

BACK TO WORK CONNECT

Step-by-Step Guide to Restart Your Job Search

How to use this guide

Block 60–90 minutes per day for 4 weeks. Treat your job search like a project with sprints, not a marathon with no finish line.

○ **Week 1 — Reset & Rebuild Your Toolkit**

Step 1: Define the target (30 min)

Role titles: Write 2–3 you'll pursue (e.g., "Operations Manager," "Learning & Development Lead")

Non-negotiables: location/remote, hours, pay band, flexibility.

Value statement: "I help ___ achieve ___ by ___."

Step 2: Audit your story (45 min)

List 6 wins from the last 3–5 years (paid work, volunteering, study, caregiving projects included).

For each, note:

Context → Action → Result (with numbers).

Keep these as raw material for your CV and interviews.

Step 3: Refresh your CV (60–90 min)

Use a clean, ATS-friendly layout (no tables/columns, standard fonts).

Headline: Target role + 2–3 strengths (e.g., "Project Manager | Stakeholder Ops | Cost Control").

Bullets: Strong verb + what you did + measurable result.

"Reduced onboarding time by 38% by redesigning induction flow."

Mirror the keywords in the job ad (skills, tools, titles).

Step 4: Tune up LinkedIn (45 min)

Headline formula: Target role | Specialty | Proof (metric or credential).

About: 3–4 lines: niche, evidence, what you want next.

Add recent courses, volunteering, and media (slides, project one-pagers).

Returners tip: Add a "Career Break (2019–2023)" section with one line of honest context and bullets for relevant learning/volunteering. You're not hiding the gap; you're curating it.

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○ **Week 2 — Build a Pipeline (Jobs + People)**

Step 5: Set smart alerts (30 min)

Create role-keyword alerts on 3–4 boards plus LinkedIn. Include variants of titles and seniority.

Step 6: Make a target list (45 min)

30 organisations: A (dream, 10), B (good fit, 10), C (stretch/adjacent, 10).

Capture hiring managers/recruiters where visible.

Step 7: Start the right kind of outreach (30–45 min/day)

Aim for 5 genuine touches per day (comments, DMs, emails).

Informational chat message (copy/paste & tweak):

“Hi [Name] — I’m exploring [function/sector] roles and admired your work on [specific]. I’m mapping the space and would value a 15-minute chat about [topic]. If you’re open, I’ll fit your schedule and come prepared. Either way, thanks for sharing your insights publicly.”

○ **Week 3 — Apply With Precision**

Step 8: Weekly rhythm (repeat every week)

Mon: Research & shortlists

Tue: Tailor & apply (2–4 quality applications)

Wed: Networking & follow-ups

Thu: Skill-building (course/module)

Fri: Review metrics & plan next week

Cont.

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Step 9: Tailor quickly (25–30 min per role)

Swap headline and top 4–6 bullets to match the advert's priorities.

Front-load achievements that mirror their KPIs.

Keep a master bullet bank you can drag-and-drop from.

Step 10: Send a smart cover note (10 min)

One tight paragraph:

Why this company now,

The 2–3 problems you can solve,

A metric-backed proof.

Close with availability and a polite nudge for next steps.

○ **Week 4 — Follow-Up, Prep, and Energy**

Step 11: Follow-up cadence (because silence happens)

Ghosting is unprofessional. Still, control what you can:

+7–10 days after applying:

"Hi [Name], checking in on my application for [role]. I'm excited by [specific] and can bring [result]. Happy to share a brief example or speak this week."

+14 days: If no reply, try a different channel (LinkedIn/email) with one new proof point.

+21 days: Assume closed and move on. Log it. Keep the door respectful:

"If timing changes, I'd welcome a conversation."

Cont.

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Step 12: Interview prep (60 min blocks)

Draft 6 STAR stories (impact, conflict, numbers).

Practise "Tell me about yourself": 60–75 seconds → past (10s) / strengths (30s) / proof (20s) / what you want (10s).

Prepare 3 questions that test culture, impact, and support.

Step 13: Protect your energy (daily)

Rule of 3: 1 application, 1 outreach, 1 improvement (skill or story).

Win log: Write one concrete win per day to counter rejection bias.

Boundaries: Fixed stop time; move your body; get outside.

Keep Momentum: Track the Right Numbers (weekly review, 20 min)

Applications sent (goal: 6–10 high-quality/week).

Conversations started (10–25 touches/week).

Responses (aim for 10–20% reply rate; improve subject lines/asks if lower).

First-rounds booked.

Offers/near-misses (capture why; adjust).

Cont.

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If progress stalls for 3+ weeks, diagnose:

Targeting too broad/narrow?

CV too duty-based (not outcome-based)?

Seniority mismatch?

Location/comp constraints misaligned?

Not enough human contact (apps without intros)?

What “Good” Looks Like by the End of Month One

A CV and LinkedIn that speak to your next role, not your last job description.

30-company target list with 10 warm contacts.

25–40 quality touches and 20–40 tailored applications.

2–6 first-round conversations booked.

Clear sense of where your story lands—and where to tweak.

Final word

September gives you clean edges: structure, fresh energy, sharper intent. Employers who respect candidates will communicate; prioritise those. Keep your rhythm, protect your headspace, and let the numbers compound. You only need one yes.