

**MICHAEL S. SEAYER**

# **5 Secrets to Mastering the Executive Job Search**



Michael S. Seaver, CPBA, SPHR, MBA



Congratulations for choosing to download this special report from [michaelsseaver.com](http://michaelsseaver.com)! Because you're reading this now, I know you are committed to living a life full of autonomy, mastery, and purpose. Like me, you fear mediocrity and are willing to sacrifice and work hard in the achievement of long-term goals.

## WHY I WROTE THIS REPORT



I have dedicated my career to unlocking human potential and supporting driven individuals across the globe who want to succeed in the 21st century knowledge economy. Like you, these individuals know that they have not reached their pinnacle and that they have more to give to the triple bottom line. They are in search of their personal mission, a higher purpose. They want to discover and apply their strengths, find their true voice and create a strategic plan to best

express who they are. I help these leaders move from managerial success to societal significance.

Through my Incorporate You™ process, I show you how to apply business strategy concepts to your career, determine how to live in a place that you truly belong, and build meaningful and lasting relationships. I challenge others to use their talents to do something they believe in and thrive in an environment that fits who they are. I help them live life with the autonomy they deserve, the ability to master their chosen profession and find a higher purpose where they can contribute to a cause greater than their own.



After completing an MBA in Global Management from the #1 international business school in the world, the Thunderbird School of Global Management, I became the

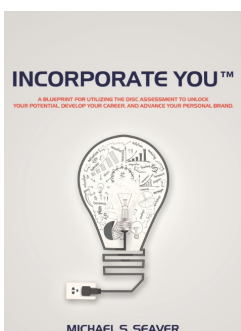
Director of Talent Sourcing at Banner Health in 2010. My time was quickly spread thin over four system-wide programs and leading the transformation of a department in need of a new identity. I also joined the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and received their Senior Professional in Human Resources (SPHR) certification. Through working long nights and many weekends, I realized I was never going to be great at any one of the activities I managed and it hit me like a ton of bricks. I began to loathe the drive into the office and

the monotony of completing the same tasks day in and day out. I needed inspiration to help me focus and provide light on a new path.

Someone suggested that I read Daniel Pink's book, *Drive*. My "A-HA" moment arrived! A sincere focus on finding a meaningful career where I could have autonomy in my work, be able to master my chosen craft, and feel as though my work is connected to a higher purpose was what I needed. I began a process of self-introspection and reflection. I looked for and identified patterns in my life over the previous 12 - 18 months. I realized that I was being told "no" repeatedly in my corporate job. I disliked the drive to work. The boss I loved resigned. Banner decided to restructure the entire HR department. My personal relationship fell apart.

Conversely, I was being told "yes" to being an entrepreneur and career coach. While at Thunderbird, I authored a business plan in my capstone course. I was raised in an entrepreneurial family and could lean on many of those experiences. I found deep intrinsic meaning working in Thunderbird's career management center and managing Banner Health's career transition program helping people unlock their potential. I lost track of time when meeting with people one-to-one. I had significant experience in the employer and employee sides of career transition. I volunteered my time teaching classes at Junior Achievement and served on Phoenix-area boards designed to help people develop their careers. I loved creating process and finding ways to help others see the patterns emerge in their own lives. Once I connected the dots, the next steps in my career became obvious.

In 2011, I founded Seaver Consulting, a career coaching practice specializing in unlocking human potential through the development of personal and professional well being. Over the following year, I worked with clients across the United States, became certified in the administration of the DISC assessment (I am a Certified Professional Behavioral Analyst, CPBA), published my first book, *Fearing Mediocrity*, and continued to enhance my Incorporate You™ process. To grow my personal suite of skills, beginning in late 2011, I taught intrapreneurship and strategic human resources courses at Grand Canyon University.



In December 2012, I was given the opportunity to work as a career coach at the W. P. Carey School of Business at Arizona State University. Being an MBA, I loved the fact that I was able to support other experienced, intelligent, and driven global leaders. In November 2013, I was recognized by the Arizona Republic as one of the top "35 Entrepreneurs 35 and Younger" for the growth and development of my career coaching business. One month later, my second book, *Incorporate You™*, was published.

In March 2014, I returned to work at my alma mater serving as the Director of Alumni Career Services where I provided executive leadership, career transition, and personal branding coaching to Thunderbird alumni across six continents. I also developed written and video content about career and human capital development for the Career Outreach blog.

