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recruitment

HOW TO RUN A STRUCTURED JOB SEARCH PROGRAMME

For Supply Chain and Logistics Professionals



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MANAGING THE PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT OF REDUNDANCY



There are lots of words for job loss: downsizing, outsourcing, rationalisation, organisational change, company review, restructuring and redundancy. Irrespective of what we call it, people's emotional reactions tend to follow a pattern as follows: denial, followed by anger, progressing to feeling low. The overall length of time a person remains in each of these states varies and depends on pre-existing factors such as their current mental state, financial security, physical health and the quality of their support network. Interestingly, age is not a significant factor and individual reactions to redundancy are no different for young and old.

It is important to remember that these feelings are normal, temporary and predictable.

So, what are the practical steps to take?

Supply Chain and Logistics professionals are by nature, organised, disciplined and logical people. Therefore, developing a structured and scientific approach to job seeking will help you in your search. There are four steps to consider at the start of this next stage in your career:

STEP 1: Review your financial situation

An honest assessment of your current financial status is critical. From this you will be able to determine how much money you need to earn, and by when.

STEP 2: Plan to improve (or at least maintain) your level of fitness

Most of us feel too busy with work to focus on health and fitness, but now is your ideal opportunity. Getting fitter will increase your self-confidence, improve your mental state and provide some light relief from job searching. Feeling good about yourself is a big help when it comes to interviews and presentations.

STEP 3: Plan your time effectively

Use your time while searching to develop new skills. This could be related to job hunting (e.g. psychometric testing practice) or work-related (e.g. CPC or Prince 2).

STEP 4: Develop a workable, achievable and practical job search plan

There is precious little resource available on job search planning, so this guide is designed to take you through the steps required. Having a project plan for your job search allows you to take control of the process, have clear personal goals and KPIs to measure your success at each step of the project, and ensure that you give yourself the best chance of finding the right job with the right company.



REALISTIC GOALS SETTING

SMART goals are as good a tool as any to guide the process. While everyone is familiar with the idea in a work context, it may be a new but very useful process for many job seekers. It's relatively easy to apply to job searching because of the process-led nature of the exercise, which appeals to supply chain professionals.

SMART GOALS

S	Specific: Define a clear, specific goal
M	Measurable: Define your goal in measurable terms
A	Attainable: Create a goal that is challenging but possible
R	Relevant: Your goal should be something important to you
T	Timely: Assign a time frame in which you'll achieve your goal

Examples of SMART goals could be:

- **Make 10 direct applications per week**
- **Identify 2 new potential job openings per day**
- **Send 50 new LinkedIn connection requests per week**

Thinking about job statistics should play its part too. Consider that you will likely be offered one in every four jobs you interview for - this is generally true for the middle management population in a moderately busy job market. These will vary for each type of role, and your specific requirements.

Luck creation

Job searching is not luck and good fortune. Like everything else it requires perseverance, attention to detail and hard work. It's also something of a numbers game, quite frankly – the more people you contact and the more connections you make – the more 'luck' you will have. So, having an ambitious but achievable goal for establishing contacts is critical.



PLANNING YOUR JOB SEARCH

Apply the same discipline to your job search as you would a project at work. Think about these key stages:

1. Relax and have a think

Before diving straight into applying for a job, take a step back and think about your end goal, and be sure you can confidently answer the following questions. The higher degree of focus you have, the easier the plan will be:

- What job do I want?
- What are the must have elements? (People management, budgets, P+L, customer contact etc.)
- How much do I need to earn?
- How far can I commute?
- Am I equipped to work from home? (Stable broadband etc.)
- What sort of company do I want to work for?
- Do I have referees who are easily contactable, and will give good feedback?
- How quickly do I need to be working again?
- Do I have any options for temporary work if required? (Short term retraining e.g. driving etc.)
- Is my CV up to date, and relevant to the post-COVID world?

2. Consider the sort of role you should apply for

If you've been a Transport Manager for 20 years, enjoy Transport Management and look forward to another 20 years in Transport Management, then this is straightforward. Post-COVID is not the ideal time to consider a change of career direction however, so you're best to ask yourself:

- What do I really like doing?
- What am I best at?
- What jobs are in demand?

