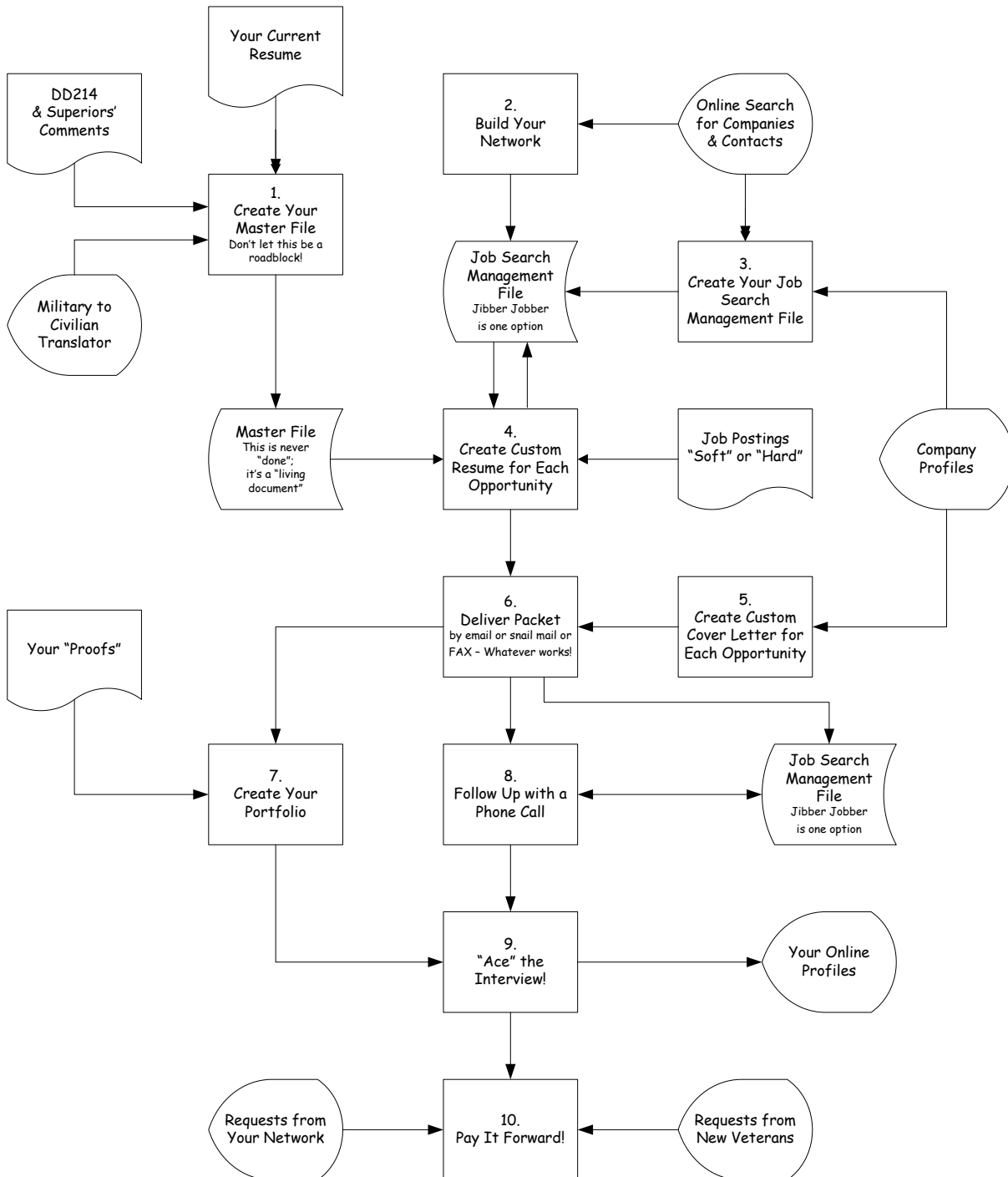


Career Road Map

Your job search is a marketing campaign. You're a product in a very competitive market. How do you present yourself in a way that differentiates you from all of the other products clamoring for employers' attention? How do you get yourself into a career that satisfies you and not just a job? You need a "good enough" plan to head you toward your objective fast. Here's one way that has been successful:



