

THE MODERN JOB SEARCH GUIDANCE & RESOURCES



Hi! I'm Stephanie Mansueto. I'm a U.S.-based corporate recruiter and job hunt coach for mid and senior social impact professionals. I have deep expertise in global development and previously worked in the advertising industry. I have served in a variety of roles including program management, business development, account/client management, operations, marketing, and recruitment/talent acquisition for global non-profit and for-profit employers, so I have a holistic understanding of corporate and non-profit goals.

My expertise is based on the U.S. job market, so I advise non-U.S. professionals to consult talent acquisition/HR, career coaches, industry-relevant professionals, employment/labor lawyers in their country of residence or employment for specific advice.

LET'S GET STARTED

- If you are eligible, file for [unemployment benefits](#) in your U.S. state.
- If you're unemployed, review your personal finances and see how long of a runway you have until you need a job. If you're job searching in a heavily saturated market or an industry that is experiencing wide-scale layoffs, **you should prepare for your job search to take anywhere from 3 months to one year+.** The more senior the position you are targeting, the longer the search may take, or if you're searching in a smaller U.S. market with less employers in your target sector, then add a few more months to that timeline. Key sectors in the U.S. job market have become increasingly competitive since mass layoffs started in 2023 due to over hiring during the pandemic, inflation, and advancements in AI.
- Career Clarity (or exploration)** - You'll want to conduct a self-audit of your career to-date. Do you want to stay in the same industry, job function, work culture, etc? Take stock of what you like and don't like about your current and previous roles and employers. What are you good at versus what experience do you want to gain? What opportunities exist in your current industry that need your skill set? Are you ready to move to a new city for

more opportunities? Or perhaps you want to consider a partial or full career change/pivot. There are a lot of [free online tools](#) to help with this exploration stage.

Note



If you are considering a career change/pivot, whether partial or full, you should speak directly with people that work in your desired role or industry. There is no better guidance than from people that are doing the work you want to be doing. Schedule informational interviews with professionals to ask questions about their career and required skills and education. Lastly, career changes require a serious time and/or financial investment. It's ok to abandon a career change/pivot after doing some initial research and realizing it's not worth the time or financial investment.

- Start or join a Peer Networking Group** - These are small groups of professionals in your network who work in the same sub-sector or city, but have different functional areas of expertise.

Example



Let's say your background is in program management for global climate adaptation work. You should join or gather a group of professionals that also work in the climate adaptation sector, but with different functional experience such as communications; monitoring, evaluation, research and learning (MERL); business development or fundraising; and strategic partnerships.

You will be able to support each other with sector or geographic-specific information without competing for the same jobs. You'll also be able to serve as accountability partners for each other as you embark on the search. Start a group chat and shared folder to share job openings, job application trackers, target list of employers, networking leads, and any other job search resources and tools.

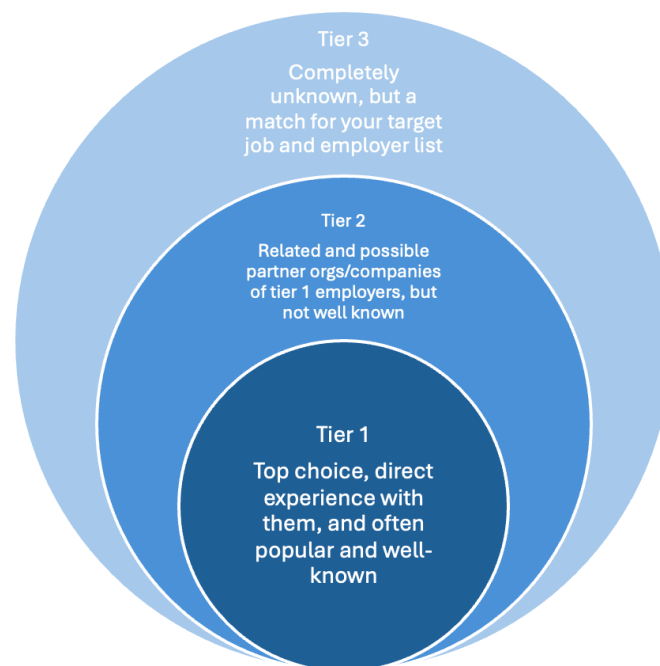
- Define your Unique Value Proposition (UVP)** - Your UVP is typically defined by the following areas of expertise:
 - **Industry/Sector /Vertical** - These are the specific sectors you have experience in such as HIV/AIDS prevention; conservation; health systems strengthening; agribusiness; or government consulting/professional services, for example.
 - **Employer Type** - Non-profit; foundations; IGOs; for-profit; government/federal; size (small, medium, or large); or growth stage (i.e. series B start-up or pre-IPO). Some of this expertise can also be categorized under industry/sector type.
 - **Job Function** - Executive/C-Suite; business development/fundraising; strategic partnerships; support departments (HR; accounting; legal; IT; L&D etc); program

management; sales; operations; marketing & communications; research & development (R&D); customer support, etc.

