Job Hunting

Manager

Director

Executive

Tips

Data

Pins

Views

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

"There are Directors and Directors. Sometimes a Director is more like a manager and vice-versa. **We do not get hung up on the name of the position**. We are very aware of the fact that the terminology of positions varies a lot. We always look at the scope of responsibilities and carefully verify them", says an Executive Search Consultant interviewed by us.

The first edition of *Job Hunting Director* was published in 2012 as a collection of pieces of advice from **CEOs**, **HR directors**, **Executive Search Consultants**, **psychologists** and, of course, Career Angels. At the time, we dared to foresee about **90%** of the answers of the interviewees. The overall awareness of the top management candidates looking for a job was rather low.

Since then, we've continued to constantly provide advice for **career-(un)conscious managers and executives**, share our knowledge and methodologies, and collect new data from as many (reliable) sources as possible. Although it's been over a decade, many of the tips from the book are still valid. For those directors who value their time, these are the three main ones:

1) Before you start looking for a job, ask yourself: what am I looking for? What is my motivation? What are my competences? What are my key skills? **The clearer you are, the better you can communicate that** to a headhunter or a potential employer.
2) Invest **up to five hours** of your time in preparing a professional (!) CV, including a well-written professional summary and work experience that highlights your achievements and your education. If you decide to include a photo, make sure it's a **professional** one. Add another two hours to prepare a CV version that is compliant with Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). More about that on page 17.
3) Before meeting with a potential employer or a headhunter: **prepare, prepare, prepare**!

It seemed that the **job market and the job hunting process itself** were rather stable, with only a few variables changing from time to time. And just when we thought that candidates were becoming more aware, **the world was struck with unprecedented challenges that had a huge impact** on everyone and everything, leaving us with a lasting notion that nothing is ever really predictable.

In 2020, our world came to a stand-still due to the COVID-19 pandemic. When you are concerned about your health, **thinking, "Oh, I'll update my CV!" is probably the last thing you will do**. Especially if you have a (seemingly) secure and stable job with a regular paycheck. To help those who weren't that lucky, we prepared the guide "**COVID-19 + Your Career & Job Search**" and came up with the **Open Webinars** initiative.

As more and more people discussed their experiences and emotions (from "nothing has changed" to "OMG, this is bad"), we wanted to understand **how "good" or "bad" the job market actually was**. We started to track official unemployment rates and the number of job ads on LinkedIn, which we analyzed and released as **Market Signals**. We still monitor these indicators and apply the resulting insights to our webinars and advisory work.

Unfortunately, just when it seemed like the world was starting to recover from the pandemic, a war broke out in Ukraine. The **Career Angels team has put together a collaborative document on Google**, allowing everyone to add their own resources for those in need.

Now, in 2025, here we are, presenting to you the updated and improved version of *Job Hunting Director*. We hope this publication will successfully guide you through the job search process in these challenging times.
Enjoy reading, *Sandra Bichl*

The Job Hunting Process – Step by Step

The job search process, according to Career Angels, follows **four simple, but not easy steps**:

1) **Define your goal**
2) **Position yourself**
3) **Prepare your application tools**
4) **Access the hidden & visible job market**

On top of the most important pieces of advice to each of the steps, in this chapter you'll find comments and content contributions from Executive Search Consultants and HR professionals.

Step 1: Define your goal

There are many **reasons for wanting to change jobs**:

- You were or are about to be made **redundant**
- You are bored of the **monotonous workload** and need new challenges
- You work in a company that has an **unhealthy atmosphere**
- You **disagree with the Management Board**, your superiors or the new direction the company is taking
- You feel stuck because you have been with your company for **more than ten years**
- You face **a glass ceiling**
- You want to make more money
- You want to **relocate**, which is impossible with your current employer
- Another industry seems more **interesting**.

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "What's your advice for those who are thinking about changing their jobs?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

There are two types of executives: those with a job and those without one. If you belong to the former, count your blessings and wait for a better economic climate and improved job market. […] We are not pre-2008 [in today's context: pre-COVID] anymore. Opportunities are not as frequent. So stay if you can while you start looking. **It's easier to get a job when you have a job**.

If you've lost your job, and **if you can afford it, take a vacation for a month or two**, so that you can consider what to do next. Most importantly: do not panic! […] Take time to reconnect with friends and family and ask yourself: What do I want to do next? Maybe it's time to start my own business? Spending some time in a foreign country gives us the opportunity to think differently and to notice things we haven't seen before.

If you have a job, don't change it until you have a new one.

Voices from the Executive Search world

Don't wait and relax, start right away! Sow now to be able to harvest in half a year.

When an executive tells me about their intention to change jobs, I try to help them realize what “being realistic” means, what to expect from the whole process, and that **it might take quite some time**.

Many executives have been looking for a job for more than 12 months. Stay active. **Put aside your ego** and take a lower-level job. Be more flexible, even if it means less money.

Although we work for firms, we see every client as a human being with different needs. Now, it is our job as executive search consultants – exercising a profession of public trust – to dig deep and ask both parties a lot of questions to ensure that both their expectations and needs are met. It is not all about completing a project as fast as possible. What we want to prevent is a candidate accepting an offer not because they really feel it’s the right match, but because they want to get out of the current one. **Making a premature, hurried or superficial career decision may have serious consequences that are difficult to reverse**. It is not in our interest to “sell” every candidate at all cost, as we have a guarantee period and would have to repeat the search if we allowed such situations to happen.

As you can see, the opinions are divided! You need to figure out your own path. **Questions you might want to ask yourself** and answer (!) prior to embarking on the job hunting process:

What do I want to do **next**?
Why do I want to change? Is the underlying drive a **feeling of frustration or motivation**?
Where do I want to work? For what kind of companies?
How does the next step fit into my **overall career plan**?
What do I expect from the new position and **how realistic** are my expectations?
How does my professional **SWOT analysis** look like? What are my strengths and weaknesses?
What makes me **stand out** on the job market?
How much do I want to earn? And what?
What **corporate culture** do I want to work in?
What should my **scope of responsibilities** look like?
What am I open to? What are my **limits**?
How much time can I **realistically dedicate to the job search**?
What are my **key competences**?
Am I willing to **relocate**? Is my family?
Would somebody objectively say that I could **hit the ground running from day 1** in my target role?
Or would I need some **guidance** at the beginning?

If you don't deal with these questions exhaustively, you will have to face difficult and – very likely – **unsuccessful interviews** with headhunters or potential employers.

Tip

Find an accomplice at the very beginning of your job searching process. As the market climate is dynamic – with ongoing consolidations, mergers, and, yes, bankruptcies – it is wise to have somebody to advise you. Therefore, in addition to your own network, **you should have somebody you can talk to who knows the market**: a headhunter or a career advisor. You have to confront your notions with what the market has to offer and determine the resultant", suggests the Managing Partner of an Executive Search company.

Our comment to that tip to manage your expectations: a headhunter's job is not to help you find a job. A headhunter is a "head"-hunter, not a "job"-hunter. Their allegiance lies with the party that pays them. So, yes, get advice from headhunters – put in the plural form! You already saw that they do not have a uniform perspective on things!

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "In your experience, how accurate are executives in assessing their own competences?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

To a certain extent, we can answer this question very precisely. One element of a candidate's competences is their professional personality model. One of the tests we use is Facet5 – a tool that evaluates the psychological profile of the candidate. It requires the participant to grade themselves at the beginning of the feedback session prior to receiving the report. So, we know that executives usually evaluate three out of five main dimensions correctly. That gives us an **accuracy of 60-70%**.

Awareness is generally very low, but it's getting better.

If somebody is a CEO, they have to know themselves.

Most executives believe that one of their key competences is "change management", although that is very often not true.

There are candidates that lack self-criticism. And then there are candidates that very openly address their strengths and their Achilles heel. These kinds of people are much more valuable, as they have **better insight**, **show maturity**, and are able to honestly say, "that part of business or my responsibilities doesn't really excite me, but this is what I've been doing about it".

Data & research

A study of more than 3,600 leaders (by Fabio Sala) across various roles and industries found that, relative to lower-level leaders, higher-level leaders more significantly over-valued their skills (compared with others' perceptions). In fact, this pattern existed for 19 out of the 20 competences the researchers measured, including emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment, empathy, trustworthiness, and leadership performance. **Only 10-15% get it right!**

In today's world, the two main tools in recruitment processes used by both headhunters and HR professionals to assess your competences are:

- **In-depth competency-based interviews** that are usually interwoven with questions regarding your career (chronological interview)
- Tests.

Tip

Career Angels recommend practicing interviewing. Interviewing others requires a different skill set than when being interviewed. Over 90% of first round interview simulations end with the client assessing themselves humbly as a 6 or a 7 (although later they usually admit that they wanted to say 8 or more), and the consultant giving them a 3-4. After the feedback round, every single executive agrees with the consultant – usually with a slightly bruised ego; but that's OK – you are here to learn!

The **most frequently used tests** are: Extended DISC®, Facet5, FRIS, Hogan, Thomas Aptitude, SHL tests, MPA – Master Person Analysis, CliftonStrengths ("Gallup"), MBTI, HAT – Harrison Assessment Test. Shortlisted candidates might also be asked to take part in an **Assessment Center**.

Data & research

As surveys from 2020 show, **more than 80% of Fortune 500 companies use online tests when hiring for C-level positions**.
89 of Fortune 100 companies use Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) personality test to screen candidates and predict future success.

Here's more data from 2021, delivered by testcandidates.com: Herbert Heneman and Timothy Judge, in their book "Staffing Organizations", contend that **pre-hiring testing**, including aptitude and psychometric, is a far more efficient method of prediction than education and interviews alone (they state that cognitive ability tests are **37% more accurate** indicators of future performance than a degree certificate). Andy Gooday, Managing Director at Round Peg Search, said of **psychometric testing** that he believed the data spoke for itself as he saw a **92% retention rate** of staff hired and still with the company after two years.

Conclusion
Knowing where you are and where you are heading is key. Without this awareness, you should not take the next step.