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1. Create Your Master File Don't let this be a roadblock! It's just the onramp.
NOTE: This will never be "final" since it's a living document, growing throughout your career. You never delete anything from the Master File but you are always adding to it. Format your existing resume to your advantage before you start to add things. If you need help with formatting, let us know.
 - 1.1. Log into <http://www.Military.com> or <https://www.resumeengine.org/> so you're ready to get translations to civilian terms as you enter data.
 - 1.2. Add a summary – a paragraph that gives an overview of who you are professionally.
 - 1.3. Add as many general objectives as there are for what you know you can do well. Objectives are theirs, not yours. Each one is the exact Job title in a job posting or a Job Title in the industry that company is in.
Example: General Manager for a Solar Panel installation company.
 - 1.4. Show your skills. This is a presentation of the keywords and buzzwords that employers tell their gatekeepers to look for. Showing them near the top will keep you out of the reject pile long enough for the gatekeeper to see some of your value.
 - 1.5. List your accomplishments in 2-3 line paragraphs, longer if you're looking for a higher level position. This is the part that differentiates you and shows that you do more than just meet expectations. Start with the most powerful verb that fits and then mention the results. After that first sentence you can elaborate about how you did it. Example:
Decreased build time 40% for a large packaging machinery company by performing gap analysis in three days and implementing the highest priority changes over a two month period.
If you think you haven't done anything exceptional, that you've just done your job, go back to your Superiors' comments about your performance and your DD214 to remind yourself who you really are.
 - 1.6. List your job experience in one liners – Job title first, Company name, Location, and, then, from and to dates out at the right margin. List your most current or present job first and work backward.
 - 1.7. List your education. If you just received a degree, show it right after your objective. If your experience is light, the recent degree will explain it up front. If you have a lot of relevant experience, the recent degree will show you to be a real go getter with your eye on the prize. List your training separately. You may or may not include this in your custom resumes but be sure to have it in your Master File.
 - 1.8. Add to the Master File whenever you think of something that adds value. Make a backup copy of your Master File off your computer. Remember to update the backup copy.
2. Build Your Network.
 - 2.1. Build your profile on social networks. Be sure that they match and that you do not show and tell things that employers are not looking for on any of the sites you choose to use. Keep it professional wherever you are.
 - 2.2. Look for people on each of your social networks who know you and respect you and invite them to connect with a personal note reminding them how you're connected and commenting on their profile.

- 2.3. Attend face to face networking events in your area. If you make a good connection, invite them to connect on your preferred social network.
- 2.4. On LinkedIn,
 - 2.4.1. review discussions in your groups every day and respond if you can add value. Accept invitations from reasonable looking connections who liked your response.
 - 2.4.2. find companies that interest you and follow them. You'll be notified when they make personnel changes and will want to know right away if they have open positions.
 - 2.4.3. endorse people LinkedIn suggests only if you know they have the skills suggested.
 - 2.4.4. write recommendations for people who you respect and can recommend with certainty that they will live up to your claims. Do not ask for a recommendation in return.
- 2.5. If you use Twitter, use it wisely. Do not tweet foolish messages. One type of good message is sharing an article of interest to people in the profession that interests you. Another might be an event that will resonate with people.
3. Create Your Job Search Management File.
 - 3.1. Whether you use Excel, Word or a more comprehensive tool like www.JibberJobber.com, create a file to manage your job search. At the very least, have columns for CompanyName, ContactName, Phone, Email, DateContacted, FollowupCall, CompanyDescription, and Notes. **NOTE:** Jibber Jobber will give you the premium version free for the first year. Tell them you're a Veteran and were referred by ReBoot Camp. There is no "kickback" for us. The owner is a friend. It's a tool worth maintaining throughout your career.
 - 3.2. Decide whether you want to try for the fastest result or the most satisfying result. Consider the urgency of your situation.
 - 3.3. Harvest information from the online company profiles. For example: What is the company's mission? What do they emphasize in their content?
 - 3.4. Make sure that you include notes that will be useful in your cover letter, your followup call and your interview.
 - 3.5. Enter each connection as you go.
 - 3.6. Enter each contact immediately after you complete the call or meeting.
 - 3.7. Follow up as promised.
4. Create a Custom Resume for Each Opportunity.
 - 4.1. Set up agents in www.USAJOB.gov, www.Monster.com, and www.Dice.com that will notify you when the type of opening you specify is listed on the site. If you still have an active clearance, set up an agent on <https://www.clearancejobs.com/>.
 - 4.2. Troll the internet for job postings. Add Skills and Accomplishment Statements to your Master File from job postings when you run across anything that you have left out.
 - 4.3. Make a copy of your Master File using the name of the company you are sending the resume to in the file name.
 - 4.4. Keep only the most relevant objective and customize this copy.
 - 4.5. If you use a summary, shorten it to only what fits this objective.

