactions — great for building trust and relationships.

Talking Points to Try:

a mix of fun and more targeted questions

What summer activity do you never get tired of doing?

What's one thing you learned recently that surprised you?

What was your favorite summer activity when you were a kid?

If you could work from anywhere in the world this summer, where would it be and why?

If you could swap jobs with anyone for a day, who would it be?

STRATEGIES FOR SUMMER NETWORKING

1. **Lead with Curiosity:** People are more receptive when you're genuinely interested in them, instead of only talking about yourself.
2. **Have a Light Elevator Pitch Ready:** In case you're asked, be prepared to discuss what you're looking for in your next role in a concise 20- to 30-second statement. To make it more effective, try tailoring it to the context of your event.
3. **Follow Up Promptly:** After you've made a good connection, send a short LinkedIn message, email, or text within 2-3 days: "Great meeting you at [event]! Would love to stay in touch."
4. **Be a Connector:** If you can't directly benefit from your new contact, offer to provide a resource or introduce that person to someone you know. This can be a powerful way to develop the relationship.



A summer slow-down doesn't mean your job search needs to go on the back burner. Every conversation you have at a summer gathering has the potential to create new connections. This might just be the season that ushers in your next career move.

THE ROOT SYSTEM: BUILDING AN AUTHENTIC PERSONAL BRAND FROM THE GROUND UP

PLANTING THE SEEDS OF PROFESSIONAL SUCCESS

Full disclosure: I can't keep a houseplant alive for more than a month. Yet I am drawn to beautiful gardens, admiring their intricate designs and vibrant colors from a respectful distance. Perhaps that's why the parallel between gardening and personal branding resonates with me — I recognize the artistry and care involved, even if my thumbs aren't particularly green.

This appreciation has me noticing something interesting: the most magnificent gardens don't happen by accident. They require intention, care, and consistent attention, much like developing a personal brand. As we celebrate National Gardening Exercise Day and Great Outdoors Month, I've found myself reflecting on how gardening principles mirror the journey of building an authentic, thriving personal brand identity.

THE SOIL: ESTABLISHING YOUR BRAND FOUNDATION

Every flourishing garden begins with rich, nutrient-dense soil — the often-overlooked foundation determining what can grow and how well it will thrive. This soil represents your core values, beliefs, and unique perspective in your personal brand garden.

Your brand soil consists of:

- **Your values and principles:** What matters most to you?
- **Your purpose:** Beyond making a living, what impact do you want your work to have?
- **Your unique perspective:** What life experiences shape how you see the world?

Remember, the richest brand soil isn't created overnight. It develops through experience, reflection, and intentional cultivation.

THE ROOTS: UNCOVERING YOUR AUTHENTIC BRAND

Just as a plant's root system extends far deeper than what we see above ground, the most powerful aspects of your personal brand often lie beneath the surface. These roots represent your authentic strengths, your story, and the connections that nourish your professional growth.

Many professionals spend years trying to shape their visible "brand" without doing the root work. The result? A professional presence that looks polished but lacks depth. Actual growth begins when you stop focusing exclusively on outward appearances and start nurturing your roots, including:

- **Your authentic strengths:** Not just what you're good at, but what energizes you. What are your talents that you also love to do?
- **Your distinctive story:** The journey and insights that only you possess.
- **Your network:** The relationships that provide support and stability.



THE ROOT SYSTEM, CONTINUED

THE FLOWERS: PRESENTING YOUR BRAND TO THE WORLD

Finally, we reach the visible part of your garden: the beautiful blooms others notice. In your personal brand, these are the external expressions that communicate who you are professionally:

- Your communication style across all channels
- Your visual identity in person and online
- Your work products and tangible contributions

When your "flowers" grow naturally from strong roots and nourishing soil, they require less maintenance and attract the right opportunities. When your external brand authentically represents your internal values and strengths, you spend less energy on impression management and more on creating meaningful work.

TENDING YOUR BRAND

Like any garden, your personal brand requires ongoing care through seasonal pruning, fertilizing growth areas, adapting to different career seasons, and seeking diverse influences.