Through all of my experiences, I have made many mistakes and have learned much. Thankfully, I have found my calling and consciously live my life's intent every day. As you read the following report, please remember that I don't want to help you simply raise the floor of mediocrity; I want to help you raise the height of excellence in your life. Your biggest threat today isn't external, it's internal; you have to live up to your potential and consistently add value to the "common" wealth. Career distinction at the beginning of the 21st century requires more than incremental change; it requires you to make quantum leaps in how you generate value for those in your circle of influence. A positive paradigm shift is required so that your competitive advantage will be directly correlated to how much more you give in value than take in payment, how you place other people's interests before yours, and how authentically and well you serve others.

Whether you are looking to change employers, industries, or job functions, the following 5-step process will help you reimagine your career and live up to your potential.



# 5 SECRETS TO MASTERING THE EXECUTIVE JOB SEARCH

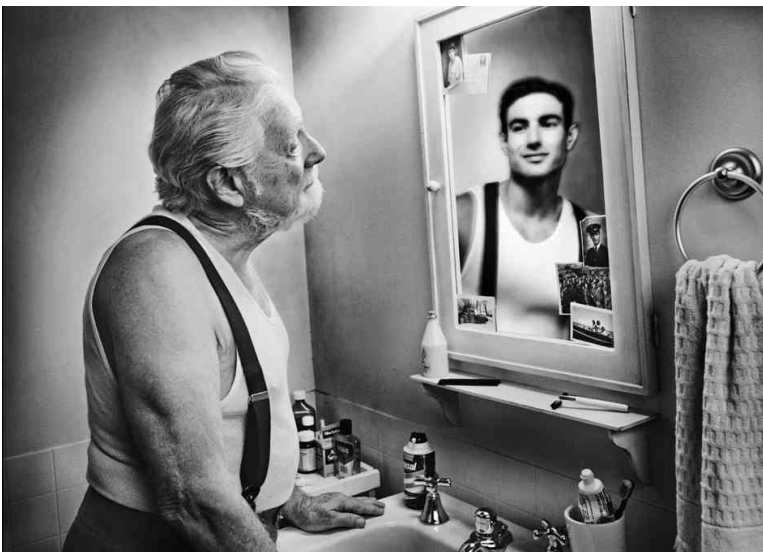
In a 2012 commencement address to the Harvard Business School, Facebook Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg offered valuable career advice that rings blindingly true today. She said, “*Careers... they’re not a ladder; they’re a jungle gym. As you start your career, look for opportunities, look for growth, look for impact, look for mission. Move sideways, move down, move on, move off. Build your skills, not your résumé.*”

Regardless of where you fall in your career, reimagining your approach to career growth will pay dividends in helping you maximize your potential and societal impact.

There are myriad reasons you may be disengaged in your job or career search. A [2013 Forbes article](#) articulates the reasons succinctly. More than two million people quit their jobs each month and 74 percent of people would consider finding a new job because: 31 percent of respondents don’t like their boss, 31 percent lack empowerment, 35 percent dislike internal politics, and 43 percent don’t receive appropriate recognition for their effort. Sound familiar?

If so, consider the below steps to help you assess your readiness for making a career move.

## 1. Be Quiet and Reflect



According to a 2013 Gallup survey, only 30% of Americans are actively engaged in their jobs (meaning 70% dislike their work and would like to do something new). You have probably recognized the competitive landscape and know that securing a new career takes time. And, the transition process shouldn’t be taken lightly especially if you want to do a job each day that excites you and provides autonomy in decision-making, mastery of specialized skills, and a connection of your purpose to the organization’s purpose.



It is wildly important that all of your actions (full-time job, entrepreneurial venture, volunteer efforts, relationship building) be in line with your personal intent and that the “compound interest” of all working in concert escalate your self discovery and success.

John Dewey once said, “We do not learn from experience... we learn from reflecting on experience.” And, James Zull once said, “It is hard to make meaning of experience unless it engages our emotions.” So, the exercise of identifying the right next career opportunity is going to rely on your ability to reflect on previous experiences to clarify the traits of your next employer, boss, and job.