- 4.6. Delete the skills that don't fit and sequence them according to the importance the employer has given them if you have that information.
- 4.7. Delete the accomplishments that don't fit and sequence them according to the importance the employer has given them if you have that information.
- 4.8. Spell check and save the file.
- 4.9. Save the file again as a pdf.
5. Create a Custom Cover Letter for Each Opportunity.
 - 5.1. Using the same Header that you used for your resume (so it has the look of stationery), enter the date and contact information.
 - 5.2. Enter a first paragraph that says what you like about the company (you have that in your notes in the Job Search Management File) and how you believe you can contribute to their continued success. Be sure to use the word success.
 - 5.3. If you are responding to a posting or an ad that shows requirements, in a second paragraph address each one and show how you fit that requirement.
 - 5.4. Enter a final paragraph that, in your own words, says that you're looking forward to the opportunity to discuss the position or opportunities in more detail and that you will call on a specified date.
 - 5.5. End with Respectfully or Sincerely, and add your name. If you are snail mailing, leave three lines before your name for the signature.
 - 5.6. Spell check and save the file.
 - 5.7. Save the file again as a pdf.
6. Deliver Packet by email or snail mail or FAX – Whatever works!
 - 6.1. If you're emailing your packet:
 - 6.1.1. Create the email and paste the content for the cover letter into the body of the email.
 - 6.1.2. Attach the pdf file of your resume to the email or make a text copy of the resume and paste the content into the body of the email if the company requires that you not send attachments.
 - 6.1.3. Send it to the specified contact with a copy or blind copy to yourself.
 - 6.2. If you're snail mailing your packet:
 - 6.2.1. Print the resume and cover letter on good quality white or cream colored 100% cotton paper.
 - 6.2.2. Sign the cover letter above your typed name somewhat larger than the font in your letter using a medium black or blue pen.
 - 6.2.3. Put the cover letter on top of the resume and fold the packet in half.
 - 6.2.4. Hand address and stamp a 6x9 envelope. You do not want your packet to be the same size as most of the mail the company gets.
 - 6.2.5. Place the packet in the envelope and mail it.

