



NEW BEGINNINGS AWAIT

NAVIGATING THE JOB MARKET

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LEADER

FINDING A NEW ROLE IN TODAY'S TECHNOLOGY JOB MARKET

Searching for a new job can be both exhilarating and daunting, especially in today's fast paced technology sector. With countless applicants vying for the same roles and an ever evolving demand for skills, navigating this landscape can feel overwhelming. However, finding a new opportunity is not just about patience, it's about strategy.

In this article, I'll give you my personal thoughts and experiences, as well as some suggestions how to effectively manage your job search using structured

approaches, staying focused on what you can control, and avoiding common pitfalls.

Enter the concept of the "3-foot world" a mindset used by many to focus on the immediate challenges within their reach. When you're job searching, this translates into controlling the things that are within your power: your CV, LinkedIn profile, networking efforts, and follow-ups. By focusing on these elements, you can reduce stress and maintain momentum in your search.

MY SITUATION

I've been actively looking for a new role as a senior technologist for a considerable period of time having left my last role as a CTO. At the time I wasn't truly aware of the market and didn't appreciate just how hard it would be finding my next role. With applications numbering in the hundreds, multiple interviews, countless rejections, and deafening silence, my mental fortitude has been challenged.

I've been through the highs of last stage interviews, the lows of not getting the role, the rollercoaster of good weeks with contacts galore, to the bad weeks of the sound of crickets.

But finding my next role is my job at the moment and I've had to approach it with as much structure and management as I would for a work role. Without this I would probably just sit waiting for the phone to ring.

WHY IS IT SO DIFFICULT?

GLOBAL AND NATIONAL CHALLENGES IN THE JOB MARKET

The difficulty of finding a new role today isn't just due to competition, it's driven by a mix of global and national challenges that have reshaped the job market, particularly in the tech sector. We might think it's us, but in matter of fact it isn't, the conditions we are experiencing have been driven by things outside of our control. The impacts are universal for those looking for a new role and it's important to understand some of these as it gives context to the market, and hopefully helps explain some of the pain we are experiencing.

ECONOMIC UNCERTAINTY

Global economic instability, from inflation to fluctuating markets, has led many companies to tighten their budgets and freeze hiring. Economic downturns often result in organisations adopting a more cautious approach to new hires, even in high-growth sectors like technology. Companies may delay hiring for new roles or focus on internal restructuring to reduce costs.

INDUSTRY DISRUPTION AND AUTOMATION

The tech landscape itself is constantly evolving. Rapid advancements in automation, artificial intelligence, and cloud technologies mean that roles that were essential just a few years ago may now be obsolete or require different skill sets. Job seekers must continuously upskill and adapt to stay relevant. Moreover, the shift toward automation has led some companies to replace

certain jobs with software solutions, further reducing available positions.

GLOBALISATION AND REMOTE WORK

The rise of remote work has led to a much more competitive job market. While this flexibility allows companies to hire from a global talent pool, it also means that candidates are no longer just competing with local professionals but with talent from around the world. Roles that were once limited by geography are now open to international applicants, increasing competition and driving up the required qualifications for many positions.

SKILLS MISMATCH

Even with the high demand for tech talent, there remains a significant skills gap. Many job seekers are applying for positions where their skills don't match the requirements exactly, leading to longer job searches. On the other hand,

employers often struggle to find candidates with the right blend of technical expertise and soft skills, making them more selective in the hiring process.

IMPACT OF MERGERS AND ACQUISITIONS

Increased M&A activity in the tech space has resulted in organisational shifts, where entire departments are restructured, downsized, or eliminated. When companies merge, there's often redundancy in roles, leading to layoffs

and hiring freezes as firms realign their internal priorities.

REGULATORY AND GEOPOLITICAL CHALLENGES

National regulations and geopolitical issues, such as trade disputes, visa restrictions, or changes in immigration policies, have complicated the hiring process for both companies and candidates. For instance, restrictions on work visas can limit opportunities for international candidates or companies seeking to hire global talent.

These global and national factors have fundamentally reshaped the job market, making it more challenging for candidates to navigate. However, by understanding these dynamics and staying flexible in your approach, whether it's by learning new skills, exploring remote roles, or targeting companies undergoing growth, you can position yourself for success even in a tough climate.

CHALLENGES IN TODAY'S JOB MARKET FOR TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONALS

The tech job market is one of the most challenging I've experienced in a long time and whilst the market is difficult, the hurdles I've faced sometimes make me question things. I'm not alone in running headlong into barriers and they can have major impacts on individuals.