3. Consider the 'must have' elements

Be honest with yourself and consider the parts of the job or company that are deal breakers. For example:

- I really can't work alone or at home so I need to work within a team / in an office
- I don't enjoy being micro-managed so I need a role that I can shape myself
- I need the flexibility to get home on time for childcare three nights per week
- Larger corporate companies suit me better
- I'm passionate about technology so a non-tech company wouldn't stimulate me



4. Start to plan

Once these questions have been answered, you can start to plan. In order, work through each stage below:

- Write/re-write your CV – there is lots of support available on-line and it tends to be free of charge
- Update your LinkedIn and job board profiles
- Increase your LinkedIn connections
- Reach out to your network
- Choose your referees
- Research job openings / companies
- Start applying online
- Decide on any speculative approaches
- Make calls to recruiters
- Prepare for interviews

Developing a structured project plan that you can refer to daily will help you in your search. Below is an example of the type of document that you may wish to create, split out by the 'preparation', 'outreach' and 'interview' stages.

Milestone	Start date	KPI's
Preparation stage		
Write/re-write your CV	Week 1	-
Update LinkedIn and job boards profile	Week 1	-
Choose your referees	Week 1	3 available
Research job openings / companies	Week 1 onwards	10 per day
Outreach stage		
Increase LinkedIn connections	Week 2 onwards	20 per day
Reach out to your network	Week 2 onwards	5 per day
Start applying online	Week 2 onwards	5 per day
Speculative approaches	Week 2 onwards	2 per day
Make calls to recruiters	Week 2 onwards	2 per day
Interview stage		
First stage interview	Week 3	4 per week
Second stage interview	Week 5	2 per week
Job offer	Week 8	-

Table 1: Structured project plan



Track your progress

Tracking the progress of your job search is important so that you can keep a record of:

- The individuals / companies you've reached out to
- The people you've connected with on LinkedIn
- The jobs you've applied for

Creating a table similar to the below, is a good way of keeping track.

Name of company/individual	Job role	Stage	Outcome
Company A	Operations Director	Applied	Awaiting feedback
Individual B	Head of Operations	Interview stage 1	Awaiting feedback
Company C	Operations Director	Interview stage 2	Offered to someone else
Individual D	Head of Operations	Final stage interview	Awaiting feedback

Table 2: Progress tracker

CV PREPARATION



As mentioned, there is an abundance of information on the internet regarding CV's, but the golden rules in Supply Chain recruitment are:

- 3 pages maximum
- Show the chronological development of your career, but only give detail for your most recent roles
- The qualifications section should be at the end, unless you have a particularly high standard of education that is relevant to the role (e.g. A business related degree, or a Supply Chain qualification)
- Only show most recent training courses, don't list all that you have completed
- List your achievements in bullet point form - present in numbers, percentages and hard facts
- If you've worked for a small company, give a brief overview of what they do
- Include a short paragraph on the soft skills you have. Everyone is a 'great team player with outstanding leadership skills'. Stick to the facts where possible.

A couple of examples of CV layout:



BUILDING YOUR PUBLIC PROFILE



If you think this sounds woke, or new-age, or trendy, then you need to think again. It may or may not have been a while since you looked for a job, but you are now in a competitive and highly digital market place where you will need to work hard to get noticed by the right people – just a like any product or service.

So, you will need to consider your **CV, LinkedIn profile and job board profiles**:

- Can people looking at your profile very quickly see what your **specialisation** is, where you live and have an idea what job you're looking for? Will they form a **positive impression** quickly? Too many words leaves an impression of too much detail or overly verbose. Not enough information can indicate laziness. Spelling mistakes highlight lack of attention to detail etc.
- If you've moved roles quite frequently, make sure the **changes are explained** to avoid the perception that you are a job-hopper
- Long time in the same company? It's seen as a good thing, but make sure you show your **progression** and how you've worked your way up
- Keep LinkedIn posts **professional and work related** only. No personal stuff, jokes, hilarious memes or profanities. Be a thought leader in your profession, not a joker. Serious people like to hire serious people

Employers search online to research potential candidates

Many qualified candidates apply for jobs and are turned down simply because they ignored their online image. Companies will Google a job seeker before even inviting them into an interview. This is the number one reason why a personal brand is so important. Employers do, and will, search for you online. Are you proud of what they will find?