- **Geographic** - The cities, countries, or regions in the world do you have direct experience and expertise in?
- **Special Skills & Proficiencies** - Languages, software expertise, certifications, etc.

Employers hire people for their relevant experience. When researching employers, if you're not seeing a strong alignment between your UVP and the current mission or growth areas for that company, it's not a good fit. It doesn't mean you can't consider future employment with that company, but you will need to focus more on networking your way in with transferrable skills rather than submitting a cold/blind application (no connections to or referral at the company) to a current job opening.

- **Target List of Employers** - Before hitting up the popular job boards, develop a target list of employers based on the employers you know in your industry. I recommend segmenting your target list into 1st, 2nd, and 3rd tier employers as defined below. If you're pivoting to a new industry your 1st tier employers will most likely be the well known "big fish" employers or those referred to you by someone in your network.



- **Open to Work Announcement** - For those that are openly job searching, announce to your LinkedIn network that you're searching and let them know what you're looking for and what you're really good at. Be specific and don't be afraid to talk yourself up! Here's a sample template

Adapt this language to your personal tone – if you tend to be more direct and formal then include less text, or if you're known for your sense of humor, throw a joke in there, or if you love your emojis throw some of those bad boys in there too.

Hi Everyone [LinkedIn Fam; LinkedIn Friends; etc],

Unfortunately, I was impacted by recent layoffs at [company]. I appreciated my time there and was able to work on some amazing projects with great people [tag people you worked with]

- Project/initiative #1
- Project/initiative #2
- Project/initiative #3

While I'm saddened to leave, I'm grateful for the opportunities I had, the relationships I built, and the growth I experienced.

I'm on the search for my next inspiring role and hoping my network can help me. Here's what I'm looking for:

[Brief description of ideal role and SOW. Include level and years of experience. Feel free to use bullet points]

This type of work usually has these job titles, but let me know if I missed any:

- Position Title #1
- Position Title #2
- Position Title #3
- Position Title #4
- Position Title #5

Here's what I do really well and where I can add value right away:

- Capability #1 – For example, are you a jack of all trades and can kick butt in an Operations Director role with a keen understanding how to work across departments, then say so!
- Capability #2 – Are you amazing at managing tough clients and communicating organizational value to clients, then say so!
- Capability #3 – Are you the biggest monitoring and evaluation nerd who knows how to use data to tell a story, adapt program activities, and create compelling knowledge management pieces, then say so!

- Industries and employer size
- Cities, country, or regional experience
- Donors/clients you specialize in

I'm looking forward to connecting with old and new peers in my industry so I appreciate your help in connecting me with anyone who can help with my search, or just to have a friendly chat with a fellow [area of expertise].

And for those in the same spot as me, take a look at my profile and let me know how I can help with your search.

Thank you, and upward and onward, my friends!

[Upload a recent headshot or fun picture to accompany post. Posts with photos receive more engagement]

[Turn on your open to work banner. From what we've seen, it doesn't hurt and some people claim the search algorithm favors profiles with this banner active]

- Revamp Your Marketing Materials** - This includes your resume/CV, LinkedIn profile, cover letter templates, and online portfolio (writing samples, case studies, pitch decks, etc). Use keywords from the job description in your resume and cover letter, and put your most relevant experience into a professional summary at the top (use bullet points if it's text heavy), especially if you're changing sectors and need to highlight transferrable skills.

AI in the Job Search



Use generative AI like [ChatGPT](#), [DeepSeek](#), or [Claude](#) to expand your list of employers in a geographic area, identify niche job boards and headhunting agencies, and tailor your job application materials. Play with prompts to get more refined results. Claude is preferred for anything where you need a more authentic human tone. Remember that AI is great for a first draft, but you'll need to edit documents before submitting.

- **Master version of your resume** - Create a master version of your resume where you list everything you've ever done with each of your jobs - every responsibility, success, performance metric, donor or partner worked with, award and accolade, etc. Then when it comes time to tailoring your resume for a specific job, you can simply cut bullet points and edit for keyword matching with the job description. This is a personal document that can be anywhere from two to 10 pages long. For experienced

professionals with a longer career history, this should never be the final version submitted for a job application; edit your resume down to two or three pages. You should be tailoring your resume/CV to every job application.