Here's a few of the things I've faced:

- **High Volume of Applicants:** With many companies receiving hundreds of applications for each open position, it's easy to feel like your CV is getting lost in a sea of candidates. We've all seen the 100+ applicants showing on a LinkedIn Job Ad - but is it real or not is debatable. But the fact is there are more people than roles, as well as a flood of fraudulent activities going on.
- **Skills Evolution:** Roles in tech are constantly changing. Today's must-have skills might be irrelevant in a few years, making it essential to stay ahead of industry trends. But those of us with decades of real-world experience have more to offer than just skills, navigating how to balance both when presenting yourself is a challenge.
- **Complex Hiring Processes:** Many companies have intricate application systems, often requiring multiple steps and assessments. Navigating this maze can be exhausting, especially when you're applying for several roles at once.
- **Bias (discrimination) in Recruitment:** It exists despite everything which says it shouldn't, and it seems to be growing for certain characteristics.
- **Too Much Experience:** It's a fact of life that the older we get the more experience we accumulate, with our work life accounting for most of this. But this is becoming a barrier for roles that may not be operating at your previous level.
- **Being Put into a Box:** People make judgements based on what they read in a CV, sometimes this means they see you in a single capacity when in fact you can do way more. It can be frustrating being turned down for a role you know you can do, simply because your skills, capabilities and experience covers way more than is needed.
- **Psychological Impact:** The pressure of continuous applications, combined with rejections or silence from employers, can take a toll on your motivation. Staying positive for yourself, and those around you, gets more difficult the longer the situation continues.

WAYS TO MARKET YOURSELF

Yes I said "Market" because let's be honest if no one knows you are looking for a new role how do you expect to get one? Think of it this way - you want to sell your house, you put it on the market to make buyers aware. The same mentality is needed in today's world, just sending out a CV will not guarantee you a job.

Thanks to a number of exceptional people in my recruitment network here are some of the things which may help.

OPTIMISING YOUR CV AND LINKEDIN PROFILE

- **Consistency is Key:** Ensure your CV aligns with your LinkedIn profile. Employers often check both, so any discrepancies can be off-putting.
- **Outcome-Focused Content:** Instead of listing responsibilities, highlight achievements and measurable outcomes. Employers want to see what impact you've made, not just what your job was. Think of it this way - Why (what was the problem) - How (did you approach solving the problem) - What (did you do and what were the outcomes).
- **Clear Structure:** Don't overload with pages of skills, or war and peace descriptions, be clear and concise. This one is optional but if you have employment gaps or short tenures, address them briefly but clearly. This shows transparency and avoids leaving employers guessing.
- **Headline Optimisation:** Use a relevant, clear headline that reflects the role you're targeting. Avoid obscure job titles that make it difficult for recruiters to find you.
- **Descriptions:** Make sure that any profile descriptions are clear, articulate your achievements, demonstrate your experience and make it easy for people to understand.
- **Leverage Recommendations:** Reach out to former colleagues or managers for recommendations. Positive reviews can strengthen your profile and build credibility.
- **Expand Your Network:** Message CEOs or hiring managers directly at companies you admire. Send connection requests with a personalised note explaining why you'd love to work with them.
- **Engage:** So what you're on LinkedIn so people will connect with you and jobs will flow in. In reality you have to engage and be active to get recognised. Don't just "like" something, comment, add something interesting to challenge the debate,

LINKEDIN

do your own posts. You have to engage and interact.

- **Personal Brand:** Think about your personal brand on LinkedIn, take yourself out of your comfort zone and do things like podcasts which can showcase your experience to potential employers. Remember this is about you and no one else.

BE PERSISTENT IN NETWORKING

- **Spidering Technique:** LinkedIn has a feature where you can view similar profiles or "People also viewed". Use this to explore new connections and opportunities you might not have considered.
- **Job Alerts and Applications:** Set up job alerts on platforms like LinkedIn Jobs, Jobsite, Indeed, and others. Apply promptly and follow up with hiring managers after a few days to reinforce your interest.
- **Direct Company Approach:** After applying, find the CEO or head of the relevant department on LinkedIn and reach out to them directly. This can help set you apart from the crowd.
- **Don't be afraid to ask your existing network:** Reach out to old friends and colleagues to let them know your situation and see if they can do referrals into their companies.
- **Talent/HR Teams:** See if you can connect with someone in the organisations internal teams, ask their

advice on the best way to approach the company.

JOB APPLICATIONS

- **Applicant Counts:** Ignore these as they can be so off putting when considering applying for a role. If the role is something you want then apply for it, see if you can connect with someone and discuss it.
- **Connect with the Hiring Manager:** Contact the hiring Manager and head of dept responsible for the role directly, letting them know you have applied and why you are worth a conversation with. But make sure you know WHY you want to work for the company you've applied to.
- **Use Company Websites to Apply:** Apply to roles via the company website, rather than via LinkedIn, as it demonstrates you have researched them and helps to cut through the email noise.

JOB ALERTS (WATCHDOGS)

Set up Watchdogs on the main job boards to alert you (immediately or daily) of new roles and apply to them quickly and follow up with the hiring team and reporting line if possible.

