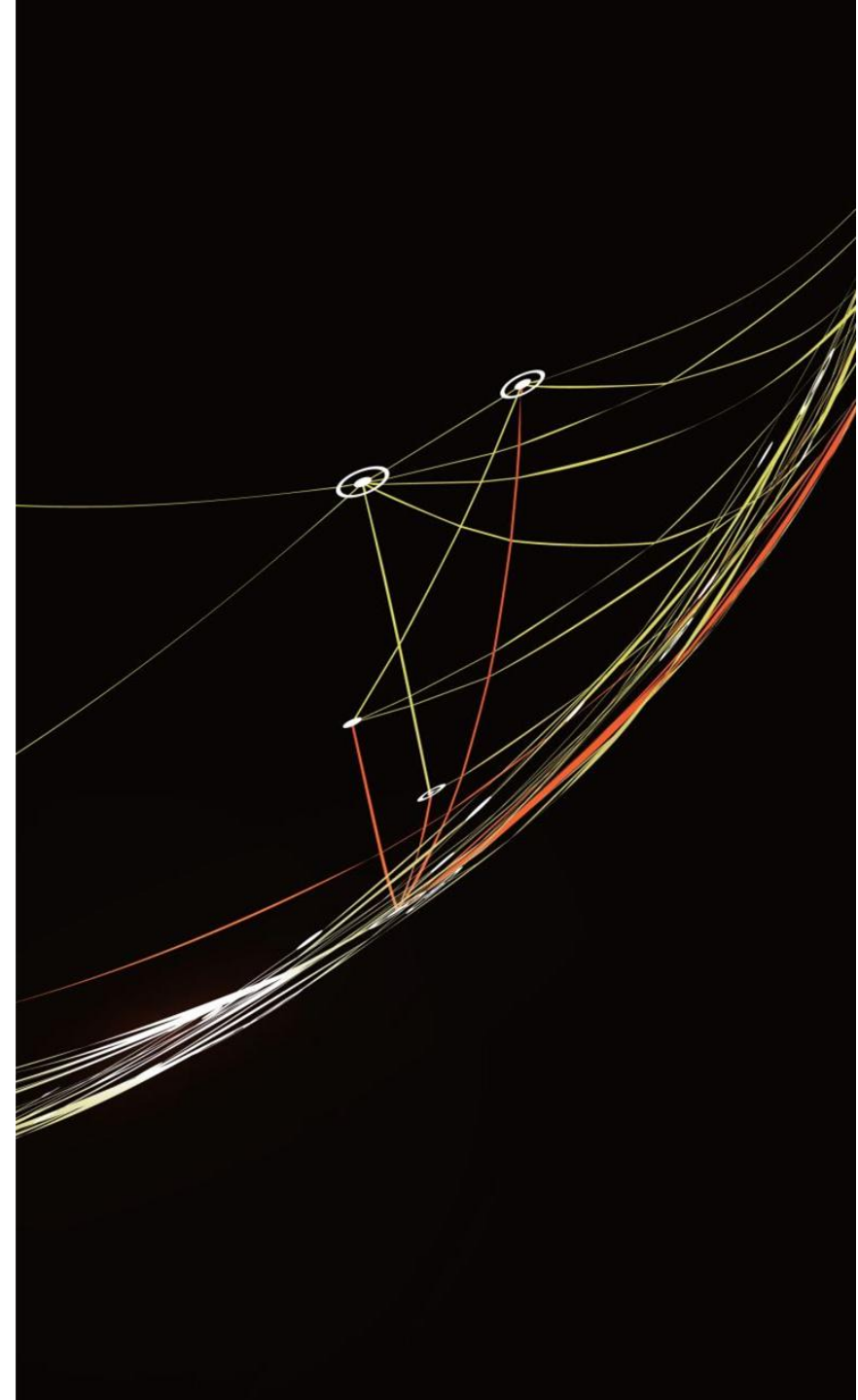# Job Searching for Older Workers

September 10, 2025

Arlington Heights Senior Center

Lynnanne Pearson, Jobs & Career Librarian

Today's Agenda

aka job search strategies

- Determining what you want
- Conduct a skills analysis
- Identify your soft, hard and transferable skills
- Address any skills or knowledge gaps you have
- Craft an elevator pitch
- Resume and cover letter updates
- Navigate Job search sites like a pro
- Network
- Research companies
- Stay motivated
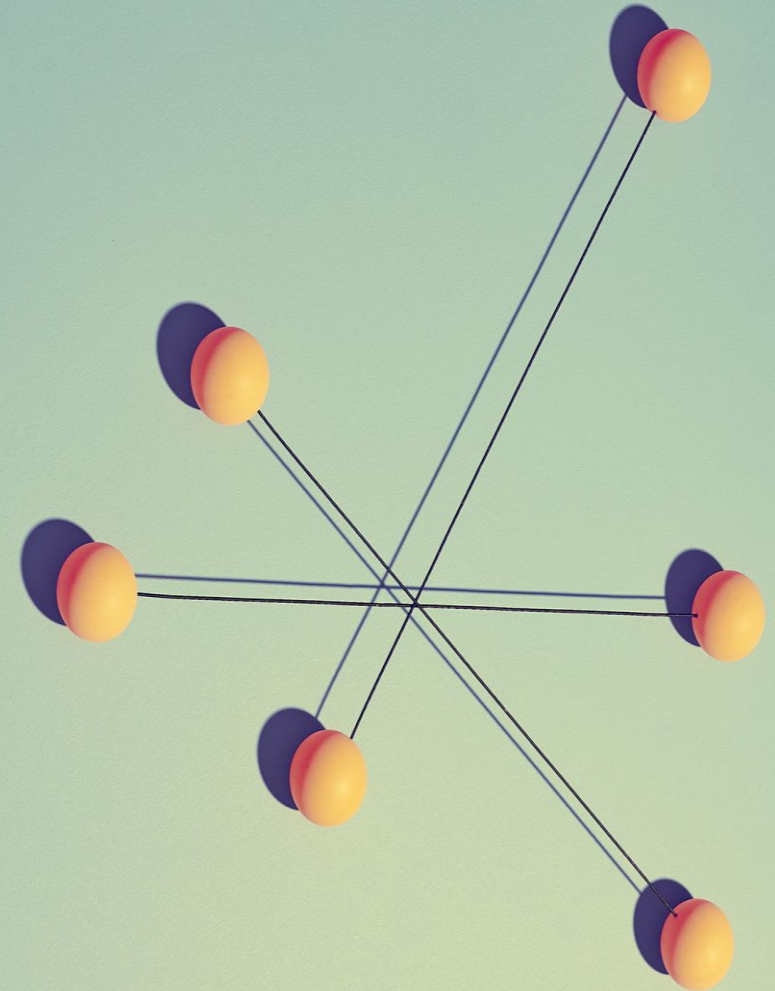