Everything you need to know about managing your career

Answer the following two questions honestly:

How would you define a successful career?
If everything was possible, **how would your most satisfying and fulfilling career path look like?**

36% of the respondents would answer both questions (almost) **identically**, whereas **64%** would give two slightly or completely **different answers**. This data comes from Decision Dynamics, a company that has been analyzing people's careers for over 40 years. **What else does the research tell us?**

1) There's a "**brain-level**" and a "**heart-level**" **response**
2) There are **common patterns**.

Decision Dynamics' Career Model consists of four main Career Concepts or views of an ideal career:

The Expert Career Concept is the most stable and historically dominant view of a successful career as being a **lifelong commitment to a profession** with which one identifies. Success means to be the best, i.e. the expert in one's area.

The Linear Career Concept is instead focused on **rapid movement upward** the "corporate ladder". Success is measured in the level one has reached, which can be translated in responsibility, power and influence.

The Spiral Career Concept is a less traditional view where one rather discovers one's career through **periodic (5-10 years) lateral changes of occupational fields**. Success means frequent opportunities to widen one's competence base and get new experiences.

The Transitory Career Concept is the **most change-oriented** and least conventional view, even to the extent that many consider it as not even a career. The more different and frequent the changes, the better.

By now, you should have realized that everybody's definition of a successful career is equally wrong as it's right. There simply is no one right answer. **Different things make different people happy.**

If you are interested in receiving an offer to generate and discuss your own Career View Report* or to receive more information, please contact **Contact@CareerAngels.eu**. Please note that this model can also be applied throughout an entire organization for better candidate, role and culture fitting.

* You would receive: an online questionnaire, a report showing the differences between the career path you've chosen and the one that motivates you the most, and **a comprehensive feedforward session that you'll leave with concrete next steps**.

Job search time

How much time should you allocate to the search? If you are an experienced manager or executive, ideally reserve:

- **Up to 100 hours per month over a period of 3 months**
- Then **an average of 20 hours per month for the remaining time** until you find an offer that you are satisfied with.

Tip

Finding a new job is a job. Treat it like a project and define a time line, budget and allocated resources. Ask your Career Angel to give you access to a dedicated spreadsheet on Google Drive to help you get organized and track your progress.

The following activities should be included – we will discuss all of them in detail throughout this e-book:

- Answering key questions about **yourself** and your **path** (discussed above)
- Preparing your documents: **2 CVs**, **business cases**, **LinkedIn profile**
- Auditing and working on your **network**
- Researching and contacting **headhunters**
- Researching and contacting **potential employers**
- **Monitoring** the market
- **Applying "correctly" to job ads** (the "" will be explained later in detail)
- **Preparing yourself**: interview simulations, salary survey, etc.

How quickly do offers come rolling in? That very much depends on:

a) How close your job search goal is to your current level of competences
b) The market
c) Your level of experience and proven track record
d) The effort, consistency and regularity you put into the process.

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "What's your advice for those who are looking for a new job?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

A job hunting director should reserve on average at least 6 months. If you are not simply looking for "a new job", but your "dream job", **factor in 12 to 24 months**. You might be thinking, "24 months?!". Yes, if you are e.g. a Regional Managing Director and you are looking relatively actively – but cautiously – for an ideal offer in the ideal company with ideal conditions, or if you operate in a niche and cannot or are not particularly interested in changing your industry.

According to Career Angels, the **length of your job search process** will depend on the following **two aspects**:

1) How easy / realistic your job search goal is.

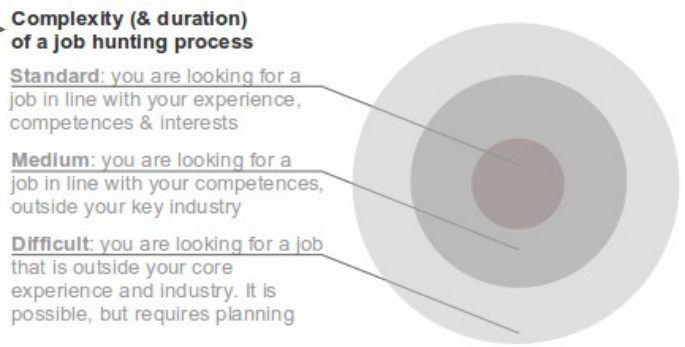
Examples for each level:

Standard: "plug & play", relevant skills for today's job market around: digitization, restructuring, change management, optimization, leadership, "e-", data, IT tools

Medium: roles that are in demand by candidates from e.g. marketing or HR

Difficult: change of industry, promotion (from manager to board level), change of country without prior experience or language skills

2) How systematic & intensive your own activity is.



Operating under the assumption that you:

- Are looking for a job in line with your competences
- Activate all four job hunting channels parallel:
  - 30-50 headhunters per city / country
  - Active networking
  - 60-120 companies (depending on the market & seniority)
  - "Correct" applying to job ads…

… your job search timing will most likely look like this:

- The first 2-3 weeks: preparation of Steps 1, 2 and 3
- 4th week: start of **emailing & contacting**
- 5th week: **follow-up** messages
- 6th week: **1st round interviews** (incl. screening calls) are completed
  → decide whether more activity is necessary (**extend list of companies**, etc.)
- 7th – 9th week: silence or low activity; send out **LinkedIn contact requests** irrespective of whether they've replied to your email
- 10th week onward: **2nd, 3rd round interviews**.

The higher up you are, the lonelier it gets, which means that ideal career opportunities are few and far between.

Tip

Treat the job hunting process like a project: establish a timeline and milestones. Track your progress and calculate your KPIs (e.g. response rate or interview rate → more on page 22), so that you know if you are on the right track or not. Record your contact history. Ask your Career Angel to give you access to a template – we use spreadsheets on Google Drive!

Step 2: Position yourself

The more complex your job search goal is (see the graph on the previous page), the more important defining your positioning on the market is. In other words:

Borrowing an expression from sales: what's your USP (Unique Selling Proposition)?
What's your potential added value?
What makes you **stand out on the job market**?
Why should you be a TOP 3 candidate?
Why should **you** not only be considered for a role, but hired?

Here are some examples of how having the answer to these questions comes through during an interview:

Example	**Finance Director**
Interviewer	**Why should our company hire you?**
Answer of **Candidate #1**	Because I'm **reliable**, a **good manager** and **loyal**.
Our comment	**That's the worst possible** (yet fairly common) **answer**. Any descriptive **adjectives won't work**. You are not a student anymore!
Answer of **Candidate #2**	Because I have **more than 10 years of experience in finance**, I'm a good manager and I have experience working in **international corporations**.
Our comment	This is a **standard answer** given by most candidates. It shows the recruiter or hiring manager why you qualify to be part of the recruitment process, **but not why you should be hired** – or at least shortlisted.
Answer of **Candidate #3**	Because I have co-authored and **delivered 2 restructuring projects in the last 3 years**. In every role in the last 7 years, I have been **able to identify savings of up to 0.5 M EUR**. And I've been able to **reduce unwanted rotation** in the Finance department **from 23% to 0% within 6 months of taking over**.
Our comment:	This is the **best possible answer that the fewest candidates give**. It gives the Executive Search Consultant or HR department arguments to put you forth on the shortlist or even attach a recommendation for hiring you!

How you position yourself (and what you are able to prove) **is key, because:**

Evidence = Credibility

Here are some tips on how to approach the topic:

- Complete courses / get certificates: Udemy.com, LinkedIn Learning, MOOCs, Coursera.org, etc.
- **Express your projects / successes tangibly** – year by year:
  - 2025
  - 2024
  - 2023
  - 2022…
- **Make a list** of projects / successes / types of clients / tools / language skills / countries / scope / number of FTEs / geographies / qualifications / volunteering experience / etc. and **look for patterns when analyzing**
- **Research your competition** (e.g. on LinkedIn) and see what kind of professional qualifications, education, publications, etc. they have that you should get too
- Talk to somebody who knows you **professionally** and ask them for feedback: (former) colleagues, mentors, direct bosses
- **Ask a friendly recruiter** (even better if you can reach out to 2-3).

Where do you show your USP? In the following three areas:

1) **Profile summary** in CV / on LinkedIn
2) **Cover email** when contacting headhunters, decision makers, your network
3) **During interviews** (especially at the beginning).

Gift from Career Angels: Free Career Consultation

Who do you, **experienced managers and executives**, speak to when you want to discuss your career? **Speaking freely about your career is usually a rare occurrence** for most of you – we have decided to create an opportunity for you **to do just that**.

Fill out the form or send an email with your CV and a brief description of your situation / question to **Contact@CareerAngels.eu** with the subject: **Free Career Consultation**.

For a maximum efficiency: **add your availability** by suggesting 2-3 date options in the coming 14 days, but not earlier than the day after the closest working day – **we need time to react and prepare**.

Please note: one person can receive one consultation for free.

Personal Branding / Executive Identity

It doesn't matter how you call it, in its quintessence, it's about being consistent in being you! It's not about hiring a PR agency or wearing fancy clothes. Everybody automatically has a personal brand / executive identity, but the majority of experienced managers and **executives sabotage themselves as they suffer from "multiple personality disorder"**, meaning that they are not consistent in how they present themselves across different channels (CV, LinkedIn profile, in-person conversations, reference checks, or on the phone during a screening call) which influences how they are perceived overall, incl. if they are seen as the right (competent) candidate or not – which often has nothing to do with their actual competences.

Having worked with over ten thousand experienced managers and executives across Europe, we have distilled the 8 interconnected facets of Personal Branding that can make or break your career – not only on the job market, but also in your organization.

Level	Strategy	Competencies	Public Speaking	Written Communication	Reputation	Online Presence	Network	Savoir-vivre
0	No self-awareness	No self-awareness	No self-awareness	No self-awareness	No self-awareness	No self-awareness	No self-awareness	No self-awareness
1	None	Junior	None	Not-consistent	Within team	Low scores	Within team	Not-consistent
2	Short-term	Mid-level	Irregular	Professional	Within company	Medium scores	Within company	Rather consistent
3	Medium-term	Senior	Regularly	Skillful	Within industry	High scores	Within industry	Correct
4	Long-term	Leader	Invited locally	Articles	Within country	Local following	Within country	Purposeful
5	Mission statement	Mentor	Invited int'lly	Book	Int'lly	Int'l following	Int'lly	To be imitated

Critically analyze every area in terms of:

- Where you currently are
- Where you should be in order to achieve your next career goal.