Here is a process for getting the most out of reflection:

**1. Ask a confidant or coach to help you identify patterns from previous action... where were you being told “yes”... where were you being told “no”?**

*EXAMPLE – I have a client who is unhappy with her current boss/leadership team. In addition to having bad feelings about the future of her firm, she also read a blog about choosing your boss before your job, and then recently had a conversation about the power of inexperienced bosses at a networking event. The “no” was coming from very different places, but she is being told that it is time to start leveraging her skills in new ways.*



**2. Proactively create experiences in the “yes” column by taking a learning mindset and anticipating that you’ll make mistakes and fail. Fail fast and learn quickly.**

*EXAMPLE – After identifying your personal intention, attend networking events specific to what you want to do next, join professional associations to meet other subject matter experts, volunteer to lead projects in the department you wish to work in, and be okay with not being great in your actions initially. The experience and contacts you make trump bad feelings from in-the-moment mistakes.*

**3. Take action to create meaningful experiences (tied to your personal intent) that allow you to get into a “Flow” state. See Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.**

*EXAMPLE – Let’s assume you are unsure whether you want to work as a professor or in a corporate organizational effectiveness function. The best way to clarify which path will be better for you is by scheduling time to talk to people who currently hold those positions and then asking for opportunities to guest lecture or to volunteer your expertise on a corporate change initiative. Having multiple hours of action will help you to determine in which situation you lost track of time, were fully engaged, and the outside world turned off.*

**4. Set aside time each day to reflect on experiences.**

*EXAMPLE – Consider utilizing the Gibbs’ Reflective Cycle where you ask yourself the following:*

*Description – What happened?*

*Feelings – What were you feeling?*

*Evaluation – What was good and bad about the experience?*

*Analysis – What sense can you make of the situation?*

*Conclusion – What else could you have done?*

*Action Plan – If it arose again, what would you do?*

In summary, the competition for jobs is increasing, the majority of the labor force dislikes their work, and humans learn quickly from reflection and being engaged emotionally. Through pattern recognition, anticipating mistakes and taking a learning mindset, creating meaningful experiences where you find flow, and using a simple daily process for reflection will help as you leverage the compound interest of all your efforts working in concert to escalate your success in making career moves and landing the career of your dreams.



## 2. Be Smart When Updating Your Résumé



Enhancing your resume will help you make career moves and progress to the next stage in securing your dream position. Effective resumes do not land you the job; they simply open the door so recruiters will invite you for an interview. The best resumes include the following in the accomplishment development statements: keywords that match those on the job description, the scope of your previous responsibilities, and quantifiable results that entice recruiters to want to learn more.

### **KEYWORDS**

Recruiters and other HR professionals are constantly inundated with hundreds of resumes for one position. To save time, organizations explicitly state what they are looking for in their job descriptions, train staff to ensure the candidate meets minimum qualifications, and look for preferred qualities (specific keywords) when narrowing the list of viable candidates. You must look at every job description you are interested in and tailor your experience to the minimum requirements listed. To increase the chances of your resume reaching the top of the proverbial pile, take three job descriptions of your ideal next job and select 10 - 12 keywords from each that are important to or are repeated in the descriptions. Highlight them or write them down so that you can insert them into your resume. You can then tailor your resume to that industry, function, company, and job by using those keywords throughout your bullet points to best explain your valuable experiences.

### **SCOPE**

The experience section of strong resumes speaks not only to how well something was done but also to the quantifiable scope of the work. It is much easier for a recruiter to form a mental picture of an applicant's experiences if the bullet point states "managed a project team of 12, with a \$250,000 budget..." versus "managed a project team." Find ways to show things such as the size of your budget, the size of your team, how many projects you had running simultaneously, the size of your company, times you were under budget, etc. Explain experiences in such a way that a recruiter can understand the breadth and depth of your work and envision you in the role before they meet you.



## RESULTS

Quantifying results of your work can be difficult, but it is very important. A strong bullet point on a resume begins with a past tense action verb, describes the action taken, and details the impact of that action. An average bullet point may be: “increased annual sales.” A strong bullet is: “increased annual sales by 25 percent year-over-year, exceeded stretch targets and secured \$500,000 of new revenue.”

To transition from one job to the next, your resume (and LinkedIn profile) must be full of targeted keywords that match those on the job description, metrics to show the scope of your previous responsibilities, and quantifiable results that entice recruiters to want to learn more.

## 3. Be Seen and Build Meaningful Relationships

As you begin to establish more meaningful relationships, it is important to remember that the street is two way – you must generate value for the person you seek knowledge from. Adam Grant, author of *Give and Take*, uses formidable research to prove the value of being able to identify someone else’s needs, anticipating new solutions for them, and then finding ways to contribute to those solutions in a way that they feel is generous and authentic.