- Recruiters in the U.S. aren't particularly strict about resume/CV length, but I recommend keeping it to three pages max for experienced professionals (10+ years of experience).
- Avoid using tables and graphics in your resume as they aren't applicant tracking system (ATS) friendly.
- Be sure to include quantifiable performance metrics and numbers that provide context of scope and scale in your resume/CV. Some examples:
 - Did the company/team/department/budget grow during your employment? If so, by how much?
 - Did you lead your team/department/company through a particularly challenging time like staff reductions, relocation or operational changes due to an unforeseen circumstance or crisis like the 2020 pandemic?
 - Did you lead a first-of-its-kind project or initiative for an employer?
 - What is the \$ value of the project you supported or managed?
 - How many staff did you directly and/or indirectly supervise?
 - How much in \$ value did you bring in for new business? What was your win rate?
 - What new partners and donors did you collaborate with?
 - Did you improve or streamline operations that resulted in better program delivery or cost savings?
 - For global development professionals - what are key quantifiable program objectives your project achieved? Reference annual reports or knowledge management/CLA materials if needed for this data.

Job Boards - Here are some social impact, CSR, and global development job boards to bookmark

Idealist	Conservation Job Board
Devex	Association of Corporate Citizenship Professionals
Impact Source (Tech Change)	Next Billion
PCDN	Net Impact
Green Jobs Board	Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship
Green Jobs	Raise for Good
GreenBiz Sustainability Jobs	The Impact Job
ClimateBase	Global impact Investing Network (GIIN)
Association of Climate Change Officers (ACCO)	Impact Alpha
Terra.do	The Chronicle of Philanthropy
Climate Change Jobs	80000hours.org
Remote Climate Jobs	National Council of Nonprofits
ClimateTechList	Development Aid

The 80/20 Rule

When reviewing and deciding which jobs to apply to, you should be a competitive fit for 80% of the jobs you apply to and 20% of your applications should be reach jobs. A competitive fit means you meet 80-100% of the hard requirements (required years of professional experience, education, technical skills, years of direct supervisory experience, etc) and reach fit means you meet 60-80% of the hard requirements. If some weeks your split is more like 70/30 or 60/40, that's ok, you just don't want to consistently be applying to more reach positions than competitive fit jobs.



- ❑ **Networking** - If you're applying the 80/20 rule to your job applications that should leave more time for targeted and genuine networking. Networking is a long game - don't expect people to hand deliver curated jobs after a 10 minute phone call. It's about building genuine connections with people you have a common interest with.

Prioritize your first degree connections who can give you leads and refer you to your target employers.

Info



Follow thought leaders, subject matter experts, TA/recruiters, and career coaches in your target sector on LinkedIn. They are great resources for relevant industry news and the latest job openings.

- **Job Application Notification** - If the job application doesn't have any "do not contact" instructions, then I recommend identifying anywhere from 3 to 5 people (there will be less relevant people to contact at smaller employers) to contact that appear to be on the hiring team and let them know you applied. Provide a summary of your qualifications. If you can identify an employer email address that is best, but most people sign up for LinkedIn with their personal email address, and if they're active on the platform, they'll receive your message. Do not send repeated follow-up emails and again, message people that look like they are involved in the hiring process.

Hi [Name],

I hope you're having a good week. I see [company name] is working on [project/initiative etc] which is similar to what I did at [company] OR I see we both worked at [company and/or department name]. I just applied to the [position title] and with X years of experience in X, X, and X, I'm eager to bring my experience to [company name]. I'd love to be considered for the position and am available if you have any questions.

Thank you for your time and I look forward to hearing from you.

- **Info Interview Request** - When reaching out to people you don't know at a company you're interested in that doesn't have any current job openings, be sure to personalize your message and be direct with your ask. Do you want to learn more about their career or a cool initiative they're spearheading at their job? Then say so. Find commonalities with that person - did you work in the same country at a certain time or work for the same past employer at one point?. Compliment them - did you appreciate something unique or insightful they said on a conference panel or on a podcast? If so, include that in your introduction. Be sure to review someone's LinkedIn profile before contacting them so you are familiar with their work and career trajectory. People are more likely to ignore generic, impersonal messages, so take the time to research the person and send a thoughtful message.

Hi [First Name],

I saw your recent [article/post/white paper/conference panel/webinar/etc] on [topic] and really enjoyed your take on [X]. Would love to connect with you. I'm a [expert title] in [city/town] looking to work with [sector or company name]. Would you be willing to briefly chat with me about your work?

Thank you!

If this information was helpful and you want 1:1 support with resume and LinkedIn profile optimization, interview preparation, networking, compensation negotiations, and more, please visit my website at www.smcareercoach.com and schedule a complimentary consult.

Please visit my [services page](#) for more information on types of services and costs. If my services are not within your budget at this time, I ask you to hold off on scheduling a consult. I routinely post free advice and current job openings in the social impact space on my [LinkedIn](#) page, so be sure to follow me there.

Good luck with your search!