Develop a clear vision

A personal brand helps you define who you are and what you're all about. Employers can learn about your skills, see what you've achieved and built, and even get a picture where you'd like to be in the future.

Validate your expertise and level of experience

Building your personal brand will not only show you in a more professional light but also tell your potential employer what you're about and what you're an expert in. Once you have developed a clear vision for your brand, the response will gain momentum.



Have a professional email address

Get a professional domain name and create an email account for yourself. Create a professional email with your new domain name like john@johnsmith.com. This is your email address for the rest of your career now. Using a domain name email gives you a more professional image straightway. Comedy email addresses may leave the wrong impression.

Come up with a strong personal statement

This is also known as a personal slogan – it should be short, concise, and to the point. You should be able to tell the world exactly who you are in **six words or less**.

Take a great photo

Your LinkedIn profile will be viewed a lot. More and more, if your CV registers interest someone will look at your photo and form an opinion. There are many arguments about the ethics of this, but it's a fact, first impressions count and you're trying to gain advantage over your competition. So, get a decent photo taken that looks professional – avoid more personal shots like wedding photos, photos of your kids/pets or images taken on holiday. Wear smart business casual attire, smile and look like you would for a first interview.

Avoid including your photo on your CV.

Manage your brand

Personal brand is important for you and your career. Potential employers will research you online, and when they do, it's important that you have control what they are able to find. Remember that employers often look at Facebook. If your work persona and social life persona are wildly different, then think carefully. We don't have many secrets these days. Google Maps will even allow an employer to have a swift look at your front garden. It's hard to believe anyone would do it, but they can and it's wise to bear it in mind.

Other top tips

- Make sure your information is up to date
- Reach out and ask for recommendations from ex colleagues
- If you've left a company, add the end date on your LinkedIn profile. Otherwise recruiters will think you are still employed and are less likely to call, and will NOT call about interim jobs which you may be open to
- If you've left your most recent company, change your current employer to "Seeking a new opportunity". This will automatically send an update to everyone in your 1st degree contacts
- Actively keep up with industry news. Find out what the competition is doing and keep up with your peers. Follow thought leaders in your niche and connect with others who are doing similar things. Post news updates via your feed and comment on them. Keep it to industry comment though – usual dinner party rules apply – no gossip, politics or religion to avoid contentious posts

LINKEDIN



You should aim to build your network daily. Aim for 20 new contacts per day. **Invite anyone you may know**, even vaguely. Accept every invite as you don't know who they may be connected to, and who may be useful to you in your job search. The idea is to be as visible as possible to the outside world. Don't worry about spam or unwanted attention as LinkedIn is quite good at managing this, and you can always disconnect easily if someone becomes a pest – but it's very unusual.

Aim to get to at least 500 UK-based connections in your industry. That will give you **second degree connections to much of the UK logistics sector**. Connect with recruiters and salespeople. They are always looking to build their networks and have good networks themselves. Add a personal note when you connect. E.g. **“Hi Bill, we both work in the Supply Chain industry and would be useful contacts for each other. Thanks, Sarah”**.

In the UK, there are over 300,000 people on LinkedIn that identify as Managers or Directors within the Supply Chain and Logistics industry. With some time and application, you can be within two degrees of separation from them all.

Just having a LinkedIn profile isn't enough though, you need to be a participant in the Logistics industry network. Luckily, LinkedIn makes it very easy to connect with other professionals and find industry related groups and content. Here are a few ways to **make yourself more visible** to potential employers and to find out more about the latest developments in your area:

Post good content to your feed

What you share and re-share tells the world a lot about you. Original content is best, graphs and images are more powerful than words, but keep it professional and work-related. Adding a personal element is great – but only in the context of your working life. Positive messages and news items create a better image than negative ones.

Join groups

Groups provide the opportunity for you to learn more about your industry by asking questions and networking with others. Most are tailored to interests and industries, so search for the ones most relevant to your industry and location.