Remember, relationship building doesn’t happen overnight, it is a long-term process. Individuals who think they can be connected to someone and immediately be offered an interview are missing out on the importance of the relationship to their career years into the future. Here are a few key points to consider as you build relationships:

1. Ask a “warm” connection (a person who knows you and the other person that you’d like to meet) to make a formal introduction. This will drive higher levels of commitment from all parties to follow through in a timely manner.
2. In your first communication with your new connection via email or LinkedIn, keep your verbiage short and sweet. I would encourage you to not mention that you are seeking employment; simply offer suggestions for times to talk and words of gratitude for his time.

3. When you talk with the person for the first time, try to limit the conversation to 15 – 30 minutes. Have tailored questions prepared that allow you to easily determine whether you'd like to work in that industry or organization. Your personality assessments are great places to uncover foundational information about your motivators, strengths, and communication preferences to derive these questions. Unless he broaches the topic first, avoid lengthy discussion about your employment status.
4. Within 24 hours of the conversation, send a follow up email thanking the person for his time and insights. If, during the conversation, he mentions family, a hobby, or other personal information, be sure to reference it in the email. Your goal is to build a long-term relationship based on unique ways you can help him in ways he'll appreciate most. Being selfish here is a recipe for failure.
5. Allow 2 – 3 weeks to pass and follow up again. Perhaps you could send a hand-written card with a quote or unique saying customized to help him achieve his goals. Maybe forward him a LinkedIn article that will help him implement a project or impact his team positively. Whatever you do, make the communication channel different from how you touched him last.
6. As jobs open, you can more readily connect with and seek advice about how to apply for opportunities or how to have your information be moved to the top of the proverbial resume pile. Although you have now asked for advice or support, your job isn't done – you must continually find ways every 30 – 60 days to follow up with and generate value for the person. Be remarkable in the generation of that value.



Securing the job you desire, in the 21st century, is heavily correlated to your ability to build a critical mass of supporters, advocates, or referral partners inside your target organizations. Your success in this process is driven by getting an early start, generating value as often as possible, and being able to relay your personal brand succinctly.

## 4. Be Open and Challenge Yourself



In the [June 2013 edition of Inc.](#), an article entitled *7 Traits of True Leaders* detailed how character traits that have been historically perceived as feminine are required for 21st century success. A leader's ability to be empathetic, vulnerable, humble, inclusive, generous, balanced, and patient will drive him/her to achieve goals. A separate study by the [Center for Creative Leadership](#) entitled *Preventing Derailment: What to Do Before It's Too Late* found that as you climb the corporate ladder, personal skills far outweigh your need for managerial and technical skills.

If you have a desire to be better at any of the above personal skills, it is important to understand the model and process for how you will learn them and be able to convert your learning into making career moves. Only 10% of your learning about soft skill development will occur by reading content online or in a book, or by attending a formal class or training. The next 20% comes from others in your circle of influence, mentors that you communicate with regularly, or your personal board of directors. The vast majority of your learning, 70%, will be derived from challenging experiences that occur both on and off-the-job.

Sue Ashford (Harvard) and Scott DeRue (Michigan) developed the Mindful Engagement process in 2012 as a way to help leaders get the most out of the experiences they go through. The following three-step process will ensure that you take the right approach, create opportunities for action, and use a structured process for reflection.

**1. Approach** – because you get what you expect, it is imperative that you establish a positive mindset and SMART goals. You must also have a learning mindset where you constantly seek new challenges and feedback from a wide variety of people. Remember to take risks, fail fast, and be persistent in the face of obstacles.

**2. Action** – what you do determines what you get as an outcome, so be proactive in trying to create opportunities and diverse experiences where you can experiment with what works best for you. This will allow you to repeat the behavior moving forward and get you closer to your goals.

**3. Reflection** – follow a structured process each time you reflect (reference page 7 above) being sure to focus on a few critical issues that will make the learning impactful. Take time to reflect as close as possible to when the event occurred and do not be afraid to go back and act on that situation again quickly.

As you identify the skills you want to develop, engage the 70 / 20 / 10 model to learn the skill from a variety of resources around you. Then, use the Mindful Engagement process to proactively foster a learning mindset, take meaningful action in challenging and diverse experiences, and then set aside time to reflect on what went well, what could've improved, and what your next steps are. Convert your learning into a different job search strategy where you proactively anticipate career change, continually improve the diversity measure of your stakeholder network, and are courageous enough to abandon career practices that made you successful yesterday. Intelligence today isn't simply the accumulation of knowledge; it's employing new practices that maximize future opportunity.



