



INFORMATION GATHERING TIPS FOR THE JOB SEEKER

By IrishmanSpeaks – Conor Cunneen

Author:

[SHEIFGAB the World: 8 Building Blocks to Successful Job Transition](#)

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DEDICATION

This eBook is dedicated to you in your job search. Only you know the pain, anger, frustration, the highs and lows of the job search. But I have met you and many others who have walked in your shoes. Job seekers who have won this transition game because they have done their homework. Job seekers who have walked into the interview 12-feet tall AND Bulletproof and found that well-paying job. This eBook will help you to walk into that interview **12-foot tall AND Bulletproof.**

This book is dedicated to you.

Send it to everyone you know in transition with my good wishes.

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This eBook has been expanded from a shorter portion in
SHEIFGAB the World: 8 Building Blocks to Successful Job Transition

Book Description

8 great lessons to re-energize your job search in an inspirational book full of insight, pathos, humor and passion. Irishman Finbarr Kozlowski visits America to research material on the job transition process. He is invited to present his unique program *SHEIFGAB the World, 8 Building Blocks to Successful Job Transition* to a group of disillusioned, pained, dispirited job seekers.

Finbarr says SHEIFGAB is the Irish word for 'Do it' or 'Make it happen,' (Well, Irish in the sense he originated the word). SHEIFGAB is an acronym for **S**tructure, **H**elp, **E**nvironment, **I**mprove, **F**amily, **G**oals, **A**ttitude, **B**ehavior.

Based on the author's workshops which garner rave reviews, this is a must read for the job seeker. It will help you stay energized and focused on the job search and ensure that you can, AND you will, walk into the interview 12-feet tall and bulletproof. Go on! SHEIFGAB the World - Do It, Make It happen in transition.

Use this code WUSSBTHA to purchase copies of [SHEIFGAB the World](#) for only \$9.95, a \$5 discount.



Format of this eBook.

In SHEIFGAB the World, Finbarr sends regular follow-up emails to help the job seekers. This is an adapted and expanded version of Finbarr's email to the job seekers on Information Gathering for the Job Seeker. Sometimes idiosyncratic, but always entertaining and insightful.

Enjoy, but more importantly, Learn and USE the information to SHEIFGAB the World.

The Pot of Gold

When you see this pot of gold icon,  we're talking gold dust in terms of really great information. (The rest is just very good information!)

Right! Let's read what Finbarr Kozlowski has to say.



Email from Finbarr**Subject: Information Gathering for the Job Seeker**

Hi Gang,

I promised you further information about prepping for interviews and information gathering. Treat information gathering as an S-HAG (Small Highly Achievable Goal which I covered in today's SHEIFGAB session.)

Information gathering is a critical skill—which if done with rigor—will convince your interviewer that you are indeed a better candidate NOW than when you left your previous job. So here are a few tips and building blocks that will help you REALLY get to know your prospective company and industry better.

In this illustration, I'll take a well known company P&G (Procter & Gamble) and show how to find information about this corporate giant. The process I outline applies to almost any company and definitely all publicly listed companies. This exercise will show you how you can become truly



knowledgeable about your target company, its competition and industry and thus allow you walk into the interview, confident, **12-foot tall and bulletproof**. I'll take you through the steps and show you what I find.

I use "Google" as the verb for all search engines, but you can find good information from Bing, Yahoo, Alta Vista, Dogpile and other search engines.

Note: All links are clickable and should bring you to the pages I found. Because the web is a dynamic animal, the content on the pages may differ somewhat from what I describe. The logic does not.

The net result I hope is that you will end up with less "unknowns" as former Defense Secretary Don Rumsfeld famously said: (February 12, 2002)

"Reports that say that something hasn't happened are always interesting to me, because as we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns; that is to say we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know."

Check it out on **Youtube** [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v= RpSv3HjpEw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RpSv3HjpEw)



A Warning

THE DANGERS OF THE INTERNET FOR THE JOB SEEKER!



Before we go through what you can learn about your target company, I want to show you what the prospective company or recruiter can find out about you! This will creep you out.