Follow companies and individuals

LinkedIn is built to help people find jobs. By finding the organisation and looking for people working for the company with a similar job title to yours, you can review their profile along with their key responsibilities. This gives you an idea of what you should be aspiring to, should you wish to work for this company in the future.



Skills and recommendations

List your skills and let other professionals you network with endorse them. This gives each of your skills a rating based on feedback from other users. It's a great way to demonstrate to potential employers not only your library of skills, but the benefits they have added to the organisations you've worked for.

Only apply for jobs you really think you are qualified for

LinkedIn job posts attract a huge response, largely because there is no salary filter. You want to stand out – so be really targeted.



NETWORKING AND BUILDING CONTACTS

Post-COVID, networking has changed a lot. Gone, for the time being at least, is the coffee/lunch/dinner, catch-up. Everyone is being advised to steer clear of face-to-face unless there's a good reason. Given that video calls have increased greatly and for some, it's becoming tiresome, it looks like the old-fashioned phone call is making a comeback. More intimate than Zoom, more personal than email – a quick five or 10-minute chat – “how's business?”. COVID has given us plenty to talk and speculate about.

People have more time to talk right now, with less meetings and working from home. So, now is a good time to pick the phone up.

FACT: Your best chance of finding a new job is through someone you already know. So, in order to increase your success rate you need to do two things:

- Talk to everyone you know
- Get to know more people

This, in short, is **networking**. In the COVID era, networking has changed. Gone, are lunches and coffees,, exhibitions, conferences, awards nights – for the time being at least. So online networking is something you need to become particularly adroit at.

There are many subtle ways of contacting people but given that your mission is straightforward (to find a job), there is no better approach than being honest about the reason for your call - not for their support, friendship and professional advice – you are looking for work - so make it crystal clear. This could be in the following forms:

- Is your company hiring?
- Do you have any projects you need external support with?
- Can you recommend the best person in your company to talk to regarding jobs?
- Have you heard of any industry leads or other info that may help me?

The approach for each person will be different depending on how well you know them. But don't be afraid to contact as many as possible. When you are working again and people contact you, remember to return the favour. This is really important.

Depending on the closeness of the relationship, how you make contact varies – and in descending order of effectiveness, and closeness of the contact. From warm to cold:

1. Phoning to arrange a meeting
2. Phoning for a chat
3. Text
4. Email to personal address
5. Email to work address
6. LinkedIn message
7. LinkedIn InMail



Be a good networker

There are two rules when it comes to networking:

1. Think long term
2. Don't overstep the mark

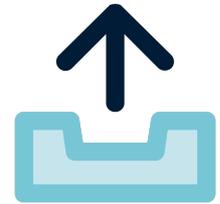
In an ideal world you'll have developed your network of contacts over a long period of time, and they will be happy to help. If this is all a bit new to you, then err on the side of caution, and don't be too pushy – try to think how you would like to be contacted. Approach varies, but here's an example of a way of contacting someone you haven't spoke to for a few years, ex-colleagues but not friends outside of work:

"Hello Cheryl,

Hope all is well. I know it's been a good while since we spoke but I'm currently looking for a new position, as you can see from my profile. Just reconnecting to ask if you can let me know if you hear of anything that may suit.

Really appreciate any help, and thanks in advance.

*All the best,
Tim"*



HOW TO SEND YOUR CV

Subject line

Recruiters and HR Managers receive hundreds of emails every day. Your email subject line is vital as it ensures your application will end up in the right place. In the subject line of your email, write **your name**, **the job title on the advert** and the **reference number**. If you did not find the vacancy on the employer's website, it's also worth adding **where you saw or heard about the available position**.

For a direct application include a quick statement of what you offer – “Procurement Manager available for interim work”, or “Transport Manager based in Leicester”, or “Operations Manager, Grocery Distribution” etc.

The body of the email

If the employer has asked you to attach your CV and cover letter, the text in the email should be quite concise - who you are, which job you're interested in, and your contact details.

If the company has only requested a CV as an attachment, then treat the body of the email as your cover letter. If you have already written a cover letter, paste it into the email. Explain why you're applying for the role, what you have to offer and your knowledge of the company.