Prepare relevant strategies to close the gaps effectively.

Think about who can help you! At your current employer, you often have access to practical resources, such as:

- A photographer (e.g. for LinkedIn)
- A coach
- Support from HR to evaluate your competences and prepare a development plan
- A mentor: find a person who can support you
- Training platforms like Udemy or LinkedIn Learning.

Sometimes you'll have to look for resources outside your current company. If you'd like to work with us, get in touch by email with **Contact@CareerAngels.eu**.

Step 3: Prepare your application tools

Are your tools **adapted to the target group**: headhunters vs. decision makers? Do they **communicate your USP**? Who you are? Are they **flawless**? Here, we'll discuss the most important and necessary tools for a successful job hunt:

1) **CV**
2) **ATS CV**
3) **LinkedIn profile**
4) **Other tools**

1) CV

This element of the job hunting process **is probably one of the most controversial ones**.

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "How important is the quality of the CV of a candidate?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

It's not an issue for me. I will discuss it anyway. Additionally, the **2-page rule does not apply to executives**, especially if they have moved cross-functionally.

The quality of a CV is pretty important. A poorly prepared CV raises questions. As to the length, we live in the **world of information overload**. Better short than long. A powerful 1-pager.

All the documents that are submitted to a potential employer are the **candidate's business card**, irrespective of the position they are applying for. The quality, therefore, is very important.

The quality of a CV is very important for me. It should tell me about the candidate's **business awareness**, their **successes**. It should be synthetic and concrete. If, let's say, a PR or Marketing Director sends me an untidy, incoherent CV, they are **automatically out of the process**.

It's nice to receive a good CV. Though, most importantly, we look for the right human being with the **appropriate competences**, and not somebody who is a professional CV writer.

The quality of submitted documents is very important, but it's not the most important thing. The most important element is the interview. Top executives often do not have time to prepare their material. You cannot base your opinion on a document, especially if it's the headhunter who is approaching the executive. **Telephone conversations and face-to-face meetings are more important**.

Quality is very important. The documents must not have errors or spelling mistakes. […] It should be written in a way that allows me to match the candidate with an ongoing recruitment project **in 20 seconds or less**.

Voices from the Executive Search world

The sloppier the CV, the sloppier the candidate. We look at aesthetics and lack of mistakes. It should be saved in .pdf format. Remember that a researcher is often not able to read between the lines. A CV is a virtual calling card of the candidate. **How seriously do you take your career?**

The quality of CVs is getting better. The font, grammar, spelling, tabs are important elements, but not everybody has to be a formatting expert. When writing a CV, the candidate should remember who they are writing it for. Who will read it? Candidates should remember that **the headhunter usually cannot dedicate more than three minutes** to each document. [...] The approach "I am a star. Everybody knows me on the market. Guess what I meant by that sentence!" is arrogant and very negative.

When preparing a CV, remember that a junior researcher with little experience might be the first person to read it, which might mean that if there is **too much lingo or it's too dry**, they will not be able to understand it and you will be excluded from the recruitment process.

Quality is very important because we have very little time. We always tell our candidates that they are not allowed to assume that a potential employer will correctly guess which part of the four-page CV is the most important one. I often read verbose CVs that contain superfluous and irrelevant information: they start with high school and so on. The person behind such a document is either not very creative or lazy, and decided to send such a representation of themselves into the market. I don't treat such CVs seriously.

It is obviously easier for the recruiter if the CV is of good quality. It allows a candidate to make a better first impression. However, **if headhunted directly, it's the recruiter's interest to motivate the candidate, and as such documents become less important** as everything is verified and confirmed during the interview.

The CV is very (!) important. It can determine whether I want to speak with a candidate or not. Some executive search consultants see on average 8 candidates per day. **It is more difficult to remember candidates with "bland CVs"**. Your CV is like your passport to better opportunities and meeting an executive recruiter.

What we receive from candidates is very often irrelevant. **What counts is the person, and not the paper**. It is our role as intermediaries to prepare the documents for our corporate clients accordingly.

As you can see, the answers are **very, very different**. But when choosing between two equally well-qualified executives, "details" like the quality of your CV might make a difference. On the other hand, to some recruitment companies or HR professionals, a sloppily prepared document **will mean early disqualification anyway**. So, will you get a second chance to make the first impression?

The person reading your CV will have on average 6-15 seconds per document to decide whether it's worth inviting you. How easy or difficult will it be for them to find what is relevant?

Put yourself in the shoes of the reader (decision maker, potential employer, HR Director, etc.), open your current CV and try to answer these questions:

What are **your strengths from an employer's point of view**?
Why should they **choose you among other** candidates?
Will they notice your **uniqueness** after opening your CV?
Why should the main **decision maker devote 15 minutes of their time to you**, although their company does not have an opening?

Your CV is your business card. It is the first impression you will make on the recipient of your CV before they actually meet you. That is why **the quality of the CV is so important**. An ideal resume **communicates your personality and traits** as an executive, and therefore its content should be prepared with the reader in mind and be relevant and concrete.

Data & research

Statistically speaking, our respondents indicated that on average only 15% of CVs can be considered top notch, almost 30% fall into the category "good," **35% are average, and the rest should be "deleted"**.

In 2024, we've prepared 645 CV Reports. Here are the results:

- The best score: **86%**
- Average score: **52%**
- The worst score: **4%**
- **Only 2.17% of the submitted CVs received a score higher than 80%.**

Gift from Career Angels: Free CV Report

Send **your CV** to **Contact@CareerAngels.eu** and we will prepare a CV Report for you within 3-5 business days.

The Report assesses your CV based on **8 different criteria**, such as: technical elements, punctuation consistency, style and formatting, language accuracy, overall legibility, etc. It will also include **valuable tips!**

Please note: one person can receive one report for free.

Even if you have no interest in becoming a professional CV writer, the following guidelines are worth following, but prior to getting started, answer these three questions:

Who will read my CV and what information will be essential and relevant to them?
What do I want to communicate? Usually, this means 3 things that make you unique.
What are the key words: in the job ad or for the company or for the non-advertised target role?

CV Structure

You will find hundreds of formats on the Internet. To those who ask us to provide ready formats, we say: “Find them on Google, because **we do not use them**”. Every CV that we work on is prepared from scratch with a similar structure while retaining the job seeker’s individuality. The structure is as follows:

Header with:

- **Relevant contact details**
- **Photo:** if you must include a picture, use one that is professional and up to date; comment: the US market doesn’t allow photos to be included in CVs in order to reduce risk of discrimination. The overall global trend is that international corporations follow that philosophy. In other words, your CV doesn’t have to have a photo if you are looking for a job in Europe (despite what some old-school recruiters might try to convince you of).

📌 Pin for further reading: Do You Really Need a Professional Photoshoot for a Good CV Picture?

A good photo can visually carry the entire CV – as you can base the color scheme on it or use it to solidify your personal branding. Read more here: Do You Really Need a Professional Photoshoot for a Good CV Picture?

Profile summary: The quintessence of a professional profile. It tells the recipient whether scrolling down is worth their time.

📌 Pin for further reading: Stop Sounding Like a Horoscope – Fix Your LinkedIn Summary Now.

What could your profile summary possibly have in common with a horoscope? The question might seem absurd, but, as it turns out, the answer is: “quite a lot”. Profile summaries are a difficult subject – people know (more or less) how to create a CV, but when it comes to writing a profile summary, they are often left confused. Should they use 1st or 3rd person? Should they keep it strictly simple? Should they stick to business language or try to be creative? The list could go on and on. We distinguish five general types of profile summaries. Which one is yours? Read the full article: Stop Sounding Like a Horoscope – Fix Your LinkedIn Summary Now.

Career path: Starting from the most recent position. Include a description of your main responsibilities and a separate section called “Selected achievements” or “Selected projects” where you tangibly express the outcomes.

Education: Does not include kindergarten to high school. Might sometimes include relevant / significant training or certificates.

Others: Any other information that might be relevant to the reader (!) – not to you. That's the place to e.g. include relevant hobbies. Remember to enlist only those that you actively engage in and can have a meaningful conversation about.

Equally important:

- **Ideal length**: 2-4 pages – never (!) a **2-column format** (check out the below 📌 Pin on why)
- Check and **double check**: formatting, grammar, spelling, etc.
- **Avoid writing in the first person**. It makes the whole text more difficult to read. We know that there are career coaches that claim otherwise. However, we have verified it with HR Directors and CEOs
- **Avoid enlisting character traits** or soft skills like "I am a creative person". You are an **executive and not a student**! The entire CV should exude your personality, which we know is very difficult to achieve. But there is no need to spell it out
- We cannot emphasize this enough: avoid including **irrelevant information** or data that could be basis for discrimination such as your **birthday**, **marital status**, **number of children** or all the trainings you have ever attended, unrelated work experience, like a stint as a TV technician or a waitress, etc.

How do you add a personal touch?

- Use a different font for all titles
- **Subtly (!) apply colors**.

📌 Pin for further reading: Top Strategies to Help You Get Job Interviews If You're Facing Discrimination

In the age of globalization, a mix of cultures brings a lot of unique opportunities, but also reveals one unsettling fact about ourselves – we all have our (un)conscious biases. So, if you know you belong to a group that could be discriminated against based on the information in their CV, erase or "re-brand" it. Why? How? Check it out here: Top Strategies to Help You Get Job Interviews If You're Facing Discrimination.

📌 Pin for further reading: 7 Reasons Why Two-Column CVs Don't Work

"Eye-catching" designs, unusual layouts… and more and more templates made available to the public… All these tempt candidates to go for 2-column CVs. Here's why it's not a very good idea: 7 Reasons Why Two-Column CVs Don't Work.

📌 Pin for further reading: Have Executive CV Formatting Rules Changed?

