



PROFESSIONAL RESOURCE · CAREER STRATEGY

Strategic Job Search Planning Workbook

A structured, fill-in workbook for defining a clear target, evaluating roles objectively, researching employers, and running a disciplined weekly search.

Precious Ifediora

Reverse Recruiter & Career Strategy Consultant
preciousifediora.name.ng

Version 1.0
October 2026
PDF workbook

CONTENTS & HOW TO USE THIS WORKBOOK

What is inside

Part 1 — Career objective & target-role definition	3
Part 2 — Target-role evaluation scorecard	4
Part 3 — Employer & market research worksheets	5
Part 4 — Weekly job-search execution plan	7
Part 5 — Networking & hiring-manager outreach templates	8
Part 6 — Application & follow-up tracker	9
Part 7 — Weekly review & measurable activity targets	10
Part 8 — 30/60/90-day planning framework	11

How to use this workbook

This is a working document, not a motivational one. The value comes from completing it with specifics about *your* situation and then acting on the output each week. Two to three focused hours up front will save you weeks of scattered applications.

1. **Work top to bottom.** Each part builds on the previous one. Target roles (Part 1) feed the scorecard (Part 2), which feeds research (Part 3) and the weekly plan (Part 4).
2. **Write in real numbers and names.** "Senior operations role" is not a target; "Operations Manager, 200–500-person logistics firms, Lagos or remote" is. Vague answers produce vague searches.
3. **Keep it factual.** Use roles you can realistically be screened into now, plus one stretch level. Overreaching wastes effort; under-reaching wastes potential.
4. **Review weekly.** Use Part 7 every week without exception. Adjust the plan based on what the market is responding to, not on mood.
5. **Use the trackers.** Parts 6 and 7 turn activity into data you can learn from.

Important: This workbook is a planning tool. It cannot and does not promise employment, interviews, or any specific outcome. Hiring decisions depend on many factors outside any resource's control.

PART 1

01 Career objective & target-role definition

Define what you are aiming for before you search. A search without a target tries everything and lands nothing.

Exercise 1.1 — One-sentence career objective

Complete the statement below. Be specific about role, level, sector, and the kind of value you deliver. Aim for one clear sentence.

OBJECTIVE TEMPLATE

"I am seeking a [role title] role at [level] in [sector / industry], where I can use my strengths in [2–3 strengths] to [type of impact]."

Your turn.

Exercise 1.2 — Non-negotiables vs. flexibles

Separate what you will not compromise on from what you can trade. This prevents ruling in roles you will resent and ruling out roles that actually fit.

Non-negotiables (walk-away if missing)	Flexibles (nice to have, negotiable)

Common non-negotiables: minimum base pay, work model (remote/hybrid/on-site), location or relocation, time zone coverage, travel, notice period. Common flexibles: job title wording, team size, industry, tools used.

Exercise 1.3 — Define three target-role archetypes

Name up to three realistic role types you will pursue. Three is the practical maximum — more than that dilutes your tailoring and your keyword focus. Fill every column.

Role archetype	Level	Function	Industry / sector	Work model	Why it fits

Exercise 1.4 — Evidence check

For each archetype, list the experience, examples, or results that already qualify you. If you cannot supply evidence for an archetype, drop it or treat it as a long-term goal rather than a live target.

PART 2

02 Target-role evaluation scorecard

Score each role against the same criteria so decisions are based on evidence, not the excitement of a fresh posting.

How to score

For each role, rate every criterion from 1 (poor fit) to 5 (excellent fit), multiply by the weight, then add the weighted scores. Weightings reflect typical priorities — change them if your situation differs, but keep the same weights across all roles so comparisons are fair.

Criterion	Weight	What a 5 looks like
Skills match	20%	You already meet 80%+ of the core requirements.
Level & scope fit	15%	The level is a natural next step, not a leap.
Compensation fit	15%	The range meets your non-negotiable minimum.
Growth & learning	12%	Clear path to develop skills you care about.
Work model & location	10%	Matches your flexibility and location needs.
Company stability	10%	Credible funding, track record, or demand.
Values & culture signals	10%	Practices align with how you want to work.
Hiring likelihood	8%	Realistic warm paths or transferable profile.

