



# Strategic Job Search

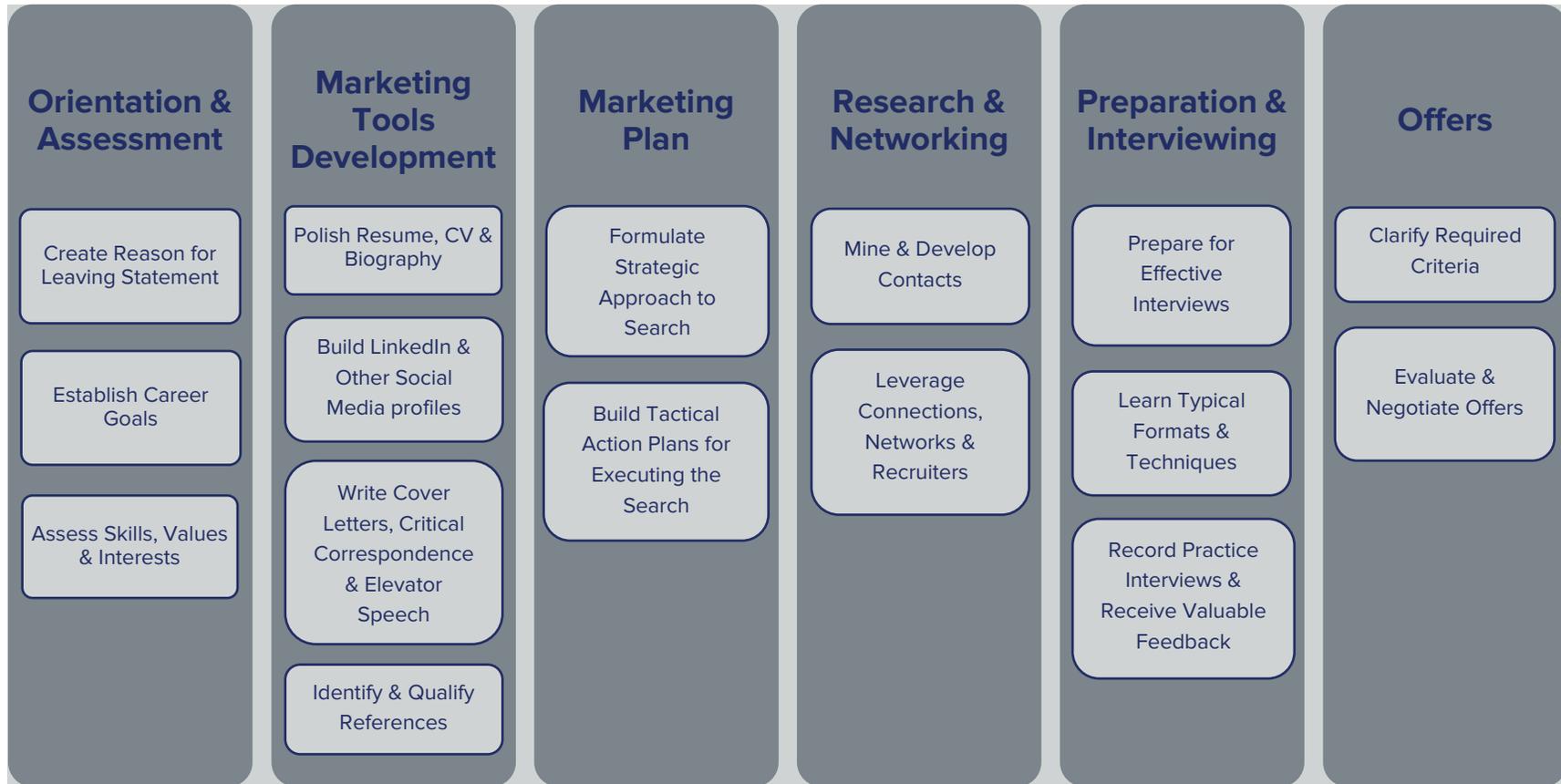
## Orientation Guide



**Transforming Work.**

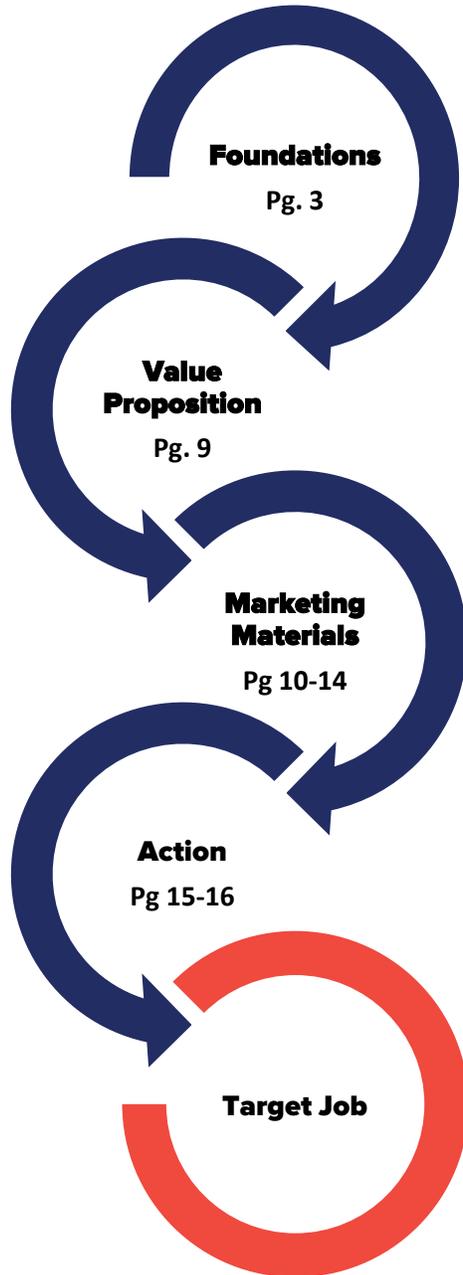
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## Ahria Career Transition Milestones



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# Quick Start- Orientation Guide



## Mindset Matters!

*Like it or not, life is full of changes. Some big, some small. Change is an ever-present feature.*

At Ahria Consulting we believe that a successful job search begins in the mind. In order to, “put your best foot forward,” you need to be motivated, optimistic and persistent.

You may feel a bit overwhelmed as you ride the waves of change. Just as you have made it through other major life changes in the past, you can come out stronger from this as well.

1. Note below at least three major life changes (e.g. leaving home, having children, the passing of a loved one, moving to a new city or country) that you have experienced in the past.
2. Rate how easily you were able to navigate the transition from the old state, to acceptance and functioning within the new state. What facilitated the ease or difficulty of the transitions?
3. Once completed, review your answers below for insights which may help you navigate this transition more successfully.

**Transition 1:** \_\_\_\_\_

Degree of Difficulty:      **Not Difficult** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Very Difficult**

What Helped: \_\_\_\_\_

What Hindered: \_\_\_\_\_

**Transition 2:** \_\_\_\_\_

Degree of Difficulty:      **Not Difficult** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Very Difficult**

What Helped: \_\_\_\_\_

What Hindered: \_\_\_\_\_

**Transition 3:** \_\_\_\_\_

Degree of Difficulty:      **Not Difficult** 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Very Difficult**

What Helped: \_\_\_\_\_

What Hindered: \_\_\_\_\_



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## The Power of Focus Questions

One powerful way to manage your mindset, is by paying attention to the questions you ask yourself and by purposefully asking yourself more empowering questions. Consider the impact of asking yourself the questions in the first group below vs. the questions in the second group..