Determining what you want

Poll

1. Retired and wanting to re-enter the workforce

2. Unemployed and struggling to find employment

3. Thinking about starting a new career

4. Job hunting after being at one company for a long time

Benefits of returning to work

$ Money!

Socialization

Renewed sense of purpose

Improved brain health

Defeat boredom

Try something new

Challenges of returning to work

Physical requirements of the job

Potential effects on benefits, pension & healthcare
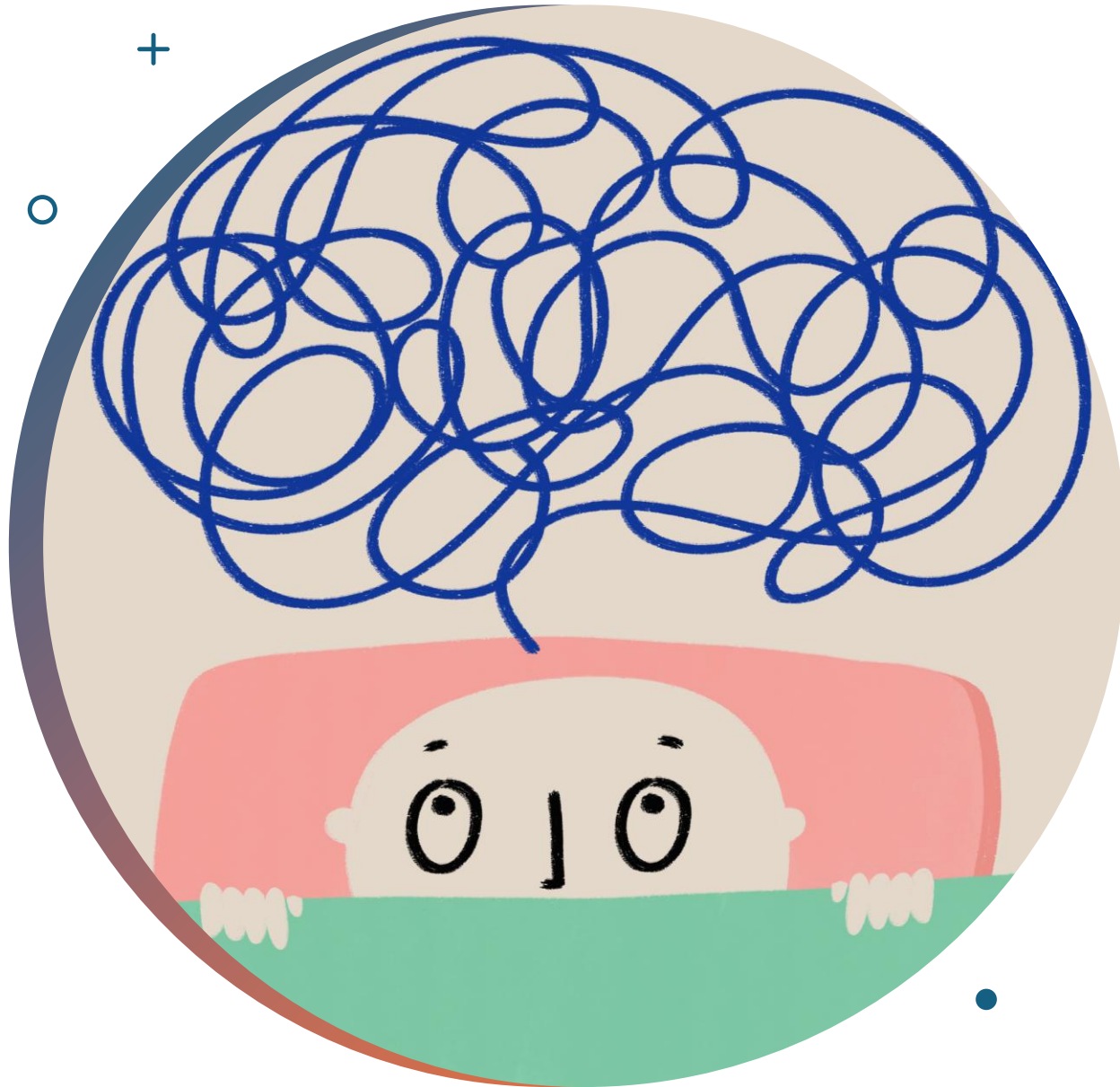
Hidden expenses