Generally speaking, cover letters are not a major part of the decision-making process. 95% of the initial assessment is based on your CV.

Saving and attaching your CV and cover letter

The names of the files you send are also important, they are the first things employers see when you submit your application. Therefore, you want your materials to be both professional and easily identifiable. The file name should state your name and distinguish whether the document is a CV or a cover letter. For example: 'janesmith.cv' or 'janesmith-cover-letter'.

The types of files you send in are also important. PDF files are optimal because of their ability to preserve formatting, but they are not always your best option. PDF files don't often work well with in house databases and HR department's tracking systems which means that your CV will not be read properly if it is scanned by an ATS. If PDF is listed as one of the file types you can use, then fire away, but generally, a Word document in .doc or .docx is your best bet.

There is much discussion around CV length and format. Getting it prepared professionally is fine, as long as the format is simple – and not too many tables. Recruiters will often reformat your CV and brand it with their own logo, so if it's too complicated the CV presented to the end client can appear messy.

WORKING WITH RECRUITERS



Know your goals

A recruiter's job is to match the right people with the right jobs. Having a clear view of your skills and ambitions is really helpful to them.

Interview recruiters

You'll divulge lots of information about your work history and job goals to recruiters along the way. It's important that you trust those you're working with and can get along with them. How long have they worked in this sector for? Are they a specialist in any one area? How long have they worked for their company? Who are their regular clients?

Trust them

In most cases, recruiters have the expertise and knowledge to help you run your job search. They also have the relationship with the client and understand the client's needs. They know what they're talking about and do this every day, so give them your trust that they will guide you in the right direction.

Establish your 'modus operandi'

Ask your recruiter what their preferred method of communication is - text, email, phone calls, WhatsApp, Zoom, LinkedIn, Teams or carrier pigeon. Make sure you've got access to the full set.

Recommendations and referrals

When a recruiter contacts you with a job that isn't a good fit or of interest to you, thank the recruiter for reaching out, explain the type of job you are interested in, and then offer to put the recruiter in touch with someone from your network who would be a better fit. It's good Karma and form.

Keep in touch

In some cases, a recruiter can become a lifelong career advocate. You never know when you might be in search of a new job, so if you click with your recruiter, try to stay in touch with her or him for the long term. This can be as simple as an email every six months to remain on their radar. This also gives you an opportunity to offer up referrals and possibly help a colleague of yours out, as well.



Tricks of the trade

Most recruiters are decent people who are trying to provide a good service and make an honest living. A small minority aren't, and some firms place their recruiters under a sales burden that drives poor behaviour.

So, a couple of things to watch out for:

1. Unfortunately, it's common practice for a recruiter to contact you to try and find out which companies you are interviewing with (and therefore chase the vacancy themselves). Don't feel obliged to divulge this information, particularly if you don't know the recruiter you are dealing with. It's called "stripping" and it's not ethical.
2. References should be taken when you are close to a job offer or at interview stage. Often recruiters will take your references and use it as a marketing opportunity for themselves. Your referees are a precious commodity and it's just not wise to let every recruiter you deal with try and talk to them.

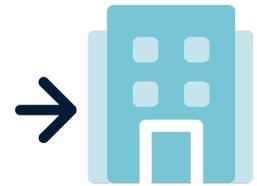
What do recruiters look for in CV's?

This also applies to in-house teams and hiring managers in general but the initial (often very quick) assessment will be to look for:

- Brands – Have you worked for large, well-known companies?
- Movement – Have you moved from company to company?
- Who are you working for now? – Do I know the company? If not, is there a description?
- Is there evidence of promotion?
- What education do you have?
- Evidence of achievement
- Does your career journey 'feel' dynamic and ambitious?

Rightly or wrongly, much of the early assessment in particular is based on feeling and intuition – often gained by a very quick assessment of your CV. The first page of your CV must convey 90% of the information you need to get across. No need for massive detail and remember, your CV is a marketing document – not an autobiography.

DIRECT APPLICATIONS TO COMPANIES



Aside from applying directly to job ads and sending your CV to known contacts, the other main angle is to approach companies directly – particularly if they are performing well, have a good brand, are close to home, have a good culture / reputation and strong leadership.