- *Why did this have to happen to me? (endless worrying)*
- *What if I never find another job? (endless worrying)*
- *What are my friends going to say? (endless worrying)*
- *How can I thrive and feel alive in my job search? (constructive problem-solving)*
- *How can I plan my days to be successful and satisfying? (constructive problem-solving)*

Challenge yourself to ask more positive empowering questions, even for one week – you’ll be surprised where it can take you! To make it easy, write them down and post them where you will see them several times a day.

***My positive and empowering questions:***

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## Search Preparedness / Client Intake Survey

*For each statement below, rate how prepared / confident you feel in this area, using the scale below.  
Share with your Career Consultant*

**1** = Not Prepared at All. Don't Know Where to Start. **2** = Somewhat Prepared. Many Questions or Unknowns. **3** = Quite Confident. Few Questions or Unknowns. **4** = Totally Confident. I got this! **NA** = Not applicable

<b>First Things</b>	<b>Rating</b>
1. I have good <b>Stress and Transition Management Strategies</b>	
2. I have prepared a <b>Reason for Leaving Statement</b>	
3. I understand the <b>Career Transition Process</b> (Budget and finances, job search schedule and activity planning)?	
<b>Self- Assessment</b>	<b>Rating</b>
4. I am clear on my Interests, Values, Skills and Motivators	
5. I am clear on my work environment preference/ Culture Fit	
6. I have a Comprehensive Retirement Plan	
<b>Market Assessment</b>	<b>Rating</b>
7. I have identified my <b>Target Goals - Roles and Industries</b>	
8. I am well informed about <b>Entrepreneurship</b> and <b>Self-Employment</b>	
9. I have a <b>Market Research Plan/ SWOT Analysis</b> strategy	
10. I know how to conduct <b>Discovery Meetings</b> (a.k.a informational interviews)	
<b>Marketing Materials</b>	<b>Rating</b>
11. I have set up a <b>professional voicemail</b> and <b>email address</b>	
12. I have a <b>30 second Elevator Speech</b> prepared	
13. I have a <b>High Impact Resume</b> and <b>Cover Letter</b>	
14. I have evaluated my <b>social media identity and LinkedIn Profile</b>	



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<b>Marketing Tactics</b>	<b>Rating</b>
15. I understand the importance of <b>active search efforts</b> to uncover the hidden job market?	
16. I am aware of key <b>job sites / search engines</b> relevant to my search and how to effectively use these?	
17. I understand how to identify and get connected to relevant <b>recruiters</b> ?	
18. I have a <b>networking plan</b> that will get me connected with my target employers / customers.	
19. If I plan to work for myself, I know how to create an effective <b>business plan</b> and execute it well.	
<b>Sales (Interviewing)</b>	<b>Rating</b>
20. I know how to prepare for <b>different types of interviews (phone, panel, video)</b> .	
21. I know how to <b>present myself professionally, plan and practice responses to questions</b> and <b>prepare questions to ask the Employer</b> .	
22. I understand how to select my <b>references</b> , how to prepare them to be good references, and when and how to present these to a potential employer.	
23. I know the key things to do <b>after an interview</b> to increase my chances of success.	
24. When I receive an <b>offer</b> , I know how to evaluate it and to negotiate if necessary, including handling the, “what are your salary expectations,” question.	
25. Should I <b>not</b> be <b>the successful candidate</b> , I know what steps I should take.	
<b>Career Resilience</b>	<b>Rating</b>
26. I know how to approach the <b>first 90 days</b> in my role in a way that will set me up for continued success and satisfaction.	
27. I understand why it is important to keep track of my <b>accomplishments</b> on an on-going basis and how to do this well.	
28. I understand why it is important to continue to conduct <b>periodic market assessments</b> and how best to do this.	



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## Qualifiers Exercise

Before you begin your career exploration, it is important to consider all of the lifestyle factors/needs that may impact the “fit” of a potential opportunity. We call these needs Qualifiers.

As these factors are not assessed in depth by any other self-assessment tool, please take a moment to think about the factors below (discuss them as required with significant others) and then record your needs to help guide your search efforts.