If you are Gen X, Gen Y and have been using social media since you were in diapers, you have probably forgotten most of what you posted online, but that embarrassing photo of you, with you-know-who, doing God-knows-what, in I-can't-remember-where might still be online. Your prospective company can find this information via sites like www.spokeo.com. (Wonder what they know about Tiger Woods?) The good news is — You can find out what they know about YOU. Spokeo is a social network aggregator site. "A



wha?" I hear you say. A social network aggregator, that's what! Spokeo and similar sites are the Sherlock Holmes of social media.

The Spokeo pitch is - "Want to see something juicy? Spokeo searches deep within [45 major social networks](#) to find truly mouth-watering news about friends and coworkers."

As one reviewer wrote: "You can easily find information about ex-boyfriends and ex-girlfriends without their knowledge...and that's not all, it even finds out what your friends are doing across tons of websites"-- [Matt Keller | News Reporter](#)

Here's how it works. Register with Spokeo and provide your email details. Spokeo then mines your email contacts and provides information on what those contacts have posted online.

It claims to find all references associated with you and your email address. So if you posted pictures on Flickr, Facebook, Myspace - whatever, Spokeo will find those once it knows the email address you posted them with. Your



prospective employer can also find this information using your email address.

Spokeo's business model is primarily based on subscriptions from "Law Enforcement," "Business" and "Recruiting." Spokeo's pitch to recruiters is "23% of recruiters already research social networks. Spokeo goes a step beyond and automates candidate research across social networks."

If you have any concerns about what you might ever have posted, it is probably a good time investment to check sites like this one out. There is a small monthly charge to get decent access, but it might be worth it. You need to check only one time and then cancel your subscription.

Note: You can do a limited check without paying a registration fee.

Is it Spokeo or Spooky-o? You decide.



NOW LET'S SEE WHAT YOU CAN FIND TO HELP YOU GET THE JOB

Building Block I

BE A GOOGLEMEISTER

Remember, we are using P&G as a sample company to search. So! Google "P&G" which will get you to the company website. I know, I know, you are saying things like "Wow, this is exciting!" But hang with me for a while.

Click on [P&G website](#) to get feel for company, brands and products. News from P&G on left hand side of screen will provide you with current public information about the company.



Go to [P&G Investor Relations](#) page. On some corporate websites, it is not that easy to find the Investor Relations page. If you are having difficulty finding the investor relations page, simply Google the company name and "investor relations." e.g. Click "[Kraft Investor Relations](#)", "[Investor Relations Caterpillar](#)".



Scope the Investor Relations page. On the P&G Investor Relations page, read the annual reports (9 previous reports available on line) and other documents of interest. These following links (for example) provide annual reports for [P&G](#), [McDonalds](#), [Boeing](#), [Cisco](#). Because in this case, I am linking you directly to PDF's of the respective annual reports you might get this message:

Some files can contain viruses or otherwise be harmful to your computer.
It is important to be certain that this file is from a trustworthy source.

I have opened all PDF's without any problem. But let's get back to our buddies in P&G.

Check P&G [Financial Results & Events](#).



The real goldmine is the [Presentations and Webcasts](#). Here you can listen to analyst conference calls, listen to presentations made by company personnel AND download copies of their presentation. Many companies are



now offering MP3 downloads of presentations. Almost all listed companies provide access to webcasts.

On the P&G site, you can download documents like [Supplier Guidelines](#) – 12 PDF pages of content, a 20 page report focusing on Innovating Sustainably (Go on – Find this yourself) and numerous other great documents that not only provide information about the company but the macro-environment also.

There is even a 3 page document on P&G Acronyms and Terms! Keywords are important not just for search engines but also for you in your resume and interview. When you spout a few of the company's acronyms back to your recruiter, you will impress her with sentences like, "I'm interested in a BM or AD role in BC or AP/DO, preferably AP/J so I can convince AG that I know CIB."

When she responds, "Great! CMK (formerly known as MRD – honest) strongly believes in FMOT and you might also be interested in F&HC—not to



be confused with F&HCIC," you know you are speaking the same language and then the job is ITB (In the bag. That's my one!)

Believe it or not, in P&G-speak those sentences make sense. Would I lie to you? Crank up the Googler and check "P&G acronyms and terms."

At the Investor Relations page, register for alerts. You can opt to get alerts related to press releases, SEC information, corporate events, webcasts etc. You select what you wish to be alerted on and how often you want information. Almost all investor relations pages allow you to do this.