Want to know if the format of a CV has changed in the last few years? Is there a "right way" to prepare one? Or if there are international standards when it comes to CVs? Continue reading to find out: Have Executive CV Formatting Rules Changed?

Last, but not least: **GDPR**. From a candidate's point of view, it is better and more secure to have a clause than to not have one at all – it applies to **all countries in the European Union**! We recommend to include this sentence at the end of your CV:

"I agree to the processing of my personal data for current and future recruitment purposes."

Our last comment on that subject: Do you *really* want a piece of paper (aka your not-so-well-prepared CV) to determine the fate of your entire career? **It just makes sense to prepare it well!**

2) ATS CV

ATS (Applicant Tracking System) is a system that supports online recruitment, allowing faster filtering and selection of the best candidates. It has revolutionized the work of many companies around the world. **Saving time and money** effectively convinces to automate recruitment processes. Whenever you, as a candidate, upload your CV to a career site → that's an ATS!

📊 Data & research around ATS

Why do companies use it? According to TopResume.com and AIApply:

- Companies **receive on average 250 CVs per job ad**
- Large corporations receive between **50-75K (!) CVs per week**!
- Between **75 and 98%** of resumes **will never be seen** by a human recruiter
- **99%** of large organizations use ATS as part of their recruitment process because they:
  - **Save money & time** (30-50 h on physical application browsing)
  - US: prevent lawsuits (discrimination): "Some AI tools have reported a **20-100% increase** in gender, ethnic, and socioeconomic diversity in hires" (source: vervoe.com). In other words: ATS has also shown to improve **diversity** of candidates
  - Have **all candidates in one place**.

According to our own research, **60-70% of job ads** for executives and experienced managers also **go through an ATS**.

The advantages that an ATS introduces to companies are associated with greater restrictions on CVs for candidates, as every single ATS is different and able to do different things:

- Some ATS can read text in a table. Some can't
- Some ATS are able to interpret M&A as Mergers & Acquisitions. Most can't
- Some ATS can identify text in the header and footer section of the CV. Others can't
- **Some ATS compare the text of your CV to the job ad you are applying to and create a ranking of candidates based on that!**

That's a HUGE problem for candidates – and the biggest challenge! We, at Career Angels, operate under the assumption that "until technology catches up with all ATS equally, candidates must have a dedicated ATS CV that satisfies the largest number of requirements possible, i.e. to ensure that as many ATS as possible can read and interpret the CV." In other words: keep it simple! **CVs prepared for ATS are by definition simple documents aimed at software legibility**. Your CV will be converted into one of hundreds of "candidate tabs" with unified structures.

We, Career Angels, have prepared a guide, **a step-by-step instruction with a checklist** on how to prepare such a CV and how to adapt it to job ads that you intend on applying to. See the 📌 Pin on the next page.

Once you have a CV that "serves as many ATS masters as possible" from a formatting perspective, **remember to adapt it to each job ad prior to applying**. Most ATS have the functionality which compares the keywords from the CV to the keywords in the job ads and, based on that, will then rank your candidacy. You can use JobScan.co (that mimics the most commonly used ATS called Taleo) for a simulation. **Your goal: get a match of min. 70%**.

Here is an example of how adding the right keywords to a CV can *dramatically* change the match rate between a candidate and a job ad…
In other words: **how likely it is for the candidate to be invited to an interview**.

The CV that is on the very left is a CV of a candidate that **fits the role almost perfectly**… if a human recruiter were to see it. **The software couldn't find the necessary amount of exact keyword matches**, so it was scored at **only 26%**.

It only takes **about 5-6 lines of additional text** to go from **26%** to **52%**, then **77%** and **85%** (note the highlighted changes in yellow, red and green). Nothing has changed in the experience or competences of the candidate – **the only thing that has changed are the keywords!**

🍿 Gift from Career Angels:
Free ATS CV Compliance Report

Having a CV that is legible by programs is crucial. **Is your CV "ATS-compliant"**? Find out! It's often the difference between getting an **interview or not**.

Send us **your CV** to **Contact@CareerAngels.eu** and you will receive the Report with **valuable tips** within 3-5 business days.

Please note: one person can receive one report for free.

📌 Pin for further reading: ATS Guide

Automated recruitment processes, pre-recorded interviews, ATS, Artificial Intelligence, bots… Expressions we hear more and more often. How does the constant development of technology affect the recruitment processes? **How do ATS work and how can you adapt your CV to them?** [Spoiler: **75% of CVs uploaded to an ATS are never seen by a human recruiter!**] Read the full article here: ATS Guide.

3) LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a ***support*** **tool across all four job hunting channels** (note: all channels are defined and explained in full detail on page 22)

Channel	LinkedIn's Role
Networking	= address book of your contacts, **some of which might result in something very tangible**
Headhunters	= **database** of recruiters, headhunters and Executive Search Consultants
Job Ads	= job portal with a dedicated algorithm **worth understanding and optimizing your profile for**
Direct Contact	= find information on companies and decision makers (**and often their email addresses!**)

📊 Data & research

71% of recruiters say LinkedIn is their **most used social media channel for recruiting**. (Jobvite, 2025)

67% say that LinkedIn is the top social media channel that **offers the highest quality of candidates**. (Jobvite, 2020)

Here's more data by Hootsuite: **7 people get hired every minute** on LinkedIn; more than **67 million companies** are registered there.

What's important for your LinkedIn profile to be effective is that you need to understand that the platform has two target groups: **humans** (recruiters, hiring managers) and **the algorithm**.

📌 Pin for further reading: Are You Making These Common LinkedIn Mistakes?

Our recommendation and tips as to how to create a solid LinkedIn profile are here: Are You Making These Common LinkedIn Mistakes?

There are **four areas** of your LinkedIn profile that you can optimize for its algorithm:
1) **Keywords** in a job ad
2) **Skills** in a job ad
3) **Profile settings**
4) **Open to work** settings

1) Keywords in a job ad: You can make a list of them manually or use a software that'll help you identify them. According to LinkedIn, job ads contain two keyword types:

- ***Public keywords*** visible to everyone in the job ad description.
- ***Recruiter-added keywords*** entered into the must-have and preferred qualification fields, which feed the matching system even if not visible in the public text.

2) Skills in a job ad: LinkedIn can show two types of skills in job posts, and because this feature is still being rolled out, they don't always display consistently across account types:

- **Skills added by the job poster**: If the job poster has added them, you'll see them at the top of the job ad where LinkedIn shows you how many skills your profile matches with.
- **Skills connected to other candidates of a job ad**: If you have a Premium account AND if min. 3 candidates apply to the job ad, this section will be visible to you. LinkedIn recommends updating your profile with the most relevant skills to improve your match.

Tip

Find and analyze 10 fairly similar job ads and create a database of the **most common skills** (from both sources!) connected to that type of job ads. If you possess the mentioned skills, add them to your profile. **You can also apply this tip to keywords**. Create a database of the most common ones and add them to your profile.

If you are looking for external support to streamline that process, hire Career Angels!

3) Profile settings: Fill out your job seeking preferences under your profile settings to ensure you are seen where and how you'd like to be seen. You'll be able to edit such aspects as your **job application settings** (choosing whether you want to save uploaded resumes or answers to application questions), **sharing your profile** after clicking apply (we recommend to switch that option ON) or **signaling your interest to recruiters** at companies you've created job alerts for.

4) Open to work settings: You can let recruiters (paid recruiter accounts) know you are looking for a new job with the "Open to" setting accessible directly from your LinkedIn profile. We don't recommend selecting "All LinkedIn members", as it will tag your profile picture with a green frame. Why? Quoting an Executive Search Consultant, "**You know how it is. Candidates who are employed are better candidates**". Important: this is not about hiding the fact that you are currently looking and/or unemployed, but about what you lead with. Your professional identity is not a "job seeker" but an "experienced manager". And there are more elegant ways of letting your network know that you are looking.

Easy Apply: Introduced in 2011, this LinkedIn function allows you to apply to a job ad directly with your profile. According to Career Angels' data, 7.5% of all researched LinkedIn job ads support Easy Applying. In the European Union, it's 8.26%. The Easy Apply feature can also automatically export your details to the publisher's ATS if they choose to do so. In job ads that support this feature, **the standard "apply" button is replaced with the "Easy Apply" one**. Once you "Submit application", it will notify the job ad poster and, **depending on how well you've optimized your profile** (i.e. adding the right "skills" and "keywords"), **it might highlight you immediately as the top applicant**.

Gift from Career Angels: Free LinkedIn Report

If you need an **objective review** of your LinkedIn profile, you can request one for free. Send an email with the link to your LinkedIn profile to **Contact@CareerAngels.eu** and you will receive the Report with **valuable tips** within 3-5 business days.

Please note: one person can receive one report for free.

4) Other tools

- The motivation letter: Unless specifically requested, don't bother. Nobody reads it. And if it's specifically requested, take the proper time to craft one that's fully targeted and profiled
- **The cover email**: It **has replaced the motivation letter**. When preparing cover emails, remember to **write for the target audience**. In other words: a headhunter and a decision maker should receive 2 different texts. **Be specific and concrete**.
- **Business cases**: As noted earlier, the Business Case includes **additional relevant information that do not fit the CV**. If you hold a top management position, a two- or three-page CV will not be enough to present yourself fully. Having so little space, it is very difficult to describe your most **interesting projects**, **spectacular successes**, **achievements** or **transactions**, let alone, to demonstrate your **unique attitude** or your **way of thinking**. This is what the Business Case is for, which on the legal market is also known as a Transaction / Deal List. We recommend describing on average **3 selected projects** (= business cases) of the last **5-7 years**. A well-structured add-on furthermore sets you apart as a motivated, well-prepared candidate, communicates your work style and train of thought. It shows your reasoning, analytical skills and business acumen. **Important**: the formatting should be **coherent with your CV**.

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "What's your advice for those who are sending CVs directly?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

I receive two to three CVs per week and react only to those who write **meaningfully**, **convincingly and to the point**. Tell me in the email why I should take the time to meet with you. The candidate's approach should definitely be individualized.