Key to this is research, so you will be able to answer these questions before you apply:

- Will they employ people with my skill set?
- Do they advertise through their own website for people?
- What does Glassdoor say about them?
- Who is the best person to contact?

Generally speaking, the best contact in the company is the person that you would report to. So, if you are a Logistics Director for example, then contact the CEO. If you are an Operations Manager of a Warehouse, then the General Manager of the Main DC would be the best person to contact.

Sending a CV cold to the HR Department is very likely to end in disappointment unless they happen to have the ideal job at that precise moment in time. A line manager will be able to think differently – do they have a project coming up? Is one of their team about to leave? Are they thinking of replacing someone? Is someone under-performing?

Again, LinkedIn will help you to research potential contacts. A Google search should tell you the standard email format for the company, and away you go.

HINT: In Google type “email AND @xyzcompany.com” and usually someone in the company’s name will come up, giving you the mail format.

In the subject line of your email, type “Logistics Director, eCommerce, currently available” – remember your six word description.

Try to be as explicit and brief as possible, and have a short one or two page CV summary to copy into the email body, as attachments are often picked up as spam.

THE SUPPLY CHAIN AND LOGISTICS JOB MARKET



The good news is that during previous recessions the logistics job market held up well. Product still flows and is stored; people still buy, drive and eat; lorries still rumble up and down our motorways and ferries still cross The Channel. So, there is always demand for Operational Management.

COVID is driving colossal change through the supply chain, and the following technical areas will continue to grow:

International Trade

Brexit is coming, and with it massive changes to product flow, customs checks and storage.

Peak planning

This year's peak will be like no other. No-one yet knows the effect of COVID on volumes, especially in the hospitality trade, so the ability to develop flexible and agile plans will be critical.

Employee engagement

In a challenging environment, with cost pressures, possible lack of eastern European labour, and a migration to eCommerce pick and pack operations, the ability to run COVID-safe, efficient warehousing operations will be key.

Business continuity planning

The second wave?

Diversity and inclusion

Much still needs to be done to build balanced workforces that represent the customers they serve. As much of the work of logistics managers is about HR than it is about product movement, diversity is as big an issue as it ever was. There is a demand for forward-thinking managers who can innovate and address this problem.

Transport Planning

Final mile deliveries are booming. Trying to cost effectively manage increasing drop numbers on reduced margins, and lower order values will drive the need for slicker, smarter and more efficient network plans.



Warehouse layout design

We don't buy from shops now – we buy from warehouses. There's a shortage of warehouse space in the UK and it is getting worse - so people who can get more out of less will be in demand.



SUMMARY

Finding a job can be daunting, especially if you have not looked for many years. Bis Henderson's recruiters have worked and recruited through previous recessions and have gained a real depth of knowledge that we are happy to share. Our thoughts and helpful hints, in no particular order:

- Recessions, viruses, downturns – they are all temporary
- You will find a job - you just don't know what it is yet
- The more you plan – the more successful you will be
- The more you plan – the more in control you will feel
- The more you plan – the more effective you will be
- Talk to as many people as you can – make your own luck
- Don't be afraid to contact people you don't know
- Everyone you are on good terms with, even if you haven't spoken for years, will want to help you – just as you would help them
- LinkedIn is your friend – ignore it at your peril
- Become friends with good specialist recruiters
- Supply Chain and Logistics is a very stable sector, and the backbone of the economy
- There are always jobs for good people
- Be prepared to be flexible around salary
- Research companies carefully – interview them like they interview you
- One of the best ways to gauge corporate cultures is to look at the person at the top – what are they like?
- Are you really proud of your CV – what would you think if it landed on your desk?
- Do you have a balanced schedule for job searching, fitness and personal activities?
- Have you set realistic goals?

Bis Henderson Recruitment is happy to provide informal career advice to individuals in the Supply Chain and Logistics sector. For more helpful candidate resources, visit our website:

- [CV Writing Tips](#)
- [Interview Guide](#)
- [Psychometric Tests](#)
- [Candidate Registration](#)

Contact us at enquiries@bis-hendersonrecruitment.com or 01604 876345