If you want to take a break and need a little lift that will put a smile on your face and a dance in your step watch this short clip:

[Choose the 'tude, Dude.](#)



Building Block II

GOOGLE FINANCIAL TERMS



Google the company stock market ticker symbol rather than the company name.

Instead of Googling “P&G”, Google “PG” which is the stock market ticker symbol for the company. The first option you find on this search page provides a host of financial websites reporting stories on [Procter & Gamble](#). I have been asked is it safe to click on links like [Procter & Gamble](#). If you trust the source, yes it is. So in this case, I think it is! When you click on that second underlined link, I have set it up to take you to a YouTube video featuring an interview with P&G head honcho A.G. Lafley speaking about Innovation. (Can you believe the guy retired just as I finished all my research? Really inconsiderate that!) By the way, we’ll talk about **YouTube** later which is another fabulous but underutilized source of information.



Google Alerts (and Yahoo Alerts)

Set up Google Alerts for your target companies. This is different to the alert you can set up at the investor relations page. (The alerts you set up at the corporate investor relations page only refer to information disseminated by the company.) Google Alerts relate to anything on the internet about the company. Be precise on what you are looking for, otherwise you'll be inundated with alerts. If you don't know how to set up Google Alerts, here's what you do – Google "Google Alerts." How crazy is that?



Building Block III

GOOGLE THE COMPETITION



Not so obvious—but really useful—Google the competition. If the company is publicly listed, you can determine the competition for your target company by checking financial websites. For P&G, a list of 9 “Related companies” is provided by *Google Finance* while *Yahoo Finance* has a “Direct Competitor Comparison” mentioning Johnson & Johnson, Kimberly-Clark and Unilever as P&G competitors and of course provides news on direct competitors. Now you go to the competitor websites to learn more.

The level of information varies from company to company. For example, J&J’s investor page has fascinating information. A [Pharmaceutical Business Review](#) features over 400 slides, numerous presentations and 9 podcasts! J&J offers you the opportunity to “Subscribe to Podcasts via iTunes.” Unilever provides a drop down menu to search for what you need. Options



include conferences, speeches, podcasts, investor events. You will be amazed at the information you pick up by checking a few different websites. Digest the information. Then play back a few pertinent points to your recruiter at the next interview and YOU WILL AMAZE THEM! Most people don't have the opportunity to do this research, but it is this type of research that will allow you to say, "*I am a better candidate now than when I left my previous position*" AND convince your interviewer of the fact.

Go on SHEIFGAB the World – Do it, Make it happen!



Building Block IV

GOOGIE EXECUTIVES and BUZZWORDS

Sticking with P&G. Their two top dogs are Chairman of the board A.G. Lafley and CEO/President Robert A. McDonald.



Google these two guys plus keywords and buzzwords e.g. "A.G. Lafley Interviews," "A.G. Lafley Innovation." You will get Lafley interviews with Business Week, Fortune, Fast Company and a gazillion other publications. Are you going to know about the company or what?

Of course much of the material you read will be marketing spin and carefully sanitized, but you will get a very good feel for the company, their thought process, values, vision, key words and key initiatives.

Another reason to track Lafley is because he was one of the most impressive and successful executives of the past decade. Understand his thinking,



concepts, frame of reference and you will hold your own in any conversation, even if he did retire after I had put all these links together. Grrrrrr!

Google the company name and buzz words e.g. "P&G Innovation" or "P&G Sustainability," or "P&G Corporate Social Responsibility."

Did you know there is a [P&G Facebook](#) page? Wha? Dull, boring, conservative P&G has a Facebook page? Yup! On the company's Facebook page, you can even get links to P&G videos on **YouTube**! So now what should you be thinking? That's right! Find P&G on **YouTube**. (Also check [McDonald's Facebook](#).) At time of writing, **YouTube** has 2,850 P&G related videos for viewing! Some are pure PR, some very insightful. You decide.

To get a more comprehensive feel for a company's use of social media, (in this case Facebook) Google "Company name and Facebook," rather than accessing the company through its Facebook page. The reason for this is you will see what other people are saying about the company's use of social media and the millions of "Moaning Minnies" who criticize blue chip companies' use of social media as not being genuine. Give me a break!