Whenever I get an email that starts with 'Dear' and isn't followed by my name, I delete it. **It's spam**. Somebody did not even take the time to check who they were writing to.

If you send your CV to a headhunter, make sure to **communicate exactly what you are looking for**.

No information about your career objective might lead to an obvious, but **false** assumption based on previous positions. **It's very easy to pigeonhole an executive.**

Step 4: Access the hidden & visible job market

Now that we have defined the most important tools, we will move on to accessing the job market.

This section covers the **four job search channels** as well as maneuvering the process:

1) **Direct Approach / Speculative Introduction**
2) **Executive Search Consultants**
3) **Networking**
4) **Job Ads**
5) **Interviews, salary negotiations & reference checks**.

The most effective course of action is to pursue all 4 channels parallel – without focusing on one particular. Here are our most updated statistics related to accepted job offers by our clients (experienced managers and executives):

Efficiency of Job Hunting Channels (= accepted job offers based on client data)

2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	Ø (3 yrs)	
48%	50%	35%	39%	59%	39%	32%	35%	30%	29%	26%	28.33%	Direct Approach
26%	20%	22%	28%	24%	35%	23%	28%	21%	18%	19%	19.33%	Networking
26%	30%	31%	23%	14%	8%	19%	12%	13%	18%	16%	15.67%	Headhunters
--	--	12%	10%	3%	18%	26%	25%	36%	35%	39%	36.67%	Job Ads

We also highly recommend to measure the efficiency of your job search via KPIs. The most important ones are **response rate** (**RR**) and **interview rate** (**IVR**):

KPIs

$$\frac{\text{\# of reactions or interviews}}{\text{\# of effectively contacted (min. 60)}} = \begin{matrix}\textbf{RR} = 30\text{-}50\% \\ \text{or} \\ \textbf{IVR} = 5\text{-}10\%\end{matrix}$$

If your KPIs are lower, review the entire process: quality of your goal, positioning, mistakes in CV, not enough contacted people or the wrong ones?

"**Source of accepted job offers**" is the most important KPI that we track, because it shows the **efficiency of job hunting channels**. In other words, it tells us what's worth spending time and effort on when looking for a new job. The results for 2024 are as follows:

- **26% efficiency for Speculative Introduction** – in previous years, that meant contacting 60-90 companies directly; in 2024, some candidates had to reach out to 90-120 firms
- **19% efficiency for Networking** (strategically using your current network and building a new one)
- **16% efficiency for Executive Search Firms** (contacting the most relevant 30-50 headhunters per market)
- **39% efficiency for Job Ads** (applying via published job ads) – back in 2015, this would have been unheard of, but since 2022 this channel has taken the lead over all the others.

1) Direct Approach / Speculative Introduction

If you could work wherever you wanted, where would it be? **What are your TOP 60-90 companies?**

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "What do you think about executives contacting companies directly?".

We asked the market

An executive that sends a CV to a lot of companies personally will **not be well-perceived**. They will definitely make a better impression by going via a headhunter. (Executive Search Consultant)

I have a very positive attitude towards personally receiving speculative introductions. It means that the executive is resourceful and motivated and **had to make a certain effort to at least find the appropriate person and contact details**. If we have an open recruitment process and the person fulfills our requirements, we include them. If we don't, I hold onto the CV for future projects. (CEO)

If the person that sends me their CV has something to offer that is interesting to me, **I will definitely remember them**. We have employed three managers that way. (CEO)

At Career Angels, we recommend the following: as strategic positions are rarely discussed publicly and are almost entirely found on the hidden job market, we suggest **going directly to the source**. Having observed the media, we know that once news appears on the market, it's usually already too late.

We definitely prefer a **proactive approach** and we advise our clients to apply it as well. As a result, in 2024, 26% of our clients accepted a job offer that was generated thanks to Speculative Introduction.

To be crystal clear, this channel has at times reached 39% efficiency – it is an effective channel, but not a magic bullet, so make sure you also use the other ones.

2) Executive Search Consultants

90% of ongoing recruitment processes for executive level positions can be found in the so-called hidden job market, as part of the processes are conducted by either the companies themselves or by executive search firms.

How do headhunters work? I have two headhunter friends. Isn't that enough?
The recruitment market is corporate client-driven. Here's a simplified process:

Step 1: Company X needs to hire a new manager.

Step 2: It decides that their internal recruitment resources are not adequate or maybe previous attempts were unsuccessful and, therefore, hires a recruitment company.

Step 3: Based on the requirements, the recruiter uses the following strategies, in no particular order:

- Searching the internal database
- Publishing an online job ad
- Contacting people from the market (networking)
- Researching competitors and contacting potential candidates
- Researching Internet.

Step 4: Potential candidates end up on a so-called longlist.

Step 5: After an initial telephone screening, the best candidates are invited to interviews and the best 3-5 are presented to the client, company X, in the form of a so-called shortlist.

Step 6: After interviewing the candidates, company X chooses one person and signs the contract with them.

How much does that cost? Depending on the recruitment company, between 10-33% of the gross annual remuneration, paid either based on success (which means that if company X does not hire one of the proposed candidates, no money is paid) or usually in 2-3 installments (at step 2, 5 and 6). So, if you have one or two headhunter friends, what are the chances that when you need to find a new job, they have an open ongoing recruitment process? Slim. **In order to maximize those chances**, we recommend identifying the best **30-50 headhunters per job market depending on the size of it**. Best means: a combination of expertise in your industry plus experience in recruiting at your position level.

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "What's your advice for those who contact Executive Search firms?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

No Executive Search company has a monopoly on an industry, even if they operate in a niche. It's always an oligopoly of at least four to five players. Check **what recruitment companies are off-limits**, meaning that they are contracted by your current employer. Find out who the most relevant consultant within that firm is. **Never, ever send your CV to a general email address** like "office@". Find them on LinkedIn and engage in a meaningful dialog. The chances that you'll find a new position via a headhunter are probably around 10-20%.

We are not charity. For us, the most important party is our client. Of course, if I receive a CV that does draw my attention, but does not fit into any of our ongoing recruitment processes, I do meet with the executive because **I know that in the long-term something interesting might come up**.

Window-shopping candidates are, honestly, annoying. They should be **honest about their agenda** from the very beginning.

Voices from the Executive Search world

If you are contacted by an Executive Search Consultant and for some reason are not interested, don't ignore them. **Don't burn bridges**. You don't know when you might need them. **Your situation could change overnight**.

Some executives want to create the impression that they do not care about the job offer we have presented to them – that we should be thankful for being allowed to "sell them". On the other hand, **they expect their headhunter to be a career advisor who paves their way** on the market.

Be honest with your headhunter. Tell them if you are in another process. **We are here to help**. Maybe it won't work out this year. Maybe it will in 3 or 5 or 7 years.

Why do Executive Search companies send your CV to a potential employer even though they do not have an open recruitment process? It might be part of their corporate policy, and then they charge their standard fee – but that's very, very rare – or it might be in their strategic interest to build a relationship either with a former or a potential client. In such situations, the introduction is very informal and **no fees apply**.

We did hear the phrase, "Today a candidate, tomorrow a client", but our experience in Career Angels has been different. Here are the statistics:
Group 1: Job seeking executives who send their own cover email and documents to headhunters from their own list usually have a response rate of 10% or less. A response is an email that at least acknowledges the receipt of the CV.
Group 2: Job seeking executives who send their own cover email, but our documents to headhunters from our list. Response rate: approx. 20%.
Group 3: Job seeking executives who send a cover email and a CV recommended by Career Angels. Response rate: approx. 30-50%.

A candidate example:
One of our clients, a high-level executive, decided to start her job hunting process by meeting executive search consultants from her industry. Once she got a better understanding of the market, she wanted to proceed immediately to contacting those companies that she had not discussed with the recruiters. We selected 30 headhunters for her:

- **93%** responded (28 out of 30) – please note that this is an **absolute exception** and we did have to follow up with 15 firms once or twice before receiving a reply.
- **33%** invited her to an interview, which led to 10 meetings.

We asked her, **"After 10 completed meetings, what are your impressions?"**.

A: "There are definitely no market standards. I had very formal encounters with two recruiters at once, and very informal ones in coffee shops. Some lasted an hour and a half, one took five minutes", our client replied.

Q: "Which ones did you like the most and why?"

A: "I liked one meeting in particular: we met at their office. It was very concrete. I had the feeling that the recruiter was truly interested. He asked very challenging, non-standard questions. We brainstormed and discussed various possibilities. That was a very nice meeting.

I remember another headhunter positively: we met at a coffee shop. She originally came from my field which gave her the necessary insight. On the one hand, she made a sincere effort to get to know me as a person and, on the other hand, she verified my background to check which of the current processes or clients would suit me best. Additionally, she managed my expectations skillfully, which I appreciated a lot. There was one more first-class meeting: I met a gentleman from an executive search firm. He was calm, intelligent and asked good questions. He gave me the impression that he was pursuing a long-term strategy".

Q: "Which meetings would you say were less impressive and why?"

A: "I had a very long meeting – lots of standard questions – with a lady that was very friendly, but the first thing she said when we met was, "Nothing's really happening on the market. Stay where you are". I had been at other meetings, and I obviously knew about current mergers and changes. That is not a top secret information. You can read about most of it in the newspaper. Her statement led me to think, "Hmm, she can't be good if nobody wants to hire her even though there *is* work". I would label one of the meetings I had as "strange": the recruiter had me waiting for 15 minutes. Once we started, I had the feeling she really didn't know how to talk to me. And I thought, "I took a day off for this?". However, at some point, she got going – maybe she remembered a project? She asked very interesting, good questions. So, after all, it was not such a big waste of time".

Q: "Is there anything else you remember in particular?"

A: "One gentleman told me during the meeting that I should stay where I was because I had a really good job. And then he sent me a list of other headhunters I could get in touch with. He might have had good intentions, but I definitely felt he wanted to get rid of me politely".

Q: "If we do the math, 50% of the meetings you had were average. What could those executive search consultants have done differently to be perceived in a better way?"