You can then use the identified needs/parameters when you are targeting your search efforts and to evaluate job offers that you receive.

Area	Needs/Parameters
<p><b>Life Roles/External Responsibilities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Considerations/needs required to accommodate needs of spouse, children, parents, community associations etc.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Geographic Location/Mobility</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What geographic area defines where you would like to work?</li> <li>• What distance/time are you prepared to commute each day?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Financial</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are your salary requirements?</li> <li>• Would/could you work on commission?</li> <li>• What benefits must you have?</li> <li>• What amount of vacation time do you desire?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Training/Education</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If reaching your career goal requires some additional qualifications, what is the maximum cost, length of preparation, and program format you are willing to accommodate?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Health/Physical</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do I have any conditions that would require workplace accommodation?</li> </ul>	



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Area	Needs/Parameters
<p><b>Psychological</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What specifically creates stress for you in roles and relationships?</li> <li>• What types of work conditions will lead to burnout?</li> <li>• What demands would you refuse in order to keep stress manageable?</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Schedule</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What would you rule out when it comes to time commitments at work? (maximum hours/week, evening/weekends?)</li> </ul>	

## Creating Your Value Proposition

A **value proposition** is your “30-second commercial” or pitch to the marketplace about your “personal brand” and the unique value that you have to offer; it’s also known as your “elevator speech”

You should always have this at the tip of your tongue for networking conversations and as part of your resume, cover letter and interview content.

**The guidelines below should help you identify key elements to form your 30 second commercial**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I am a.....</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-management skills</li> <li>• Your target profession (if it can be reasonably claimed)</li> <li>• Education level/professional designations (if applicable)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• My areas of expertise include...</li> <li>• My areas of greatest strength are...</li> <li>• My strongest skills include...</li> <li>• I am known as the “go to person” for...</li> <li>• I am sought out for...</li> <li>• Over the course of my career I have worked (in these industries, for these organizations... <i>as relevant</i>)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus on transferable skills not previous roles/titles and on experience that is relevant to the future</li> <li>• Make your value proposition clear to as wide an audience as possible by limiting the use of jargon/lingo             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- the more people that can easily understand your experience and skills, the more people that can suggest appropriate contacts/opportunities</li> </ul> </li> <li>• When speaking with someone who is within the industry you are targeting, some use of jargon/lingo may be appropriate and valuable but challenge yourself as to what is truly widely known and understood vs. specific to your particular employment history</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most recently I ...</li> <li>• One of the accomplishments I am most proud of...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Your most recent experience and one major accomplishment there</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>I am now very interested in...</i></li> <li>• <i>My goal now is...</i></li> <li>• <i>My current focus is....</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Be as specific as possible about what your transition/career development goals are – increases the likelihood that the assistance you are offered will be appropriate and valuable</i></li> <li>• <i>ASK if the individual has any insight or connections to offer with respect your target roles/companies/industries</i></li> </ul>



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## Resume Best Practices

Most reviewers spend less than 10 seconds scanning your resume before deciding whether to pass it over or give it a second look – your resume must make a powerful and lasting impression.

Here are some resume Do’s and Don’ts to ensure your resume lands on the YES pile

### Do:

- **Make it easy to read**
  - Pay close attention to your formatting and have someone else help with edits
- **Include a Profile/Summary Section**
- **Start each bullet with an action verb in past tense**
- **Create high-impact accomplishment statements and order them in terms of relevance**
  - See the sample before and after statements below; as a hiring manager, which statement would you prefer to receive?!