Scorecard — copy for each role you evaluate

Role: _____ Company: _____	Rating (1–5)	Weighted score
Skills match		
Level & scope fit		
Compensation fit		
Growth & learning		
Work model & location		
Company stability		
Values & culture signals		
Hiring likelihood		
Total weighted score		

Reading your score. 4.0 and above: pursue actively and tailor a dedicated application. 3.0–3.9: pursue if time allows, or if a warm contact exists. Below 3.0: skip, or revisit only if your target changes. A role that scores low on *skills match* or *compensation fit* rarely becomes worthwhile later.

PART 3

03 Employer & market research worksheets

Research converts a list of job boards into a shortlist of employers worth your tailored effort

and your outreach.

Worksheet 3A — Company research (run for each priority employer)

Answer these before you apply or approach anyone. Fifteen minutes per company is enough.

1. What does the company actually sell, and to whom?
2. How is it funded and is it growing, stable, or shrinking? Any recent news?
3. Who is the likely hiring manager or team lead for this role?
4. What problem is this hire expected to solve in their first 90 days?
5. What language do they use for this kind of role (titles, tools, outcomes)?
6. Do you know anyone with a connection to the company?
7. What would make you a strong fit — and what is the biggest gap?

Worksheet 3B — Market scan

Spend one session mapping the market so your keywords and targeting are grounded in reality, not assumption.

Source (job boards, company pages, recruiters, referrals)	Roles found	Common keywords / requirements

Worksheet 3C — Target employer list

Build a working list of 15–30 employers that fit your archetypes. This becomes the backbone of your weekly outreach.

Company	Why this employer	Contact / warm path	Status

PART 4**04 Weekly job-search execution plan**

A job search is a recurring project. Give it defined blocks each week so it progresses alongside everything else in your life.

Suggested weekly cadence

Adapt the days and hours to your schedule, but keep all five activity types present every week. Consistency beats intensity.

Day	Focus	Typical activities
Monday	Plan & pipeline	Review tracker, shortlist new roles, prioritise the week's 3–5 strongest opportunities.
Tuesday	Applications	Submit tailored applications for the week's priority roles.
Wednesday	Outreach	Send networking and hiring-manager messages; follow up on earlier threads.
Thursday	Applications & tailoring	Second application block; tailor resumes to specific job descriptions.
Friday	Review & prep	Weekly review (Part 7), interview prep, tidy the tracker, plan next week.

Activity quotas — set a target then record actuals

Quotas keep effort balanced across applications, outreach, and follow-up. Adjust the targets to your market and capacity after the first two weeks.

Activity	Weekly target	Actual	Notes
Tailored applications submitted			
New networking / outreach messages			
Follow-ups sent			
Informational or referral conversations			
Target employers researched			
Interview preparation sessions			

Quality over volume. Three well-tailored applications and five genuine outreach messages typically outperform thirty generic submissions. Track responses, not just sends.

PART 5

05 Networking & hiring-manager outreach templates

Short, specific, and easy to reply to. Replace everything in [brackets] with real details before sending. Never send a template unedited.

TEMPLATE A · CONNECTION REQUEST (KEEP UNDER ~300 CHARACTERS)

Hi [Name], I'm exploring [role type] roles and your experience at [Company] stood out. I'd value staying connected and learning from your path in [field]. Thanks — [Your name].

TEMPLATE B · WARM REFERRAL REQUEST (ONLY TO GENUINE CONTACTS)

Hi [Name], I hope you're well. I'm applying for the [role] at [Company] and noticed you're connected there. If you're comfortable, I'd be grateful for a quick point in the right direction — happy to send a one-line summary and my CV. No pressure at all. Thanks, [Your name].

TEMPLATE C · DIRECT HIRING-MANAGER OUTREACH

Subject: [Role] — quick question about the team's priorities

Hi [Name], I saw the [role] opening at [Company] and wanted to reach out directly. I've spent [X years] doing [relevant work], most recently [one concrete example relevant to their need]. Before I apply, I'd value knowing what the team most needs solved in the first 90 days. Would you be open to a short conversation? Either way, thank you for your time. — [Your name], [link]

TEMPLATE D · FOLLOW-UP WHEN THERE IS NO REPLY (SEND ONCE, ~5-7 DAYS LATER)

Hi [Name], just following up on my note about the [role] at [Company]. I understand you're busy. If it helps, I've attached a one-page summary of how my [relevant experience] maps to the role. If the timing isn't right, no problem at all. Thanks, [Your name].