A: "Well, firstly, don't encourage a potential candidate who has decided to leave a job to stay where they are because of a slow market. Even if they contact me again, I probably won't want to speak with recruiters who lack market awareness. Secondly, what set the best apart was the interest they showed in me as a person and as a professional. With the others, it seemed they just wanted to close their projects as soon as possible without any interest in building a relationship. Additionally, shouldn't recruiters also assess the candidate's interpersonal skills and not only focus on professional competences? Make a sincere effort or at least feign interest. Thirdly, if you decide to choose a public place, which is absolutely fine with me, have the decency to select one where it's calm and we can speak discretely. Having people walk up to the table greeting you every 10 minutes is irritating. And last, but not least: if you have an office that you know is difficult to find or where parking is scarce, tell the candidate so. I like being professional and punctual, but arriving at a seemingly easy-to-find address, and encountering a building without signs and multiple entrances to choose from, getting lost in the process... Not only was I late, I was also frustrated, which doomed the meeting to a worse outcome than it could have had".

Most of our clients concur with these comments. In summary, here's some advice for headhunters in a nutshell:

1) Be a **competent partner** who is aware of the market
2) Ask **challenging**, **intelligent** questions
3) Remember that today's candidate can **be tomorrow's client**. Make an effort to **build that relationship**
4) The **devil is in the details**: communication, logistics, punctuality.

What candidates criticize the most:

- The **lack of reaction**. They do not expect an interview invitation to every email they sent, but a simple acknowledgment of receipt. They want to be sure that they are at least in the database
- The **juniority of** the **consultants**. We agree with those who say that relatively inexperienced professionals at recruitment companies should not sit in front of seasoned executives, let alone decide whether they fit the job in question. **Yes, it is ridiculous**.

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "How should managers react when faced with relatively inexperienced consultants?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

Candidates should refuse to attend such meetings.

As unfortunate as such situations are, they are a very good opportunity to **demonstrate your maturity and elegance**. Help the junior recruiter through the interview. **Show how professional you are**.

We have heard of such situations from our candidates. It mostly happens with companies that fill executive positions, but focus heavily on monthly or quarterly sales targets, which leads to high personnel turnover. Usually, only highly motivated junior people work in such an environment and treat it as a unique career opportunity.

If I were in their position, I'd immediately **walk out of the room**.

In the words of a former client, "Behave as you would at the dentist: **with dignity**".

We recommend, "Be nice to the less experienced. Do not burn bridges. You never know what might come out of it".
To sum up, **headhunters work for their corporate clients, not for you**. At the end of the day, they pay the bills. So, how can you put headhunters to work for you? You can't. The recruitment market is driven by companies as that is where the money lies. Prepare a list of 30-50 headhunters with relevant (industry) expertise that have access to insider information. A handful will act upon an excellent CV.

3) Networking

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "In your experience, how important is networking in the job hunting process?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

Key elements in the job hunting process are, on the one hand, **active networking** and, on the other, **so-called public activities**: attending conferences, writing articles.

I discourage executives from using networking as their only means of generating job offers as, based on my experience, **it usually ends poorly**. **Networking should be supported by a smart strategy**.

Virtually none of the professionals we interviewed mentioned the downsides of networking, so why is the second respondent the only person who raised that issue? To be perfectly honest, we did not ask for clarification because the answer seemed obvious to us. What follows is neither their opinion nor our speculation on what they meant. It is entirely our opinion and both our personal and professional experience.

When does networking fail?

I'd like an extract from an article that we wrote to serve as the introduction:

"Under pressure to find a job?
When under pressure, we often behave emotionally. We do things we normally wouldn't do. And not having a job puts most of us under **tremendous stress**. […] If this panic shows in your job search, you're in trouble. Nobody wants to interview a frustrated and scared candidate.

Don't:

- **Send out poorly prepared CVs** to as many people as possible
- **Start chaotically calling people**, "Hi, Bob. How are you? I know it's been a long time! […] By the way, do you know if anybody is hiring?". The person you've called wonders why you didn't reply to the email they sent you a year ago and resents receiving a call only when you need something. He or she may say, "Sure, send me your CV, I'm thrilled to hear from you and will be happy to help", but that won't be sincere
- **Include the phrase "looking for a job"** or "looking for new opportunities" in your online profile.

📌 **Pin for further reading: Forget #OpenToWork: What To Do Instead**

Read our reasons why you shouldn't add this phrase to your profile here: Forget #OpenToWork: What To Do Instead.

Contacts, contacts, contacts
At least 19% of jobs are found through personal contacts. If you've neglected building **meaningful connections** with all the people behind the business cards you've collected, you're already missing out! Moving forward, remember Harvey Mackay's admonishment to "**dig your well before you are thirsty**". In the meantime:

- **Be considerate** when calling people you haven't spoken to in a long time. Don't be pushy. Don't burn bridges. Send the extra two emails to reconnect
- **Put yourself on the market** by **attending** or **speaking at** industry-oriented events or even better, organize one yourself!
- When speaking to people you have worked for or with in previous jobs, **ask whether or not they'd be willing to give you a recommendation** on LinkedIn
- Ask your friends *skillfully* for their support.

Remember that looking for a job might be the hardest work you'll ever have. What you get out of the search will match what you put into it. Happy digging!

Networking, or in this context contacting people you know to find new employment opportunities, fails due to:

- The **lack of tact** when approaching others
- The attitude "You are my friend. You **have** to employ me"
- Hiring an acquaintance for all the wrong reasons: not because they are qualified, but out of a **feeling of obligation**
- After employing a friend, especially a close one, the new employer-employee relationship **may become awkward** at best, and in the worst case scenario might lead to poor or even harmful business decisions. The fine line between friendship and business relationship can become a vast gray area of question marks and uncertainties
- Only when you start working with somebody do you get to know who they really are. You can easily become disappointed by them, and then it's very difficult to undo your hiring decision or the recommendation, especially when it comes to executive positions
- If you were hired by a friend or thanks to a friend, resigning from the new job (whatever the reasons may be) can be **uncomfortable** because you feel **indebted to them**
- Other employees might find out that the outside hire was purely motivated not by qualifications, but by a relationship. It's even worse if somebody inside the company who would have been more competent was passed over. Conflict is almost inevitable
- Recommending a friend you hardly know might put you in an uncomfortable position, especially if the person **doesn't perform as expected**.

Personally and professionally, we **do recommend "networking" as a channel to generate leads** that might result in job offers but only when done skillfully and tactfully. At this point, we'd like to quote an executive search consultant who declined our invitation to participate in this e-book: "[...] For that you need life experience, emotional maturity, and a whole set of soft skills from all involved parties". While "that" refers to the recruitment process, we believe it to be true for the entire job hunting process, particularly networking.

4) Online Job Ads

When we last published this e-book, only 14% of our clients at that time had accepted a job offer that was generated directly by an online job advertisement. However, since the outbreak of the pandemic, **applying to online job** ads **has become a more efficient method of job hunting, with the efficiency rate rising to 39%**.

Applying to hundreds of job ads **without properly prepared application tools** is still one of the least effective methods of job hunting. However, when done tactfully, it should not be omitted. Our dear friend Vilfredo Pareto understood that **20% effort generates 80% results**. At Career Angels, 80% is not enough. As you probably want to receive **the best available job** offers, you should not exclude online ads, although you shouldn't focus solely on this channel either.

The best strategy to approach this source of potential job offers is to **register with two to three most popular job portals**, set up an automatic job search that provides you with links once a week, reserve 30 minutes in front of the computer with a cup of your favorite beverage, and click through the links. And don't forget about LinkedIn – it's essentially a job portal with its own algorithm. Check out pages 19 and 20 for tips on optimizing your LinkedIn profile to increase your visibility to potential employers.

Again, remember: the **higher up** you find yourself on the corporate ladder, the **fewer suitable offers** you will find. Do not apply to everything that seems only partly interesting.

5) Interviews, salary negotiations & reference checks

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "What should executives pay particular attention to during a job interview?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

The relationship between the candidate and the headhunter is one of mutual responsibility. The headhunter represents the candidate. The candidate represents the headhunter. We often ask ourselves, "**Do I want to be responsible for this executive**?". Junior consultants approach that process all too often "by the book", inquiring artificially about strengths and weaknesses, etc. On the other hand, executives forget to **adapt their corporate slang** to their audience. […] I've been doing this job for 15 years and the best advice I can give an executive for an interview is to be themselves.

This might sound silly, but the chemistry starts with a firm handshake. Be honest. **Be very well-prepared**.

Although there is so much information on the Internet on this topic, candidates are not able to prepare themselves properly for an interview. They cannot discuss their strengths and weaknesses. Prepare! **Get to know the potential employer**. Be honest, because bending reality does not help in the long term.

Listen to the questions and answer them with concrete examples. **Be authentic**. Have an honest goal and motives.

Voices from the Executive Search world

I look for coherence and integrity. Does the candidate really walk their talk? **I look for the skill of being able to admit mistakes**. I look for structure in the answers. **I look for business acumen**.

Answer the questions you are asked. **Be concrete**. **Be honest**, because a professional consultant will be able to easily decipher a candidate's real nature or motives.

Try to get into the shoes of the interviewer. What answers would you like to hear? Stick to the relevant topics. **Run interview simulations**.

Be yourself. There is no need to exaggerate or play or pretend. Sooner or later, the truth always comes out. Present the most important elements. The worst thing a candidate can do is, often wrongly, **assume they know what the headhunter is looking for in an executive**. That leads to misrepresentation. Depending on the market and the company, we might be searching for a democratic or autocratic leader.

First and foremost is the ability to communicate. If an executive is unable to establish a relationship with the headhunter, he or she will not be able to do it with the employer either. **Be confident and pay attention to details** such as eye contact, where you sit, and a firm handshake. Remember that the interview is not an inquisition but a dialog between partners.

It might seem obvious, but experienced managers do not put enough emphasis on:
1) Adequate self-presentation as a **mature and reliable manager**
2) Being **well-prepared** and able to share not only information about their own experience, but common **knowledge of the market**, business sector, or organizational processes they are involved in
3) Good **communication skills and honesty** when speaking about their goals and expectations when it comes to their future position.