Building Block IV

GOOGLE ADVANCED SEARCH



Understand the best practices for Google Search. This page on [Google Search Basics](#) was an eye-opener for me as was this [GoogleGuide](#). You have to spend a bit of time studying this, but are you serious about information gathering for your job search or not?

(Remember the first SHEIGAB Building Block – S for Structure.) So! Structure one hour of your valuable time to understand the search process and you will find information and job posting faster and easier than your fellow job seekers and it will help you SHEIFGAB the World.



Building Block V

AMAZON

Not a site you might think of first, but you can find every book (well nearly every book in publication) on this site including by the way [**SHEIFGAB the World: 8 Building Blocks to Successful Job Transition**](#).



Search "Procter & Gamble" and "Procter and Gamble" at the Amazon site – over 14,000 results. Oh Goody! Interestingly, the search which includes 'and' rather than '&' provided better results for me, even though the correct name is "Procter & Gamble." Explain me that as a former boss of mine used say - often! (He wasn't very bright.)

This though is a bit of a crap-shoot and you do need to be specific in your search. "Advanced Search" is best. Note, for some strange reason, "Advanced Search" is not visible on the first search page. It is only when you search for a term in "Books" that the advanced search option then pops up.



So, let's say you want to find books that feature your target company CEO. In the P&G example, when you search for A.G. Lafley a number of books pop up. Lafley's book *The Game Changer* with Ram Charan is a great read on Innovation. If you don't want to buy it, borrow it from your local library.

Amazon provides one fantastic tool – "Search inside the book."

In the Lafley search I did, one of the books (for example) that popped up is *The Definitive Drucker: Final Advice from the Father of Modern Management*. Hit "Search inside the book" for "Lafley." Voila! 13 references to Lafley which you can read.

Here's another example from a humorous insightful business book written by a goofball Irishman! Find [Why Ireland Never Invaded America](#) on the Amazon site. Hover over the book cover and search inside the book for "Innovation." Ten pages referenced and you can read all of them. 28 results for "Vision" etc. You can do this for the majority of books on Amazon.



Added Value Tip

Buy the company's product. This is OK if you are checking P&G: not so good if you want to find information about Bentley or Rolls Royce! Do this for your target company if possible. Wander the supermarket aisle or retail outlet where company products are sold. Talk to consumers and Network, Network, Network like crazy. Toyota has a concept called Genchi Genbutsu ("Go to the source and learn" which is basically what this eBook is all about.)



Search inside [Why Ireland Never Invaded America](#) for "Genchi Genbutsu." It will help you with this overall information gathering project.

"One of our jobseekers came into my office and said that **SHEIFGAB the World – 8 Building Blocks to Successful Job Transition** has helped him "TREMENDOUSLY" to stay focused and encouraged during this difficult time in his life"
Naperville Community Career Center

Use this code WUSSBTHA to purchase copies of [SHEIFGAB the World](#) for only \$9.95, a \$5 discount.



Building Block VI

LINKEDIN and SOCIAL MEDIA

Search your target company on LinkedIn. You must be registered with LinkedIn to do this. If you are not, what have you been doing? It is an invaluable social networking tool for you.

Become a LinkedInMeister. The best book, BY FAR, on LinkedIn is [LinkedIn for Dummies](#). Get that book, crank up your computer, hit LinkedIn and go through the book chapter by chapter. It will help you to SHEIFGAB the World and WILL help you in your job search.

Other way to improve your LinkedIn capabilities: Search **YouTube** for "LinkedIn" and Google "LinkedIn Tutorials," or something similar. Utilize the first and fourth SHEIFGAB Building Blocks – **Structure** your time to **Improve** your knowledge. Structure one hour a day for 4-5 days to really learn LinkedIn and it will pay dividends. And because you pay attention to the **Environment** Building Block in **SHEIFGAB**, you will of course do this



basic Improvement work outside your home. I mean you're not reading this on your home computer, are you? If perchance you are, ask yourself "Am I spending too much time working from home?" (Hint: the answer is probably "Yes and I would be way more productive if I changed my Environment.)

Some basic LinkedIn tips.