Key sites to consider:

- Jobsite (<https://www.jobsite.co.uk>)
- CWJobs (<https://www.cwjobs.co.uk>)

- CV Library (<https://www.cv-library.co.uk>)
- Welcome to the Jungle (Otta) (<https://www.welcometothejungle.com/en>)
- Cord (<https://cord.co>)
- Haystackapp (<https://www.haystackapp.io>)
- Indeed (<https://uk.indeed.com>)
- Glassdoor (<https://www.glassdoor.co.uk>)
- LinkedIn Jobs (<https://www.linkedin.com/jobs>)

SHREK5

The five big headhunters. These are the organisations that the big business tend to go through for their senior hires and these days they do have a specialised Technology team that will work your areas and roles. Find the appropriate person on LinkedIn and message as well as calling them directly to introduce yourself. But note that roles with these organisations can have long and convoluted application processes.

- Spencer Stewart (<https://www.spencerstuart.com>)
- Heidrick & Struggles (<https://www.heidrick.com/en>)
- Russell Reynolds (<https://www.russellreynolds.com/en/>)
- Egon Zehnder (<https://www.egonzehnder.com>)
- Korn Ferry (<https://www.kornferry.com>)

PITFALLS TO AVOID

This could be a huge list of things not to do and for every positive action you will find the opposite advice. Unfortunately you will make mistakes and it's how you learn and move forward, it's your journey so you have to own it. But three things I would point out are:

- **Over-reliance on Auto Apply:** Platforms like LinkedIn offer an “Easy Apply” feature, but don’t just use the auto apply / easy apply buttons – you’ll end up applying to roles that just aren’t relevant or suitable. This can damage your reputation if the same business/agency is hiring multiple roles and receives your profile multiple times with tailored/different CVs.
- **Giving Up After No Response:** Not hearing back from an employer is frustrating, but it doesn’t mean “no”. Follow up professionally after a few days to express continued interest. Persistence often pays off, especially in competitive fields.
- **Neglecting Networking:** Don’t isolate yourself from the professional community. Engaging with peer groups, attending industry events, and participating in forums can open doors. Many opportunities arise through word of mouth, so expand your reach and stay active.

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER

So how do you bring all that together? Sounds like a lot of work - it can be, but this is where structure and a plan really help to keep your search organised and effective, treat it like a job itself. Structure your time, refine your efforts, and stay proactive.

- **Treat the Search Like a Job:** Dedicate 2-3 hours per day to your job search. Set aside focused time to research roles, refine your CV, and reach out to connections. Balance this with breaks to prevent burnout.
- **Target Companies Directly:** If you have companies in mind, don't just rely on job boards. Go to their websites and apply directly. Senior-level roles are often advertised internally before going public. Additionally, research companies that have received recent funding using Crunchbase, TechCrunch, Sifted, VC News Daily, Dealroom, and Pitchbook as these firms may soon be hiring as they scale.
- **Expand Your Reach:** Attend industry events or engage with tech-specific peer groups. Platforms like Eventbrite host networking events where you can connect with professionals in your field. Also, consider joining groups on LinkedIn that cater to tech leaders they often share job opportunities and industry insights.
- **Pay it Forward:** You are not alone in your search for a new role, so offer advice and guidance to others. Connect them to roles they may not have seen, make introductions that may help them.
- **CV:** This is YOUR story so make sure you tell the one you want. There is lots of conflicting advice on what to include / not include, what format it should be, how many pages, etc. There is no "Magic" format, or content, or hidden technique - keep your CV concise, detail achievements (Why, How, What), who've you worked for and what did you achieve (responsibilities), make it about you (the language of "we" doesn't tell the hiring manager much, if you were part of a team emphasise your impact and acknowledge the impact of others.).
- **Know Who You Are:** It's easy to blunderbuss your way across job applications, but make sure you know who you are, what do you want from your next role, what can you bring to a role which others can't. Ask yourself when applying for a role - Why Me?
- **Recruiters can help:** Despite what we see in posts on LinkedIn, having a good, strong and trusted Recruiter network is invaluable. They have the experience of how to present for opportunities, listen to them and work with them, after all they get paid if they get you a job.

3-FOOT WORLD: MANAGING WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL

The key to staying grounded during your job search is to focus on what you can control. Your "3-foot world" includes updating your profile, refining your outreach strategy, following up with recruiters, and maintaining consistency in your efforts. Don't let factors outside your control, like how many applicants a role has, distract you from your own game plan.

By dedicating time to what's within your reach, you'll maximise your chances of success without becoming overwhelmed by the broader uncertainties of the job market.

CONCLUSION

Finding a new role, especially in today's tech landscape, can be challenging, but with the right strategy and persistence, it's absolutely achievable. Keep refining your approach, stay connected, and remember to focus on your "3-foot world". Above all, don't forget that people are often more willing to help than you might think, tap into your network, and pay it forward when you can.

Throughout your search consider this, there is the role you'd like, the role you might need, and the role you didn't know you wanted. Be open to possibilities and see if there's something else which might just be that thing you didn't know you wanted to do. I'm not a recruiter or anything like that, just someone who is looking for their next role and hopefully this article provides some new/different avenues others may not have tried.

Good luck with your search, be true to yourself, and stay persistent!

Remember it only takes one - one call, one interview, one recommendation, one offer to make a big difference.

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