The most rewarding aspect of viewing your personal brand as a garden is embracing the natural cycles of growth. Some seasons bring obvious blooms, while others focus on root strengthening or soil enrichment. All are essential to sustainable success.

In our hyper-connected world, there's pressure to craft an instant, picture-perfect personal brand. However, the most compelling brands, like the most beautiful gardens, develop organically over time. Be patient with your growth, focus on creating rich soil through clarified values, and nurture your roots. You'll end up cultivating a personal brand garden that is uniquely yours.



Special Feature

CULTIVATE YOUR CAREER GARDEN: TOOLS FOR EVERY SEASON

In today's unpredictable job market, career development is less like climbing a ladder and more like tending a garden: an act requiring continuous care, adaptation (weeding), and occasional pivoting (replanting). This article provides essential "gardening tools" for every season of your career journey – a collection of Career Experts Group (CEG) articles, resource guides, and videos to grow and nurture your job search and career path.

THE CAREER GARDEN CYCLE: EMBRACING NATURAL GROWTH

Just as gardens follow seasonal patterns, our careers naturally flow through cycles of exploration, growth, mastery, and renewal. Whether you're planting new seeds after a career change, nurturing your budding skills, harvesting the fruits of your expertise, or preparing soil for a fresh start, CEG offers specialized resources tailored to each stage.

EXPLORATION PHASE: Selecting Your Seeds

The beginning of any career journey involves discovering possibilities and preparing fertile ground. During this phase, you're asking fundamental questions such as: What truly interests me? In what industry or company would my skills best flourish? Which values do I want my career to consistently reflect and uphold?

The following resources will help you explore what's next and determine which tools will help you get there.

- Dig deep into your aspirations and motivations with our "[List of Questions for a Career Conversation](#)."
- Align your career direction with emerging opportunities, guided by the "[Action Plan: Mastering Trend-Based Goals](#)."
- Watch Kim Kristensen's remarkable journey "[From Circus to Mediation](#)" to witness how career paths can take unexpected turns.
- Find motivation during transitions with "[Job Transition - Mindset and Inspiration](#)."



GROWTH PHASE: Daily Tending

Once you've planted your career seeds, consistent nurturing is essential. This stage focuses on developing your professional presence, building networking connections, and positioning yourself effectively in the marketplace.

Job Search & Networking:

- Power up your resume with "[430 Action Verbs](#)" and "[310 Resume Power Adjectives](#)" that truly showcase your value.
- Master modern job search techniques with our "[Job Search Strategies: Using LinkedIn Job Search Features Checklist](#)"
- Tailor your professional image with specialized resume guides for [Executive Board](#), [Technical](#), and [Non-Profit](#) roles.
- Expand your professional network using strategies from "[Networking Message to Warm and Cold Connections](#)."

Get an insider's look:

- Understand automated hiring systems through our comprehensive "[Everything You Wanted to Know About ATS](#)" series (2 videos in the series).
- Amplify your visibility with "[LinkedIn Post Ideas Made Easy](#)" and "[Time-Saving Social Media Posting Strategies](#)."
- Protect your career garden from harmful elements with "[Safeguard Your Career: Recognizing and Reporting Job Scams](#)."

Special Feature

CULTIVATE YOUR CAREER GARDEN, CONTINUED



MASTERY PHASE: Harvesting Knowledge

As your career garden matures, you'll find yourself in a position to reap the rewards of your dedication while sharing your abundance with others. This phase focuses on maximizing your value and expanding your influence during and after the hiring process.

- Negotiate from a position of strength using our "[Job Offer Negotiations](#)" guide.
- Consider the complete package with "[Salary Isn't Everything - Benefits and Perks](#)" when evaluating opportunities.
- Build lasting career resilience via "[Brand Visibility, Network Expansion, and Career Agility](#)."

RENEWAL PHASE: Resting and Investigating New Directions

Even the most abundant gardens need periods of rest and rejuvenation. Whether you're taking a career sabbatical, seeking work-life balance, or preparing for an entirely new planting season, these resources support your transition.