Hit drop down arrow in LinkedIn search box (top right hand side) to get companies. At very top of LinkedIn page, click on "Companies" and hit search icon. You will now see full list of companies that you have some association. On left hand side of page, you can filter to 1st and 2nd connections. I bet you never knew you were connected to so many companies!



Click "Hiring" which shows you companies in your network with jobs posted in LinkedIn. At time of writing, 1.054 companies in my network have job openings. This can be refined further by keyword.



Enter company name in the search box. For this example, we'll stick with P&G. Goldmine! When you click on the search results, you will see immediately, current and former employees that you are LinkedIn to—Even the ones you never liked and the ones that never liked you (but they were idiots!)

You will also see “New Hires” and “Recent Promotions and Changes.” Maybe you can connect with a newly promoted exec and wish them well.

One area to concentrate on (right hand side of LinkedIn page) is a window highlighting the companies “employees are most connected to.” Here you might determine some of the key suppliers / vendors to the company, or at least who company employees have good connections with. Check these corporate sites also. This can often help you better understand key concepts, buzzwords etc.

“News” provides you with a limited number of published articles. This is not as comprehensive as you will find at the financial websites I wrote about previously but it is helpful.



When finished searching your target company, click on "Companies" again.



This time in "Search Companies" type in your keyword. I typed in "Foodservice" and set the search criteria to a Chicago zip code. I find 25 companies who have some connection to Foodservice AND I can see if I am connected to anyone in these companies. Even if I'm not connected, I have a database to work with. Yippee!

Join Alum groups for your previous company, school, sorority, etc. Find who in your list of connections mentions the target company in their profile?

Facebook and Myspace

You will benefit from creating a Facebook (and to a lesser extent Myspace) profile, partly because you may be able to connect with friends in your target company, but just as importantly it shows you understand social media. If you are a 44 year old executive, the 28 year old recruiting manager already considers you to be "like, you know, totally old." One way



to beat that perception is to demonstrate social media awareness. And if you insist in believing social media isn't for you, don't be surprised if the twittering recruiting manager decides you aren't for them. (Note, you can decide if "twittering" is an expletive or social media related!)

Twitter

If I may paraphrase Winston Churchill – “Never in the field of social media has so much been written by so many with so few (characters).” You may not “get” Twitter. You may have no real interest in tweeting others.



Here's the bottom line. Even if you don't believe in Twitter and other social media, it is important for you to KNOW about social media, so you are seen to be contemporary and knowledgeable. Twitter can help you in sourcing information and job leads. There are a number of Twitter alert programs available, (go on, Google it) which can keep you current on alerts related to target companies, keywords etc. You decide whether you can handle all the drivel you will have to pore through, but you do have to pan a



lot of water to find that gold nugget. Even if you don't set up formal Twitter alerts, you can search your target company / target in the Twitter search function to get real-time results. Still unsure about Twitter? (Hey, a lot of people are.) Check out this *New York Times* article [Why Twitter Will Endure](#) for further insight.



Struggling to keep going during these tough times. Watch this short clip on the importance of a [Clear and Compelling Vision](#). You will learn and you will laugh and just maybe get thirsty!

"I have a dozen books on my bookshelf here in front of me on self improvement, self branding, self motivation, and I have never got to the end of any of them except **SHEIFGAB the World** by Conor Cunneen-which I read in one sitting. I doubt I will ever feel like reading the others now....."

Rob Nichols SVP Unilever

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Building Block VII

YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

“And still they gazed and still the wonder grew, that one small head could carry all he knew” – *The Deserted Village*: Oliver Goldsmith

And you will be amazed at the amount of information you can get in that small(ish) building that is your local library. Make friends with librarians in the reference section who are expert at information gathering.



Understand the wonder of online databases available via your local library. Some libraries restrict access to certain databases, in that they do not allow remote access i.e. you have to be at a library computer to access. But the bulk of the databases can be accessed from your own PC, once you are a patron.

Note: I urge you to "LIVE" the "E for Environment" Building Block. Change the Environment you work in consistently and DO NOT do the bulk of your



computer work at home. You know, and I know that one hour at your local library searching online databases will be much more productive than one hour at your home computer.