Before ( <b>Responsibility Statement</b> )	After ( <b>Accomplishment Statement</b> )
Responsible for designing and delivering customer service training programs	Designed and delivered a new multi-media customer service training program for over 6,000 customer service representatives; both customer satisfaction ratings and employee satisfaction scores for this group increased by >25% post program
Operated, maintained and adjusted XZT5 RapidWrap machinery	Operated, maintained and adjusted heavy manufacturing equipment, minimizing downtime by 4 hours per week and saving the company \$200,000 per year

### Don’t:

- **Use acronyms unless positive your audience will be familiar with them**
- **Miss spelling or grammatical errors** ... proofread, proofread, proofread ... edit, edit, edit!
- **Include names of references on your résumé - Why?**
  - As best practice, the interviewer will request your reference list at the appropriate time so do not take up valuable space on your résumé to include them.
  - You may choose to vary the people you offer as references, depending on the specific job. Providing names too early robs you of this option *and* the opportunity to warn your references about the potential for an upcoming phone call
- **Attach transcripts, reference letters, awards, etc.** - These will make your submission bulkier and are inappropriate at this initial stage. If people are interested and require this information, they will ask you for it.



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## Sample Resume

**JOHN DOE**

Header

City, Province

Cell Number • johndoe@doe.com

### PROFILE

Profile/ Career Summary

- Motivated, strategic professional team builder and mentor. Recognized for accomplishments-driven focus resulting in rapid acceleration to executive level positions of increasing breadth and responsibility. Over 25 years of Managerial experience successfully leading teams; consistently achieving and exceeding organisational targets
  - Consistently achieved growth targets both individually and as a team
  - Track record of mentoring staff into sales and team leader positions
  - Recognized sales success in the medium-large commercial lines/specialty segment
  - Recognized as a topic expert with years of training expertise

Skills Highlights

### AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Sales Leadership
- Commercial Customer Sales and Relations
- Carrier Negotiations/ strategic Implementation
- Mentorship and Development of Talent
- Executive Team Building
- Public speaking and presenting

### EXPERIENCE

Position Profile

#### Senior Executive

X company

2018-2020

- Developed strategies across business lines that led to a 25% growth margin which exceeded annual growth targets
  - Built and recruited executive team and worked with this group to land on immediate short-term goals that created new platforms to drive growth and efficiency
  - Strategic relationship building with business partners led to increased business and revenues
  - Met with Board of Directors quarterly to review results and deal with any board and stakeholder requirements. Recognized for quick decision making leading to solutions focused action

Accomplishment Statements

**Ahria**  
CONSULTING

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**Senior Executive** **X Company** **2015- 2018**

- Leader of entire regional operation including overall budgetary oversight. Results of work recognized through promotion from Executive to Senior Executive
  - Grew working capital by 30% in 6 months, allowing the company to take advantage of better resources for continued growth
  - Reimagined business development strategy to include a 20% increase in sales force, resulting in \$550M in increased profits YoY
  - Steered company through a complicated re-organization, resulting in a 75% increase in profits with minimal employee turnover

**Senior Manager** **X Company** **2004 – 2007**

- Management of existing commercial client and surety portfolio, including marketing, placement, end negotiation of individual accounts and contract review
  - Strategically led production of larger commercial construction account to meet set sales goals each year
  - Implemented a bi-weekly meeting with 9 other department heads to discuss goals, updates, and challenges, increasing productivity across departments by 20% YoY
  - Trained new hires in existing protocols and marketplace practices and ensured they were operating at full capacity within 6 months of hiring

**EDUCATION**

- Bachelor of Arts in Business University of xxx 1999

**Education**

**CERTIFICATIONS**

- Management certification 2019
- Leadership Training 2018
- Sales Training 2015
- Project Management Training 2009

**Professional Development/Certifications**

**COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

- **Insurance Exchange (IE)** – Director of the Board - 2017 to Present
- **Education Foundation (EF)** – Director of the Board – 2016 to Present
- **Education Computing Network (ECN)** - Director of the Board – 2014 to Present
- **Southwestern Ontario Business Services** - Director of the Board – 2013 to Present

**Community Involvement/ Board Memberships**



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## Cover Letter Guide / Template

### Your Name

Mailing Address • City, Province  
Phone number • email@email.com •  
LinkedIn URL