I try to keep the first meeting rather informal. Have a chat over coffee. That gives me a good context to dig deep and inquire about the underlying motivation of the candidate. **A new job is like a puppy**. **It's not only for Christmas**.

The most inappropriate approach during an interview is the "I deserve this job" attitude. I have also observed that **executives have trouble talking about themselves, their achievements and key competences**. Some feel uncomfortable in a weaker negotiating position.

The important elements are: dress code, clear communication, and attention to detail. My philosophy is: **expect nothing and never assume anything**. At a certain executive level, hard skills are not as relevant as character, maturity, views, and perceptions.

The phrase "sell yourself" has a negative connotation, but I mean it in the most positive sense. **Be yourself**. **Be authentic**. **Be confident**, but **don't overdo it**. You might be the only candidate, or you might be one of 20. Answer questions by focusing on the most important thread.

Number one: be very honest. Number two: **talk about your achievements and failures**, because somebody who can't talk about their failures and what they learned from them is not always a valuable candidate. Number three: **be well-prepared**. Number four: focus on and talk about what is relevant. Number five: answer the questions that are being asked.

Be confident, but not arrogant. We sometimes hear from our candidates: **why should I even meet you**? I want to meet directly your client. They need to remember that we are the first point of contact. They should trust us.

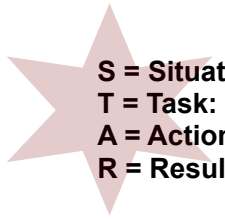
Talk about your achievements and not about your tasks. If you are not working currently, **do not allow your desperation to show**.

The three biggest faux pas:

- **Over-confidence bordering on arrogance**
- **Lack of preparation**
- **Failure to listen**.

An international HR professional observes the following on **gender differences**, “During interviews, women are often more modest than men in presenting their achievements and highlighting their qualifications and skills. Women also ask more questions about the culture of their potential new employer, the composition of teams, and offered benefits. Men seem to be more interested in the levels of independence they will have, the firm’s strategic plans and internal competition they may face.”

What helps our clients most is to stick to the **STAR technique** when answering questions. It helps to maintain focus and to remember every stage of a project:



S = Situation:	give a brief context / background / introduction
T = Task:	explain what your responsibilities were
A = Action:	describe what you did
R = Result:	share the result

Not much can go wrong when applying this method. **Practice or role play** with somebody you know. Our motto in very colloquial terms is, “**Screw up at the simulation** so that you can **nail it during the real interview**”. In our experience, our clients are ready after three interview simulations.

We’ve observed that those who have not been “on the other side of the recruitment process” for a very long time, or those who usually do the recruiting, face the most daunting challenge. It's especially tough for CEOs. A 40 or 50-year-old successful Managing Director sitting in front of us during an interview simulation usually **bombs the very first questions**: “Can you please tell us a bit about yourself?” or “Why did you accept our invitation to this meeting?” or “What makes you stand out on the market?”. It is not so much about teaching them something new, but rather helping them get used to being on the “other side” of the table, taking advantage of what they already know and have been doing for many years.

In the words of one client, “What I appreciate the most is the help to prepare for interviews. Thanks to that, the recruitment process **does not end after the first meeting**. I’m aware enough to pick up on signals I did not see before and can now react accordingly”.

Salary negotiations

What is the worst thing that can happen during salary negotiations? That **you ask for too little**. We won't write an essay here on how to (not) negotiate your salary. Instead, we'll redirect you to our blog.

📌 Pin for further reading: 5 Questions to Help You Determine Your Salary Negotiation Power

How do you negotiate your salary best? The most important thing to do before you start is to assess your overall salary negotiation position. How to do it? You'll find out by reading our blog post 5 Questions to Help You Determine Your Salary Negotiation Power.

The reference check

A well-chosen reference can backfire if you *think* you knew what they were going to say. But your references **are not only the people** you mention on your CV or check during an interview.

Once an executive search company starts working on a new assignment, one channel for generating candidates is **asking their contacts** on the market who they would recommend for X position. From the very first day, the consultant listens to what "the market" has to say about you. The moment the best 3-5 candidates have been selected, a more thorough process starts. That thoroughness depends on both the executive search firm's standard procedures and the requirements of the corporate client. We did find some recruitment companies that do not check their candidates' references.

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "Do you check your candidates' references?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

Most people use their friends as references. It's obvious they'd say something nice, isn't it? **We prefer to rely on our assessment**.

We know from our experience that just because somebody is your friend **does not mean** they will provide you with a **positive endorsement**. However, companies that follow this philosophy are a definite minority.

The remainder usually does the following to at least some extent:

- **Check** with the people you have mentioned
- **Ask** for **additional sources**: your superior, your peers, your employees, your clients, a business partner
- Inquire **subtly** (!) with **reliable**, **trustworthy** contacts
- Activate **other channels** with or without your knowledge and/or consent.

At all times, the well-being, confidentiality, and reputation of the candidate are imperative and extremely well-guarded. This was probably the only issue that everyone we talked to agreed on unanimously due to its sensitivity.

CONCLUSIONS & WORDS OF CAUTION

We asked Executive Search Consultants, "What's your most important advice for job searching executives?".

Voices from the Executive Search world

The key is preparation, **communication, attire, punctuality**.

Some believe in spreading an aura of importance and diva-like behavior such as by not showing up or canceling last minute. […] The really good candidates are the friendliest ones. **General savoir-vivre is in order**. And it's definitely worthwhile to prepare.

The three biggest mistakes are: **being too passive** because of the "work will find me" attitude, **being arrogant**, and **lacking preparation**.

Candidates often use very colloquial language when dealing with us as they believe they will get in through the back door. Some contact us three or more times per month: **respect your candidacy, don't be desperate**.

The most important part of the whole job hunting process is the first stage: **skillfully matching the person with a company and position**. Don't take just any job. Sooner or later you might receive *the* offer which means that you may run the risk of being incoherent in developing your career. It can **damage your image** which makes it more difficult to successfully participate in recruitment processes.

The most important factors are: diligent evaluation of your views, **a consistent level of communication with all involved parties**, a realistic take on your financial expectations, and avoiding "stardom" attitudes.

Communicate sincere motivations: don't play "I'm a star". Sometimes it simply pays off to show that you care. Additionally, **do not change your financial expectations in the course of the process**. This lack of integrity results in your loss of credibility.

Job hunting executives can be divided into three categories. The first group is **very aware of their own competences and develop themselves continuously**. They are usually familiar with the techniques of promoting themselves on the market. The second and, at the same time, the largest group, are those who have just entered the process of assessing and evaluating their strengths and weaknesses. And then, there are those who form the third group: these executives **do not submit themselves to self-analysis and therefore, face the biggest challenges in finding new employment**.

Individualize your approach. Be transparent. And remember, the market is a small place which means that **everything you claim can be easily verified**.

Remember, the recruitment process is never just one-way. Use an interview to probe if that company is right for you as well. Communication is a two-way street. It's not only them interviewing you, it's also you interviewing them. Observe how they treat you and respond to you. **Is that the place where you want to spend the next five to seven years**? It's two-sides engaging. It's not only the company that can say no.

You should observe the market that you are interested in. What kind of **new investments** are being undertaken?

Voices from the Executive Search world

There is a very fine line between frustration and motivation. Refrain, on the one hand, from expressing **negative emotions toward your current or former employer**(s), and on the other hand, from letting your frustration show as you have been looking for a long time.

Look for a job with class. You can ruin a very good first impression formed during the interview with the way you behave after it: calling constantly to check up on us. We do understand your situation but don't exaggerate. **It is enough to send us your CV once**. We do have a lot of very good CVs in our database. So do other recruitment companies. If we have something for you, believe me, we will call you.

I would say that there are two main things to avoid. Firstly, **have clearly defined objectives and be aware of your true strengths** and realistic professional aspirations, because the "I can do everything" approach does not help a candidate to reach the next step. Secondly, **don't seem desperate**.

Women tend to be more loyal to their employers and probably change jobs less frequently than men. Before deciding to change, women carefully think about the **pros and cons** of staying vs. leaving, e.g. they check if a potential new employer has other women partners and how they are treated or whether there are any better career development opportunities for them. Men more often change either to gain **more power** or to have **higher remuneration**.

Based on my experience, the most important advice an executive should follow when trying to secure a new position is: courtesy gets you further than arrogance; **don't use your own corporate jargon** when talking to a headhunter or potential employer; and don't talk too much – **quality over quantity when you speak**.

Irrespective of your career level, changing a job **is never simply about adding a new company onto your CV**, especially if you have worked for your employer for a long time. A lot of emotions and psychological defense mechanisms are involved.

THANK YOU FOR READING!

As we reach the end of this e-book, we want to **express our gratitude** for joining us on this journey. Our final chapter features a section of most frequent **questions** asked by people who stumble upon us, together with **answers** provided by Sandra Bichl, the founder of Career Angels. And if you're looking for **more resources**, you can find us on:

LinkedIn … to attend free webinars, get notified about our newest blog posts, and learn how to use LinkedIn to your advantage!

YouTube … for tutorials on how to navigate the job market, find your dream job or advance in your field!

facebook … for daily updates, special offers, and to get to know us a bit better!

CAREER ANGELS … to find out more about us, our team, and our services for clients – also B2B (consulting & training) and outplacement services!

Everything you want to know about Career Angels

The below questions are answered by Sandra Bichl, the founder of Career Angels.

Question: Great e-book, but… what do you actually do? How can Career Angels help me?
Answer: Career Angels is an international **career & HR consulting boutique** that has a team of consultants with 10+ years of experience in HR, recruitment, Talent Management combined with consulting and/or coaching. We support four groups of clients:

- **Individuals**: we offer tailored support for those who need guidance on their career path – whether it involves changing your job or finding a completely new direction. Our expertise covers career management, job search strategies, preparing tailor-made personalized CVs, personal branding, coaching, and more. Whether you need to do market research, find headhunters, prepare for an interview, or simply want to "talk things through" – we are here to help you.