- Explore flexible options with our "[Gig Work Resources Guide](#)."
- Navigate career reentry after a break with our "[Returnship Program Support](#)" resource guide.
- Discover steps for a successful career transition through "[The Coaching Process](#)" video.
- Expand your horizons with our comprehensive "[Lifelong Learning Resources](#)," featuring opportunities for upskilling and reskilling.
- Discover perspectives for career reinvention in "[Rejuvenate, Renew, and Reinvigorate](#)."

TOOLS FOR EVERY GARDEN

Some challenges transcend career phases. Our cross-cutting resources address important considerations, regardless of the stage of your career journey:

- Navigate workplace accommodations with "[Critical Issues Facing Neurodivergent Job Seekers and Employees](#)."
- Protect your well-being with "[Understanding Your Health Insurance Options](#)" and our [accompanying video](#).
- Know your legal protections through "[Visible and Non-Apparent Illnesses and Disabilities: KNOW YOUR RIGHTS](#)."
- Support community health through "[Donate Blood and Save a Life](#)."

YOUR CAREER GARDEN AWAITS

Like a garden, your career requires patience, adaptation, and care. With the right tools and knowledge, you can cultivate a professional life that sustains and fulfills you through every season. The cyclical nature of career development means that even established professionals may find themselves back in the exploration phase, planting new seeds for second acts or pursuing passions over paychecks.



Which phase of the career garden are you in today? Visit careerexpertsgroup.com to access all of the above resources (and many more!), and begin cultivating your most vibrant professional life.

I feel stuck in my job search. What can I do to move forward? -Claire T.

Job searching is more than a checklist, it's a journey of personal growth. It can feel frustrating to put in the work but not see progress. These periods of feeling stalled often become a catalyst for reflection, clarity, and reinvention.

Here are five common reasons job seekers lose momentum, along with actionable steps to help you grow through the process, build confidence, and position yourself for your next opportunity.

1. Lack of Focus and Strategy

One of the most significant mistakes a job seeker can make is applying everywhere without a clear plan. This scattered approach wastes valuable time and energy while diluting your impact. Research shows that targeted job searches are significantly more effective than mass applications [1].

Action Step: Identify your core skills, values, and career aspirations. Create a focused list of 10–15 target companies and specific roles that align with your goals. Dive deep into each organization's mission, recent news, and current challenges. Once you find a role at a targeted company, customize your resume and cover letter to demonstrate how you uniquely can contribute to the company's success in the role.

2. Lack of Consistency and Follow-Up

Job searching is a marathon, not a sprint. Without a consistent routine, it can be easy to lose momentum and feel overwhelmed. Maintaining steady, manageable daily activities helps sustain motivation and effectiveness throughout your search.

Action Step: Set realistic daily and weekly goals that align with your energy patterns and other commitments. Use spreadsheets, job search apps, or CRM systems to track applications, networking conversations, and follow-up communications. Consistency builds momentum and helps you identify patterns in your progress, allowing you to adjust your strategy as needed.

3. Weak Personal Branding

Employers won't recognize your unique value proposition if you can't clearly articulate what sets you apart from other candidates. In today's competitive market, a strong, consistent personal brand dramatically increases your visibility and your opportunities for job interviews.

Action Step: Refresh your LinkedIn About section to authentically tell your professional story and share your career aspirations. Develop a clear personal brand statement you can confidently deliver while networking and interviewing. Actively engage with relevant industry content by commenting thoughtfully and sharing insights to boost your visibility and establish credibility. Don't forget to ask former colleagues and managers for LinkedIn recommendations that showcase your skills and work style.



ASK THE EXPERTS

*I feel stuck in my job search, continued***4. Underutilizing Your Network**

Here's a striking statistic: between 70% and 85% of jobs are filled through networking rather than traditional job applications or postings [2]. Yet many job seekers focus almost exclusively on online applications while neglecting the power of human connections. Remember: people hire people.