Date

Contact's Name  
Contact's Title  
Organization Name  
Address

Salutation i.e. Dear Mr. /Ms. (Last Name only) OR Dear Hiring Manager/ Team if you don't know the exact name:

#### First Paragraph: (2 -4 sentences)

- Indicate why you are writing
- Tell how you heard about the position/employer and why you are interested in it
- Mention the position to which you are applying
- Insert a brief sentence that gives your educational background
- If you have a contact, mention that person here
- A brief statement about why you would fit the position

#### Middle Section: (can be 1 or 2 paragraphs)

- Demonstrate that you have done some research about this organization
- Describe what you have to offer to the employer. Focus on what you can do for them rather than why you want the position
- Connect their needs and your skills and/or experiences. Highlight your most significant accomplishments, abilities, and experiences that are specifically relevant to the employer and job requirements. This is the section that will make the reader want to learn more, leading them to your resume
- Use this section to portray confidence in your ability to succeed in the position

#### Final Paragraph

- Thank the employer for considering your application
- If you need to explain anything out of the ordinary on your resume, this is the place to do it.
- Express your desire to meet at an interview in the near future
- Make it clear what happens next- How will you follow-up?

#### Complementary Close (i.e. Sincerely)

Your signature (if mailing) - leave 4 blank lines for this

Your name, typed



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## Sample Cover Letter

**JANE DOE**

City, Province, 555-777-888. jane@janedoe.com  
LinkedIn Page address

Date

Ms. I. M. Flyin  
Director Customer Experience  
WestJet Airlines  
865 Airport Road  
Calgary, Alberta

**Re: Station Manager, London**

Dear Ms. Flyin:

One of my most memorable positive customer service experiences involved a conversation with a caring, efficient and highly invested WestJet reservation agent; therefore, I was thrilled at your organization's announcement to serve the London market. As your London Station Manager, I would work hard to create and promote the level of service I have personally experienced and that is synonymous with the WestJet brand.

My unparalleled passion for the world of aviation along with my recent educational pursuits has provided me with a solid understanding of the airline industry. My airline knowledge is coupled with extensive management experience within the service industry. Throughout my career, I have strived to ensure that customer needs are met through prompt, courteous and solution-based service. My customer focus has resulted in not only positive customer feedback but has inspired others in my organization to provide the same level of service. Most recently, in my role as a regional manager, I managed upwards of 35 individuals in various roles and functions to deliver exceptional customer service within budget parameters. In short, I am confident that my knowledge, skills and experience would allow me to excel in this position.

I look forward to an opportunity to meet to discuss my candidacy. To that end, I will contact you at the end of next week to confirm receipt of my application, answer any questions you might have and to determine when a personal meeting would be feasible.

Sincerely yours,

Your Name



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## Weekly Job Search Activity Planner

Week of: \_\_\_\_\_

### Active Search Activity

#### *Networking / Discovery Meetings:*

Contact / Connection to Target(s)...	Pain Points Discovered / Additional Contacts Made

#### Direct Approach Efforts:

### Passive Search Activity

#### *Postings Responded To:*

Posting (Role, Company)	Active Efforts Related to Posting

#### Recruiter Activity:



**Wins / Highlights This Week:**

**Challenges / Frustrations This Week:**

**Plans for Next Week:** (*\*\* Flag those where assistance required with materials or connections*)

**Postings Plan to Apply To:**

**Postings to Follow Up On:**

**Recruiters to Contact / Follow Up With:**

**Companies / People to Actively Approach:**



**We wish you all the best with your job search!**

If you need support, please contact our office to speak with one of our Career Consultants.

**Contact Information:**

**Ahria Consulting (London)**

519 642 2612  
888 712 9993

**Ahria Consulting (Kitchener)**

519 804 9781  
888 712 9993

We have office locations throughout Southwestern Ontario and offer on-line support as well. You can also email us at [hello@ahria.ca](mailto:hello@ahria.ca)

