

General Strategy

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A key part of job hunting is to really **hunt** the job. But isn't it simple? Just search a few job titles you're interested in on LinkedIn and Glassdoor, e.g., Software Engineer and Data Scientist, and turn on the new job alerts. I did exactly the same thing one year ago and thought I was hunting a job. I was not. I was actually **waiting** for a job. LinkedIn advertises same jobs to millions of people with similar background as us. How likely will we be the lucky hired guy out of thousands of similar candidates? In addition, we just receive advertisements passively from LinkedIn. So, we can miss thousands of opportunities that we should have known if we looked for them actively. The recommender system adopted by LinkedIn is smart. But we are the only ones that know exactly what we are looking for. So, in this chapter, we will discuss how to hunt by ourselves.

1. Specify Your Target

I know you guys want a tech job. You want to be a software engineer. You want to build machine learning models. Yeah, that's cool. But it's not the target I am talking about. You should specify the industries that you're open to work in, e.g., health care, robotics, quantitative trading, education, retailing, travelling, etc.. The reason behind this is that skills don't hire you but companies do. It's much easier to find a company if you specify an industry first.

There is more than one way to determine such industries. I suggest that we focus on fields we are passionate about. I can't imagine how frustrated we would be if we were forced to do something we didn't like for thirty years. You can also try industries you find promising and don't hate much. But that will be a test of your vision. Learn some history and stay updated with market news and tech advances if you choose this path.

2. Search Actively

Okay, it's time to chase our prey. Before we start, I'd like to remind you that you should still turn on new job alerts on LinkedIn or other platforms you find

handy. We definitely don't want to miss those free and "exposed" job postings.

2.1. Google and Beyond

When you're confused about something, you may either ask Google or turn to experts. We follow the same strategy here. Since you've already decided which industries you'd like to join, you may now pick one of them, open your browser, and search "promising companies in `INDUSTRY_NAME`" or similar phrases. Click into the first a few websites Google provides and you will obtain a list of companies that are worth your research.

You may also talk to your friends, professors and alumni for suggestions. Their experience can help you discover more promising companies. Don't worry much if you don't know such people (although I recommend that you should start networking right away). There is a simple and fast way, which is especially useful when you are looking for tech start-ups. We often read from the news that tech giants like Microsoft acquire or collaborate with other firms. It will be great if we can obtain a list of those firms. Big companies like Microsoft have their own venture capital departments. They usually post their portfolios online. We can simply search "`TECH_GIANT_NAME` venture capital" and see what companies they invest in. You can also try other VCs like Y Combinator. But please be reminded that not all VCs invest in the industries you're interested in.

2.2. Be Open-minded

Our searching criterion is actually not complete. It sometimes takes more than an industry name to find a company, for example, the location and the company size. Tech giants in the U.S. are always popular. Everyone knows the Magnificent 7. But they are not for everyone. If you want to quickly grow into an all-rounder and own your own product, a smaller company or even a start-up may fit you better.

You may also consider opportunities outside the U.S.. As a new/recent graduate, you are in one of few periods in your life when you are free to explore almost any part of the world. Other markets like East Asia and EMEA also generate millions of jobs. Just to be honest with you, I received interview invitations from five companies during my ten-month job hunting journey – one in the U.S., one in the U.K., one in the Netherlands, and two in China. I ended up in the Chinese branch of an American robotics start-up. Many employers are open-minded. They don't care about your citizenship if you're talented. They WILL help you get a visa if you are hired.

Job hunting can be time-consuming, especially when the market is terrible. You

need to stay calm and make efforts consistently. Don't spend a whole week doing nothing but the entire Sunday on LinkedIn. Try to spend around 1 hour on job searching everyday, and another half an hour on filling the applications. Think twice if you plan to spend more than 2 hours, as it can be really exhausting.