Source: Charles Jennings, former CLO of Reuters

## 5. Be Consistent and Share Your Brand Daily



If you have a strong support structure around you, I offer the following 80/20 methodology of how you can devote time to the continual learning process, job search, and making moves in your career. Just because you have a good job today doesn't mean you'll be doing the same work next week... the 21st century career search is continual. According to ere.net, less than 25% of career opportunities are posted online. The

vast majority of your future jobs, board positions, and volunteer assignments will come to you because you are being recommended and referred into them. Achieving your career goals is correlated to your ability to build meaningful relationships and proliferate your personal brand through key channels.

### 20% – Online

To best avail yourself to knowledge and jobs in a specific industry, review your target company's websites regularly and set up saved job searches on LinkedIn, SimplyHired, Indeed, and niche boards. Have the jobs emailed to you daily or weekly. This is a reactive approach to career development, but it will provide you with an idea of what companies are hiring for what jobs. As you begin to apply to jobs on these sites, be sure to know your personal brand and tailor your cover letter and resume to each job.

### 80% – Relationships

The vast majority of your career opportunities will come from weak ties – the friend of your friend. To access this hidden market, establish a process for connecting to people recurrently. It might take three or four touch points with someone before he/she trusts you enough to discuss advancing your career. Build and manage recurrent relationships through the following:

1. *Current Connections* – continually generate value for your first level connections, and as the need arises, ask for recommendations or introductions to individuals in their networks,
2. *Alumni Association* – tap into both your undergraduate and/or graduate degree alumni association by attending events or conducting informational interviews with alumni in your target companies,
3. *LinkedIn* – separate from the jobs functionality referenced above, be active posting meaningful comments, connecting others, writing recommendations for colleagues,
4. *Professional Associations* – leverage these for access to subject matter experts, a specialized body of knowledge, and connections in your target companies,



5. *Volunteering* – not only will it feel good intrinsically, but strategically give time to charitable organizations tied to companies you're targeting as your next employer,
6. *Boards of Directors* – serving on boards will give you the opportunity to positively impact a company, but also display your thought leadership, and grow additional skills, and
7. *Executive Search Consultants* – a developing relationship with a recruiter with strong ties to the industry you'd like to work in may open doors to senior level executives you wouldn't normally have access to.

By being great at your full-time job and devoting purposeful time each month to the above channels, you will become well known in your community and open doors (both full-time and entrepreneurially) you may have previously thought impossible.



By surrounding yourself with people who care about your development, you are much more likely to be success ready with high levels of hope, engagement, and well being. I encourage you to use the above channels to find meaningful long-term projects that allow you to learn continually and positively impact the community in which you live. Devote a set number of hours each week to generating value for others, living your personal brand, and exploring opportunities that your network refers you to. Instead of taking the deficit-based approach and focusing on what's wrong, re-focus on what's strong about you and market your strengths and unique qualities accordingly.

In the 5-Step Process for Making Career Moves, you've learned about the (1) power of reflection, (2) how to update your résumé, (3) building lasting relationships, (4) the importance of challenging yourself, and to be (5) consistent in the delivery of your personal brand in searching for your next career. Now what? Through as many channels as possible, generate thick value for others. Every interaction you have is a pseudo-interview. Do the actions you take allow your stakeholder network to continually build trust in your brand, your strengths, and what you could potentially do for them?

If so, you're headed down the correct fork in the road.

# ABOUT MICHAEL'S INCORPORATE YOU™ PROCESS



The Incorporate You™ blueprint equates your personal brand to a corporate brand by bringing together the ideas of an entrepreneur's business plan, personal branding, and career transition techniques. The book's content includes:

## **PERSONAL BUSINESS PLAN**

Your personal business plan sets a strong foundation by allowing you to see your character traits in black and white from your DISC assessment, clarifying your values and identifying your guiding purpose moving forward. Incorporate You™ features a professional, evidence-based DISC assessment (used by both small businesses and Fortune 500 companies globally) to develop your personal business plan, with consideration toward your core behaviors, motivators, and competencies; a self assessment driven by reflection; work priorities; and the development of intention and ambition statements, a value proposition, and a set of constraints.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

You will start by reviewing your professional experiences and creating accomplishment development statements using the recruiter-acclaimed S.T.A.R. format (which identifies the Situation, Task, Action, and Result of previous experiences). These statements will be used in the rest of this section of the blueprint to write your resume, LinkedIn profile, two different cover letters and your 30-second commercial.

## **MARKETING PLAN**

The development of a personal brand requires you take your intention and ambition statements and value proposition and exude them through a variety of online and in-person channels. Your personal marketing plan blueprint will describe how to accomplish this and determine whether or not those in your circle of influence are receiving the message.