Action Step: Make networking a cornerstone of your job search strategy. Reconnect with former colleagues, join professional associations in your field, volunteer for causes you care about, and actively seek informational interviews. These meaningful connections often unlock opportunities that never reach public job boards. Attend virtual and in-person industry events to expand your reach and stay current with trends in your field.

5. Not Learning from Setbacks

Rejection is inevitable in job searching, but making repeated mistakes without reflection leads to frustration and stagnation. The most successful job seekers treat each setback as a learning opportunity and continuously refine their approach based on feedback.

Action Step: After each rejection or unsuccessful interview, refocus your energy and ask what you can learn from the experience. Keep a "lessons learned" journal to track patterns and celebrate progress. Remember, every setback is setting you up for a stronger comeback.

MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE

Job searching requires patience, persistence, and strategic thinking. Addressing these five common roadblocks will transform your approach from reactive to proactive. Clear those obstacles, nurture your professional growth, and watch your job search bloom with renewed energy and purpose. Stay persistent, keep learning from each experience, and celebrate small wins along the way — your next opportunity is closer than you think.

REFERENCES

1. BioSpace, "[Benefits of a Targeted Job Search and How to Get Started](#)," October 7, 2019
2. Forbes, "[Networking: It's Not What You Think](#)," October 15, 2020

CAREER EXPERTS GROUP "YOUR CAREER > YOUR FUTURE" NEWSLETTER ARTICLES

- [Opportunities Expand When We Expand Our Circle](#)
- [Circle of Influence](#)
- [3 Strategies to Free Yourself from Fear in the Job Search](#)
- [Elevate Your Personal Brand, Elevate Your Career: The Power of Mindset](#)
- [Mastering Career Resilience: Unleashing the Power of Your Personal Brand](#)



HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

LEVEL UP YOUR VOICE: JUNE IS EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATIONS MONTH!

Want to connect better and be heard? June is your month! Effective communication is more than just talking, it's also building bridges. Communication is a vital skill for both one's personal and professional life.

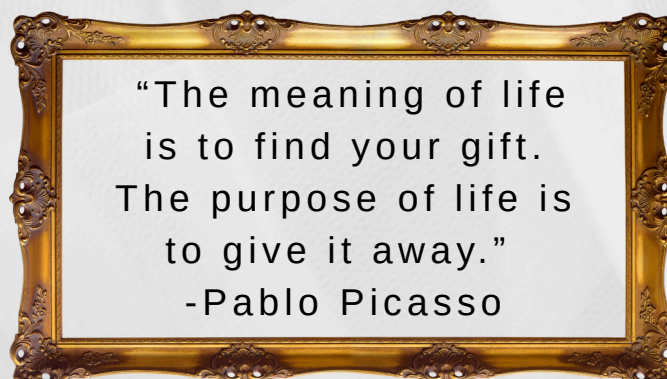
Organizations like the National Communication Association (NCA), founded in 1914, have long championed the study and importance of effective communication. The formal establishment of a dedicated month further spotlights and encourages the improvement of these crucial skills across various platforms.

Let's dive into some easy steps to boost your skills and have fun doing it:

- **Listen Up! (Actively):** Communication is two-way. Deliberately focus on what others say (words and body language). Minimize distractions and try summarizing their points to ensure you understand it. You'll be surprised what you learn!
- **Say What You Mean (Clearly!):** Ditch the jargon and rambling. Be clear, concise, and structured. Before you speak or write, nail down your main point. Clarity wins!
- **Feel Their Vibe (Empathy Rules):** Try seeing things from other people's perspectives. Consider their background and feelings. Empathy builds trust and makes your own message land better.
- **Watch Your Moves (Nonverbals Matter):** Your body speaks volumes! Make sure your posture, eye contact, and gestures match your words. Also, pay attention to other people's nonverbal cues – they tell a story!
- **Get the Scoop (Seek Feedback):** Want to keep improving your communication? Ask for honest feedback. Be open to suggestions – it's how you grow! Reflect on your conversations: What worked? What didn't?