- **Companies**: we offer a range of services to support organizations, incl. outplacement programs, tailored Assessment and Development Centers (AC/Dcs), and various training programs to meet your challenges. We can help you develop career paths of your employees, adapt or design your organizational culture, as well as enhance both internal and external recruitment processes.

- **Business Schools (G/E/MBA) & professional organizations**: we cooperate with G/E/MBA students and alumni at business schools, as well as with members of professional organizations **(like ACCA)**. On top of individual career consultations, we organize webinars, workshops and bootcamps, offering valuable resources and helping students and professionals reach career excellence.

- **Career Advisors**: we share our knowledge and methodology with other professionals to improve the quality of services provided on the market: every year we train an average of 50 professionals, and carry out approximately 3 in-house trainings for HR departments of big international companies. What's more, we have designed and delivered postgraduate studies "Career Advisory" at one of the best universities in Europe.

Q: Who founded Career Angels? What's the backstory?
A: When I was a recruiter myself, a lot of my friends and candidates asked or even demanded my help. "Sandra, you are a headhunter. Find me a job!". Most didn't understand that I specialized in lawyers or that recruiters don't really work "like that". However, very often, I found myself formatting CVs, writing motivation letters and giving career advice. Aside from two of my friends who ignored my tips, all the others **found jobs very quickly**. So, friends of my friends and friends of my candidates started getting in touch also asking for help. In June 2010, I decided to see if anybody would pay for my support and **immediately found my first client**. He recommended me and the rest is history. It went from a tiny freelance side-business to an office in the city center to going 80-90% online at the end of 2012 and 100% online as of 2020. We've gone from 100% local clients to 90% Europe and 10% outside of Europe.

Q: How effective are you?
A: That's a very good question! We need to start with the fact that not everybody expects tangible results in the form of a new job! About 40% of our clients get in touch for more strategic matters like formulating their career strategy, improving their personal brand / executive identity, receiving an objective assessment of their current competences and/or chances on the market or crafting a plan to get promoted.

If somebody solely wants "to get their CV formatted" (our methodology is, of course, much more in-depth), we cannot say that they did or did not find a new job based on our CV. What we can compare are the effects they get with their own CV version – not getting invited to any job interviews – with the effects they get with their new CV: getting invited. In that case, we are 100% effective. Sometimes, we have clients who only want to go through the interview simulation **because they usually never get through the first round**. Once they practice with us, they get to the second and third round and receive job offers. In that case, we are also 100% effective.

For those who decide to work with Career Angels in a complex, full-service manner which usually translates into a project scope of 100-300+ hrs (depending on the final parameters, incl. the number of targeted countries), the efficiency rate is almost 90%. Why not 100%? Here are some examples – and yes, in case you are wondering: all of them are real, and all of them are senior executives:

- Client A didn't show up to confirmed interviews. Several times
- Client B admitted to having overslept for an interview that was scheduled at 2 pm. Rescheduling it took 2.5 months due to the prospective employer losing their initial interest
- Client C lost motivation and refused to engage in further activities that had been confirmed and paid for! They then proceed to ghost us for 2 months which meant losing some of the already created momentum. Ultimately, the project was put on hold
- Client D decided to start their own business.
- Client E refused to activate one of the most crucial channels mid-project – "just because" – although we had agreed upfront that it would massively contribute to the final success.
- Client F's spouse changed their mind as to relocating to a different country
- While Client G changed their mind on their own – the initial target countries were based on previous experience: UK, France, Middle East and Australia; a binding job offer came from Australia which the client decided not to pursue as it was suddenly "too far away".
- And sometimes it's a counter-offer from the current employer that results in our clients ultimately not changing.

But in all cases, we've always been able to generate interviews with premier employers and top executive search firms. Converting those opportunities into recruitment processes lies then fully in the hands of our clients.

Q: What kind of clients do you have?
A: 61% of our clients are members of a management board (locally or internationally) or report to one. 31% are experienced managers with at least 10 years of experience. The remainder are professionals – sometimes our clients' children! Which is, indeed, a great honor!

If you'd like to further segment our clients, you could have a look at the combination of the following four parameters:

- The time the clients can realistically dedicate to the job search, in other words: how much is the client able to do on their own?
- The amount of support the clients feels comfortable with. Some feel at ease when outsourcing everything, some cringe at the mere thought of it
- The budget they feel OK spending, i.e. investing in your career at this particular moment of your life
- The clarity of the career / job search goal that you have.

Q: What kind of feedback have you received so far from your clients?
A: The other day one of our clients said, “Sandra, I really like working with you and your company. You are extremely professional and maintain a very high level of service. But what I like best is that you are all ‘normal’. You are not pretentious”. We think that sums it up pretty well. **We are practical**, **direct** and **always straightforward**. One of the policies we have is to **switch to the first name basis at the first** “**Hello!**” – which is very unusual in some cultures. It helps eliminate unnecessary, often very superficial barriers.

Q: Tell me more about your clients.
A: Our clients usually:

1) Are willing to hit “**pause**” to answer underlying questions about their motives, goals, desires, competences, skills, and expectations
2) Are **open to feedback**.

My team and I feel obliged to always tell the truth and share **honest feedback**. To give you an example: an experienced lawyer came to our office. She was going through a rough patch. Her words said, “I really want to find a job”. But her raven-black dyed hair and dark eye shadow screamed, “I'm depressed, don't hire me!”. Her posture communicated, “I don't deserve to be hired. I don't believe in myself”. So, we told her, “Listen, even if we help you get interviews, nobody will hire you. Not in your current state of mind. […] If you need to speak to a psychologist, we are happy to recommend someone”. It turned out that she was already seeing one and she thanked us for our honest feedback. Two weeks later, she sent us a much better version of her CV and told us she had decided to give the job hunting another try. That little push helped her. Here’s another example of how much our feedback is appreciated: During one of the interview simulations, our client, a Managing Director, suddenly said, “Just be honest with me. Tell me the truth. At work, I am never sure whether my employees are being straight with me. I pay you to be honest with me”.

We do sometimes turn down work, e.g. if somebody overestimates their competences and is not willing to be assessed objectively. We don’t want to commit to helping somebody find a job that doesn’t match their skills or is simply unrealistic.

Q: What industries do you specialize in?
A: We do not specialize. We are confident that we can help clients in **any industry**. If none of our Career Angels have the necessary know-how, we are able to reach to our network and obtain what we need from the market. Remember that headhunters are not our competitors, but to some extent collaborators who are willing to share. Additionally, **we keep very close relationships with our former clients** who are the best sources of information and contacts.

Q: How do you attract clients?
A: Every year, **75-90% of our clients are generated thanks to referrals**. In the history of Career Angels – which is now in its 15th year – we have paid for advertising only a handful of times: on Facebook to promote a course, one test run on GoogleAds, and two test runs on LinkedIn to understand their tools and pricing. 57% of our clients return within 2-8 or more years. Our longest client relationship is now in its 15th year.

Q: Who can join your team and how?
A: We are looking for professionals **fluent in English** with at least **10 years of experience** gained in **Europe** to join our team as Career Consultants. As we want to ensure our clients receive flawless materials, having an eye for **details** and focusing on **high quality** is a must.
To join our team, you need to go through a 6-step recruitment process that includes **tests**: English and puzzles, CliftonStrengths Assessment by Gallup, Career View by Decision Dynamics. After successfully passing all the steps, we will have a call summarizing the process.

We also recruit new members for our support team that consists of students – and we don't require any previous experience.

Check out our **Career site** for more details on the roles and on how to apply for them.

Q: What is your take on whether executives should test their market value and participate in recruitment processes even if they are not interested in changing jobs?
A: Both companies and headhunters sometimes post "fake" job ads to enrich their databases or to get a better understanding of the market. Why shouldn't candidates be allowed to do the same? Nonetheless, thinking long-term, we would strongly advise executives to be very clear from the very beginning about their motivation: "**I'm happy where I am**. I suspect that you will not be able to offer me something that could be of interest. However, I am open to exploring, but please remember, I will probably not accept any offer". That way the headhunter knows from the start to look for more motivated candidates. On the other hand, the recruitment process might turn out to be interesting after all.

Career Angels on Udemy
Every step of the job search explained – backed by research!

Career Angels has created a Udemy course to support job seekers **in all four steps of their job search process**. The course is designed as a comprehensive, **step-by-step** introduction to **strategic** planning of your **job search**, with an understanding of **COVID-time market trends**.

What you'll learn:

- **Job Search Strategy**: build and implement an **effective job search strategy**, consistent with your career motivations
- **Professional Goal Setting**: make sure your next career step is realistic and **in line with your profile**
- **Diagnosing Your Strengths**: formulate your unique selling proposition (**USP**) and check it against job market requirements
- **Personal Branding**: communicate your USP to relevant people in relevant ways
- **CV Creation**: make sure your CV really **stands out** against the competition
- **ATS-Compliant CVs**: optimize your CV so that it is **AI-friendly**
- **Hacking the LinkedIn Algorithm**: build an effective LinkedIn profile
- **Writing Cover Emails**: make sure your emails to headhunters and hiring managers are not only opened, but also **read with interest**
- **Professional Networking**: build long-term business relationships **that can support you** during your job search
- **Contacting Headhunters**: know how they work and how they think in order to build effective relationships
- **Contacting Decision Makers**: know how they work and how they think in order to build **mutually beneficial relationships**
- **Interviewing Skills**: be strategic when being interviewed
- **Online Interviews**: the practical differences and similarities between **offline** and **online interviewing** and what this means for you

The course provides **over 14 hours of content**,
as well as **downloadable resources** about how to:
– Set realistic goals
– Create CV for humans & ATS
– Hack LinkedIn
– Prepare for (online) interviews
… **and much more**.

Who this course is for:

- **Experienced Managers**
- **Executives**
- **Specialists**
- **Corporate Professionals**

If you don't feel like putting the materials together on your own, sign up for our Udemy course: Every step of the job search explained – backed by research! **(highest rated in its category!)**