- 6.3. If you're faxing your packet:
 - 6.3.1. Print a cover sheet and the packet on bright white paper.
 - 6.3.2. Fax the cover sheet and packet to the company contact.
- 6.4. Update your Job Search Management File with the date you delivered the packet and the date you specified for the follow up phone call.
7. Create Your Portfolio.
 - 7.1. If you can, get a good quality leather portfolio that will handle protector sheets that carry a full unpunched page.
 - 7.2. Gather or create your proofs for the accomplishments you have claimed in your resume. Examples of proofs are actual documents if you're allowed to use them, documents that you create to show that you know how to use a required tool, certificates of completion for training, and "attaboys" from Superiors.
 - 7.3. Buy a supply of protector sheets that will not stick to your proofs.
 - 7.4. Buy tabbed separators that extend beyond the wider protector sheets.
 - 7.5. Assemble your proofs in the portfolio in categories that will facilitate your interview.
 - 7.6. Practice responding to typical interview questions with the portfolio facing an Interviewer (your significant other, a relative, or a friend) until you are completely comfortable with the portfolio as a prop.
8. Follow Up with a Phone Call.
 - 8.1. On the day you specified, make your follow up call.
 - 8.2. From beginning to end of the call, smile. The tone of your voice will be open and friendly while you smile.
 - 8.3. If the gate keeper asks if the person is expecting your call, say yes. You told them you would call.
 - 8.4. If the gatekeeper asks what your call is about, tell them you're following up on correspondence you have had with the person.
 - 8.5. If you land in voice mail, leave a confident message with your name and the position you're calling about. Say that you will call later and leave your phone number. Remember to smile.
 - 8.6. When you connect with the person you identified as the decision maker, tell them you have been looking forward to the opportunity to discuss the position or the company's needs in more detail. Tell them that you would welcome the opportunity to meet in person. Do this in your own words.
 - 8.7. Update your Job Search Management File with the date and comments about the follow up call.
9. "Ace" the Interview!
 - 9.1. Before the day of the interview:
 - 9.1.1. Print copies of the resume you sent for this position for the interview and place them in the pocket in the front of your portfolio. Put the portfolio where you can't forget it.

9.1.2. Set out clothing that's appropriate for this position.

9.1.3. If you don't know much about the company, drive by a day or two before the interview at start time and see how the employees are dressed. The added advantage is that you will know exactly how to get there and how long it takes on the day of the interview.

NOTE: People used to make the mistake of showing up for interviews with Levi Strauss in jeans. No one was ever hired at the corporate offices if they showed up in jeans.

9.1.4. If it's not practical for you to make a trip to the company before the interview, look at their website and dress as closely to the look they chose as possible.

9.2. On the day of the interview:

9.2.1. Leave early enough to be in the neighborhood before you have to be there. Be appropriately friendly, polite, and respectful to the Receptionist if there is one.

9.2.2. Smile and greet the Interviewer while you shake hands, making eye contact, and using their name. Have a firm but not crushing handshake. Mirror the Interviewer's posture.

9.2.3. Provide your high-quality copy of the packet for the Interviewer and keep one for your own use so you can keep focused on what you presented to them that got you the interview.

9.2.4. As soon as the Interviewer asks a question about one of your Accomplishment statements or a listed skill, open the portfolio and turn to the proof for that item. Slide it across turned toward the Interviewer while you comment on how you appreciate the opportunity to discuss it in more detail (in your own words). Be prepared to open the portfolio to proof for any question the Interviewer might have.

9.2.5. Take notes during the interview. Flag questions in your notes by underlining or highlighting them in some way that will be easy to find later.

9.2.6. If you have not asked questions during the interview, at the very least, when the Interviewer asks if you have any questions:

9.2.6.1. Ask if there is anything else that the Interviewer would like to know or that needs clarification.

9.2.6.2. Ask what the next step is.

9.2.6.3. Ask when you can expect to hear about a decision.

10. Pay It Forward! **United you all stand!**

10.1. You got the job! Now, update your online profiles to let your network know where you are and what you're doing.

10.2. Keep in touch with your network and continue to respond to questions in your areas of interest. Do not let your network stagnate. Your online network is part of your new "tribe."

10.3. Continue to attend events that provide benefit to your employer and to your career development. Make new contacts.

10.4. Join professional associations so your new "tribe" is not entirely contained in a single company. For the most part, companies today do not keep employees for long. However long you are at a company, enjoy learning and growing. It's not a job that you're after; it's a career and a career can span many companies.

- 10.5. When you receive a request for a referral from a member of your network, respond immediately and as honestly and positively as possible.
- 10.6. When you receive a request from a new Veteran for a referral for an open position, get to know them a bit and forward their resume if it seems like a good connection for your company, for you, and for your fellow Veteran.
- 10.7. Enjoy your new life. If you aren't enjoying it, remember that effective career management is your mission from now until you retire. You are the new "Greatest Generation."