Effective Communications Month is your chance to shine! By practicing these simple steps, you'll connect more deeply, be understood more easily, and navigate life with greater confidence. So, listen actively, speak clearly, and connect with empathy.



HOLIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

LOOKING AHEAD TO JULY

TAP IN RESPONSIBLY: JULY IS NATIONAL CELL PHONE COURTESY MONTH!

Our phones connect us to the world, but let's make sure they don't disconnect us from the people right in front of us. July is the month to improve our mobile manners! Here are some easy ways to be a more considerate digital citizen:

- **Be Present (In Real Life [IRL] First!):** When you're with people, be with them. Resist the urge to constantly check your phone. Engage in the conversation and enjoy the company. Those notifications can probably wait.
- **Volume Down, Please:** Loud conversations in public spaces can be disruptive. Keep your call volume at a reasonable level and be mindful of those around you. Consider using headphones for calls and media.
- **Silence is Golden (Sometimes!):** Meetings, movies, performances, places of worship – these are often phone-free zones for a reason. Silence or vibrate your phone to avoid disturbing others.
- **Text with Tact:** Not every conversation needs to be a call. For quick updates or non-urgent matters, a text message can be less intrusive. Be mindful of the recipient's availability and avoid lengthy text exchanges when a call might be more efficient (and courteous).
- **Walking and Talking (Proceed with Caution!):** Navigating busy streets while glued to your phone can be hazardous for you and others. Be aware of your surroundings and step aside if you need to make or take a call.
- **Respect Those Serving You (Be Present and Polite):** When you're being helped by someone in public – a cashier, a waiter, a stylist, etc. – give them your undivided attention. Put your phone away. It shows respect for their time and effort and allows for clearer communication. Being present ensures smoother and more pleasant interaction for everyone.
- **Respect Personal Space (Digital Boundaries):** Avoid showing others private photos or videos on your phone unless they explicitly ask. What's okay for you might not be okay for everyone.
- **Mind Your Manners (Online Too!):** Cell phone courtesy extends to our online interactions. Be mindful of your tone in texts and messages, avoid sharing sensitive information without consent, and think before you post.

National Cell Phone Courtesy Month is a reminder to use our devices thoughtfully and respectfully. By being mindful of our mobile manners, we can enhance our in-person interactions and create a more considerate environment for everyone. So, let's tap in responsibly and connect with courtesy!



HOLIDAY SPECIAL FEATURE - NETWORKING BIO

GERRY "THE GRILL MASTER" SMOKESTACK

Premier BBQ Executive Officer & Culinary Innovation Strategist

IGNITING PROFITABILITY AND FLAVOR OPTIMIZATION FOR GLOBAL DINING ORGANIZATIONS THROUGH VISIONARY SMOKE MANAGEMENT, OPERATIONAL HEAT CONTROL, & INNOVATIVE MEAT MAXIMIZATION



Meat Whispering

Smoke Engineering

Flavor Alchemy

Grill Diplomacy

BOARD POSITIONS

- **Founding Director**, Sauce Diversity Initiative | 2017 - Present
- **Chairman of the Board**, National Association for the Advancement of Charcoal Knowledge | 2018 - Present
- **Executive Board Member**, International Brisket Enthusiasts | 2019 - Present
- **Advisory Council**, Smoke Management Institute of America | 2019 - Present

AWARDS

- "Golden Tong Award" (2023)
- "Flame of Fame" Lifetime Achievement Award (2024)
- "Smokin' Hot Executive" Award (2022)

"Gerry doesn't just cook meat—he performs miracles. His brisket made me cry real tears and propose marriage to a rib rack."

*-Bobby Flamethrower
Certified Meat Operations Officer*

Gerry Smokestack is a leading architect in the premium BBQ industry, instrumental in the creation and implementation of a vertical approach to barbecue supported by widespread temperature zoning and meat segmentation. As the visionary flame behind Smokestack BBQ Consulting LLC, Gerry delivers unparalleled grilling services that span meat analysis, global spice segmentation, and innovative smoking solutions, catalyzing flavor profiles and profitability for an impressive portfolio of clients including top-tier steakhouses, celebrity chefs, competition pitmasters, institutional meat investors, and Fortune 500 backyard enthusiasts.