TEMPLATE E · THANK-YOU AFTER A CONVERSATION OR INTERVIEW

Hi [Name], thank you for the conversation today. I enjoyed discussing [specific topic] and am more confident the [role] is a strong mutual fit because of [one concrete point]. I've since thought about [their question or challenge] — my approach would be [brief idea]. Happy to provide anything else useful. — [Your name]

Rules that make templates work. Personalise the first line with something specific. One clear ask per message. Keep it under ~120 words where possible. Follow up once; repeated chasing damages the relationship more than a missed opportunity.

PART 6**06 Application & follow-up tracker**

One table for everything you send. It stops applications falling through the cracks and shows you where the market is responding.

Date applied	Company	Role	Source	Contact	Resume version	Status	Next action	Follow-up date

Suggested status values: Applied · Screening · Interview scheduled · Interviewed · Assessment · Offer · Rejected · On hold · Archived.

Resume version log

Keep a simple record of the versions you send so you always know which one a given employer received.

Version	Target role type	Key changes	Created

PART 7

07 Weekly review & measurable activity targets

Fifteen minutes every week. This is where a search either compounds or drifts.

Weekly review questions

- ☐ How many tailored applications did I submit, and how many were genuinely tailored?
- ☐ How many new outreach messages did I send, and to whom?
- ☐ Which follow-ups were due, and did I send them?
- ☐ What response rate am I seeing per activity — ignoring silence is a mistake.
- ☐ Which roles or companies produced the most interest, and why?
- ☐ Is my keyword focus still aligned with the roles I am targeting?
- ☐ What did I learn from any interview, screening, or rejection this week?
- ☐ What is the single highest-value action I have been avoiding?
- ☐ What will I do differently next week?
- ☐ Is my pipeline balanced, or am I over-reliant on one channel?

Activity targets and actuals

Metric	Target	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4
Tailored applications					
Outreach messages					
Follow-ups sent					
Conversations held					
Interviews / screens					
Employers researched					

Look for patterns, not verdicts. Low response to applications but strong response to outreach means shift effort toward relationships. Silence everywhere usually means the target, the resume tailoring, or the keyword focus needs review — not more volume of the same.

PART 8

08 30/60/90-day planning framework

Set goals for three horizons so early weeks build momentum and later weeks convert it.

Days 1–30 • Foundation

Focus: build the machinery — a clear target, a baseline resume, and a live pipeline.

- ☐ Complete Parts 1–3 of this workbook.
- ☐ Produce one strong master resume and one tailored version.
- ☐ Build a target employer list of at least 15 companies.
- ☐ Set your weekly quotas and begin the plan in Part 4.
- ☐ Send your first batch of outreach messages.

Checkpoint metric: ___ applications sent · ___ outreach messages · ___ employer list entries.

Days 31–60 • Traction

Focus: increase tailored effort, gather response data, and refine targeting.

- ☐ Review which applications and messages are getting responses.
- ☐ Refine keywords based on real job descriptions.

- ☐ Secure and hold informational or screening conversations.
- ☐ Prepare interview stories and practice them aloud.
- ☐ Drop or adjust archetypes that are producing no traction.

Checkpoint metric: ____ conversations · ____ screens/interviews · response rate ____%.

Days 61–90 • Convert

Focus: turn conversations into interviews, and interviews into offers, while keeping the pipeline full.

- ☐ Maintain application and outreach quotas — do not stop to wait.
- ☐ Run structured interview preparation for every live process.
- ☐ Practise negotiation and prepare your questions for employers.
- ☐ Keep expanding the employer list as roles open and close.
- ☐ Review the whole plan and decide what the next 90 days should target.

Checkpoint metric: ____ interviews · ____ final-stage processes · offers ____.

Reminder: These are activity goals within your control, not outcome guarantees. Interview and offer outcomes depend on the employer, the market, and many factors beyond any plan.