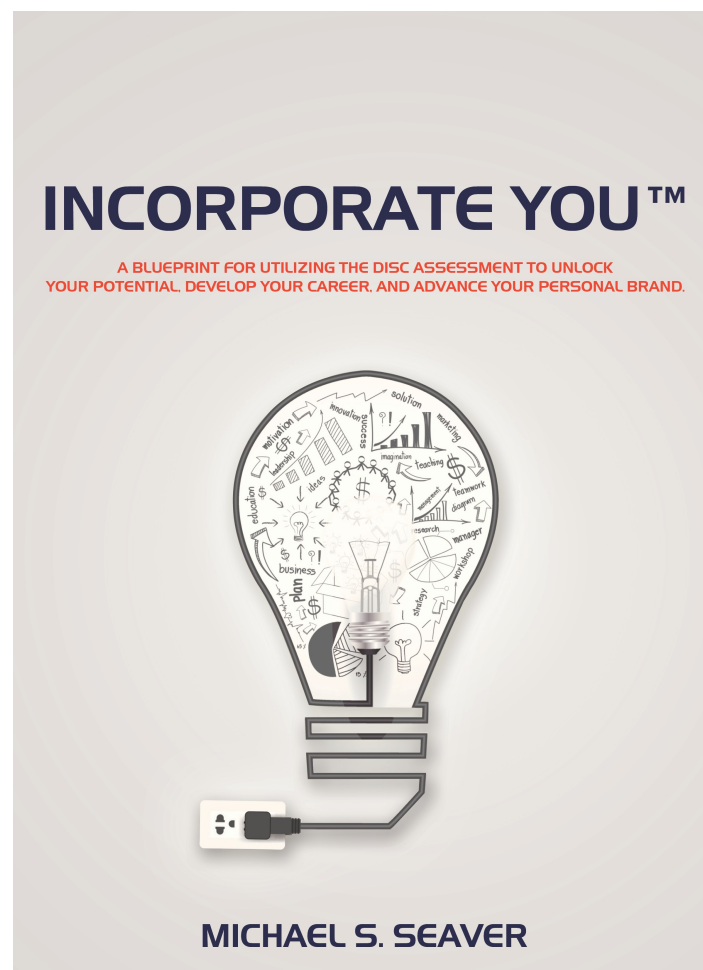
## **OPERATIONAL PLAN**

Implementation of your marketing plan is the next step in the Incorporate You™ process. This will be the guide in that implementation. Networking requires you to be ruthless with your time and you must begin with the establishment of S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely) goals. With the goals established, you can then integrate the use of best practices, a tracking form and communication tips (based on the DISC assessment) for how you tailor your communication to different behavioral styles. The operational

plan also includes robust content about the interview process. You will have a process for where to gather information about your target companies, how to prepare for and make a great first impression, what to do to have a successful interview, how to tailor your communication style to the interviewer, and unique methods of follow-up.

## **CONTINGENCY PLAN**

The last step in the process, and perhaps most important, is the identification and implementation of a risk mitigation, or back-up plan. Creating a continual personal development plan will be the foundation for you to mitigate the risks associated with losing a job. In a society where the only constant appears to be change, you must search for your next career continually and consciously create opportunities for developmental experiences, garner additional certifications, learn how to continuously develop needed skills, and surround yourself with a rich, diverse, and trusted advisory board.



## NEXT STEPS

If what you read in this report inspired you to explore how to get further support to make career moves, then I'd love to help!

Here are ways I can support your personal development:

- 3 one-to-one coaching packages to fit a variety of needs
- Webinar series about topics such as personal branding and LinkedIn
- Live Events and Workshops
- Books

Ask yourself, where do you envision your life 6 - 12 months from now? Are you ready to invest in unlocking your potential?

To explore next steps, I invite you to schedule a no-obligation *Strategy Session* with me by emailing [michael@michaelsseaver.com](mailto:michael@michaelsseaver.com).

You are also welcome to visit [michaelsseaver.com](http://michaelsseaver.com) to read my blogs or to follow me on social media channels. See what others are saying by reviewing my 35+ recommendations on LinkedIn and my [Testimonials](#) page on [michaelsseaver.com](http://michaelsseaver.com).

Thank you! Now go forth and be awesome!



Michael S. Seaver, CPBA, SPHR, MBA  
[michael@michaelsseaver.com](mailto:michael@michaelsseaver.com)  
(480) 540 - 9399