His tenure in the industry is marked by pivotal roles at Texas Timber Flavors, Pitmasters Global Network, Charcoal Exchange International, and MeatCorp US. He has been instrumental in driving strategic smoke partnerships and leading segmented grill stations to new levels of success. His groundbreaking work has not only reshaped barbecue models and operational strategies but also substantially increased shareholder satisfaction and waistlines.

Smokestack is a quintessential leader whose strategic meat initiatives have consistently translated into high-level success for the organizations he has fired up. At MeatCorp US he masterminded a strategic merger of brisket and ribs that fundamentally transformed the company's flavor trajectory and operational efficacy. His innovative approach and adept crisis management during charcoal fluctuations resulted in a significant elevation of the company's taste performance, reinforcing his reputation as a catalyst for robust organizational growth and customer value enhancement.

SOME OF GERRY'S KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- **Revenue Flame Turnaround Strategies:** Revitalized lagging North American BBQ business, boosting sales from \$15M to \$33M and achieving triple-digit smoke ring growth in two years.
- **Sales Growth and Meat Expansion:** Amplified organizational grilling capacity 156% and flavor profiles 65% in three seasons, catapulting customer satisfaction to a record high of 99.6%.
- **Strategic Talent Marination:** Escalated EBITDA (Meat Earnings Before Interest, Taxes, Depreciation, and Amortization) from \$465K to \$13M, surpassing taste targets 78% by improving employee seasoning through strategic talent acquisition and smoke culture development.
- **Unified Commercial BBQ Strategy:** Orchestrated integration of four independent grilling units into a cohesive operation, spurring unprecedented flavor innovation and significantly contributing to a 260% leap in global sauce revenue & EBITDA growth.

CORE SUCCESS DRIVERS

- **MEAT WHISPERING:** Leverage deep marinade insights and a flame-kissed approach to forge robust protein relationships, driving sustainable flavor development and establishing industry benchmarks for grilling excellence.
- **SMOKE ENGINEERING:** Transform challenges into opportunities and inspire pit crews to achieve unparalleled success through an environment of innovation and smoke accountability while harnessing a unique blend of fire management, operational seasoning expertise, and decisive basting action.
- **FLAVOR ALCHEMY:** Combine analytical temperature prowess with creative rub strategies to identify and capitalize on new meat opportunities and innovative sauce line offerings, fueling flavor growth and securing competitive advantages in diverse outdoor cooking and grilling markets.
- **GRILL DIPLOMACY:** Cultivate tactical and transformative relationships with farmers, butchers, and spice merchants, leveraging collaborative pit-master style to unlock value and propel market presence while merging hot zones with cool zones to create synergistic flavor profiles.

CHECK OUT A SAMPLING OF OUR GREAT INFORMATIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL VIDEOS.

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Denise Bitler
Resume-Interview
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Laura Johnson
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**Creating A Civil Workplace: Why It
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Jacqueline Peros, Founder of JMP Branding LLC





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**Which Would Impress a Recruiter or
Hiring Manager More:
ChatGPT-Written Resume or Career
Service Provider-Written Resume?**
By: Denise Bitler
Resume-Interview Success, LLC



*Master Resume Writer (MRW), Certified Professional Resume
Writer (CPRW), Certified Digital Branding Strategist (CDBS),
Certified Interview Compensation Negotiations Coach (CICNC),
Certified Interview Coach (CIC)*


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**Celebrating Pride Month:
Interview with Tom Powner,
CEO/COO Career Thinker Inc.**
By: Denise Bitler, Resume-Interview Success, LLC and
Laura Johnson, LLEJ Careers






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ALONE WE ARE UNSTOPPABLE.
TOGETHER WE ARE A POWERHOUSE!

Stay tuned for our July 2025 Edition,
"The Freedom Mindset: Thinking Beyond Traditional Career Paths"