Selection of online databases available at local library

Business & Company Resource Center

Gale Directory Library (Encyclopedia of Associations)

Gale Virtual Reference Library

LexisNexis Library Express

Plunkett Research Online

PROMT (Predicasts Overview of Markets & Technology)

Record Information Services

Reference USA

Sorkins Directory of Business & Government (In-Library Use Only)

Wall Street Journal Online



The LexisNexis facility is phenomenal. LexisNexis positions itself as “a leading global provider of content-enabled workflow solutions to professionals in law firms, corporations, government, law enforcement, tax, accounting, academic institutions and risk and compliance assessment.” Wha???

What this means is that via your library, you can find references made to your target company in almost any publication. If I search “P&G Innovation” on LexisNexis, I find 369 articles, categorized by Magazines & Journals, Industry Trade Press, Newspapers etc. When I click newspapers, I find 123 articles on “P&G Innovation.” Articles are available from *The New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Times UK* and 4 articles from my fave newspaper *The Irish Times*.

Your library contact will be happy to provide you with lessons and advice on how to use these databases. Use them well and you WILL walk into that interview 12-feet tall AND Bulletproof. Rock ‘n’ Roll!



Building Block VIII

YOUR NETWORK

The best way for you to mine your network is to use the “**H**” Building Block in **SHEIFGAB** and **Help** others. **Help** regularly and **Help** often. Then when you reach out for information and support, it will be more forthcoming. Sure, there will be some jerks who will not reciprocate but, don’t you be that jerk. That will come back to bite you sometime.

Job seekers sometimes are too passive in mining their network. LinkedIn and other sites are great, but don’t just stop at posting a request on line. Get proactive. Pick up that phone. Call people and ask questions. The person who does not reply to your LinkedIn request might just have her memory jogged by your phone call and possibly direct you to someone else who can be a great resource.

And Now – At Enormous Expense!!!!

The Best Networking Tip EVER in the History of the World (You Excited?)



Arrive early for networking events. It is much easier to start discussion with the other three people in the room rather than trying to get involved when there is a phalanx of networkers in front of you.

The Bottom Line

As a job seeker, you should be able to say to your prospective employer, "I am a better candidate now than when I left my previous company, because I have continued to Improve and grow. I know who the movers and shakers are, in your industry and who is doing interesting things. Even if my job does not require this specific information, my research shows I am focused on personal development and growth, that I did not let the job search get to me and I am a better candidate now today, than when I left my last job. In fact, I am the best candidate for this job."

You will be able to say that, if you follow these 8 Building Blocks to Successful Information Gathering for the job seeker.

Go to it and SHEIFGAB the World.



Amazon Reviews

SHEIFGAB the World: 8 Building Blocks to Successful Job Transition

"I purchased this book as a result of seeing the author speak live, for a second time. His thoughts are well organized, and really do help you in the process of professional transition. I like Conor's conversational writing style, and his thoughts really do make a lot of sense. The job search process in today's world has changed fundamentally over the last decade or so. The process itself can grind on a person's psyche as well - Conor "gets" that, and his book offers a number of coping methods, told through humorous stories and anecdotes. I really enjoyed this book! Highly recommended!"

"I bought the book after hearing Conor speak. His style and wit make the book a delightful read as well as getting the point across very quickly. I read the book in one sitting, and laughed all the way through while learning how to structure my day to be most productive. Conor points out the fact meeting your goals for the day is almost more important for your sanity than the volume of work one completes.

He helps one process through the emotional state of being a NIGEP, firmly points that networking isn't all about getting, it is all about giving, and then enjoying the rewards; and how to change your attitude to increase your altitude."



"Sheifgab the World doesn't just apply to those in transition, it applies to everyone who wants to improve their daily productivity"

"I love this book because it's loaded with practical content while being highly entertaining. I was so impressed with the author's ability to make such a serious subject so fun to read. Highly recommended!!! "

"How should a job seeker spend his/her days? This small book, written by an award-winning humorist, has the answer. "SHEIFGAB the World, 8 Building Blocks to Successful Job Transition", takes you through the steps of structuring your days for successfully landing a job while keeping a positive attitude. The book is in story form, following a group of job seekers through the process of learning the eight building blocks. The story makes it a quick read. The book is particularly helpful for those in the job search for a long time, but new job seekers will also find it useful. I highly recommend this book."