Loss of free time

Details to consider

- Money!
- Schedule
- Location of work
- Benefits
- Trainings

Skills!

Skill inventory

- fall into different categories
- can be hard or soft
- are transferrable
- Pull your skills from:
  - past accomplishments and experiences
  - volunteer work
  - hobbies
  - specialized education
  - any certifications

Hard Skills

- Fact based
- Measurable
- Relate to specific knowledge or training
- Examples:
  - Know another language
  - UX design
  - Copyediting
  - JavaScript, SQL, etc.
  - Forklift operator certified

Soft Skills

- Relational, personal or behavioral skills
- Subjective
- Situational
- Examples include:
    - Workplace basics
    - Attitude and Adaptability
    - Communication
    - Teamwork
    - Problem solving
    - Emotional Intelligence
    - Creativity

Transferable skills

- Transferable skills are, like the name implies, skills that you have built up in your life and career that can be transferred over to a new job or career.

- Knowing Microsoft Excel is a hard skill but the transferable skills are the ability to learn quickly, detailed oriented and master technology.

- Other Examples include:
  - Problem solving
  - Critical thinking
  - Attention to detail

Technology skills

- One of the fears employers sometimes have about older workers is that they have low technology skills

- Assessing and updating your current tech skills is critical to remaining competitive in the workforce.

- Assess your current technology skills by taking an [online assessment](#).

- Use Library resources to increase your technology skills

Library resources to upskill your technology

- DigitalLearn.org
  - Free online tech training on topics like basic PC/Mac skills, Word, Excel, using the web, job searching, etc.
- Gale Courses
  - In-depth, instructor-led, 6-week classes on Adobe, Google, Microsoft, cybersecurity and more.
- Learning Express Library
  - Computer & internet basic courses as well as AWS training center
- Peterson's Test Prep
  - Computer basic courses on Microsoft Office and Window 11.
- Treehouse
  - Web design, coding, mobile app development and more. Earn points/badges to track your progress and create a showcase for potential employers.
- Udemy
  - Offers over 3500 on-demand video tutorials covering cloud computing, IT Operations, Generative AI & many other technology topics.
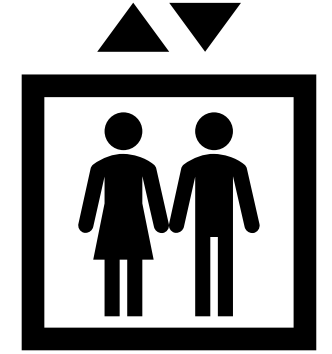
Brainstorm Your Personal Skills

Elevator Speech

Elevator speech

- a short (30 seconds max) speech
- conveys your unique selling points
- Specific and authentic to who you are
- Conversational in tone and not a sales pitch.
- Useful in networking and interviewing (the dreaded "tell me about yourself" question)

Sample Elevator pitch

"Hi___, my name is___. I am (summary of what you do). I am looking to/I am interested in___. I recently worked on a project that___. I am interested (what your want your job/career to be) because of (special skill/talent you have)."

I'm currently a tutor, and my favorite part of my day is working with young children and seeing their delight when they grasp a concept. I'm looking to become a teachers aid so that I can use my tutoring knowledge and expertise in a classroom setting.
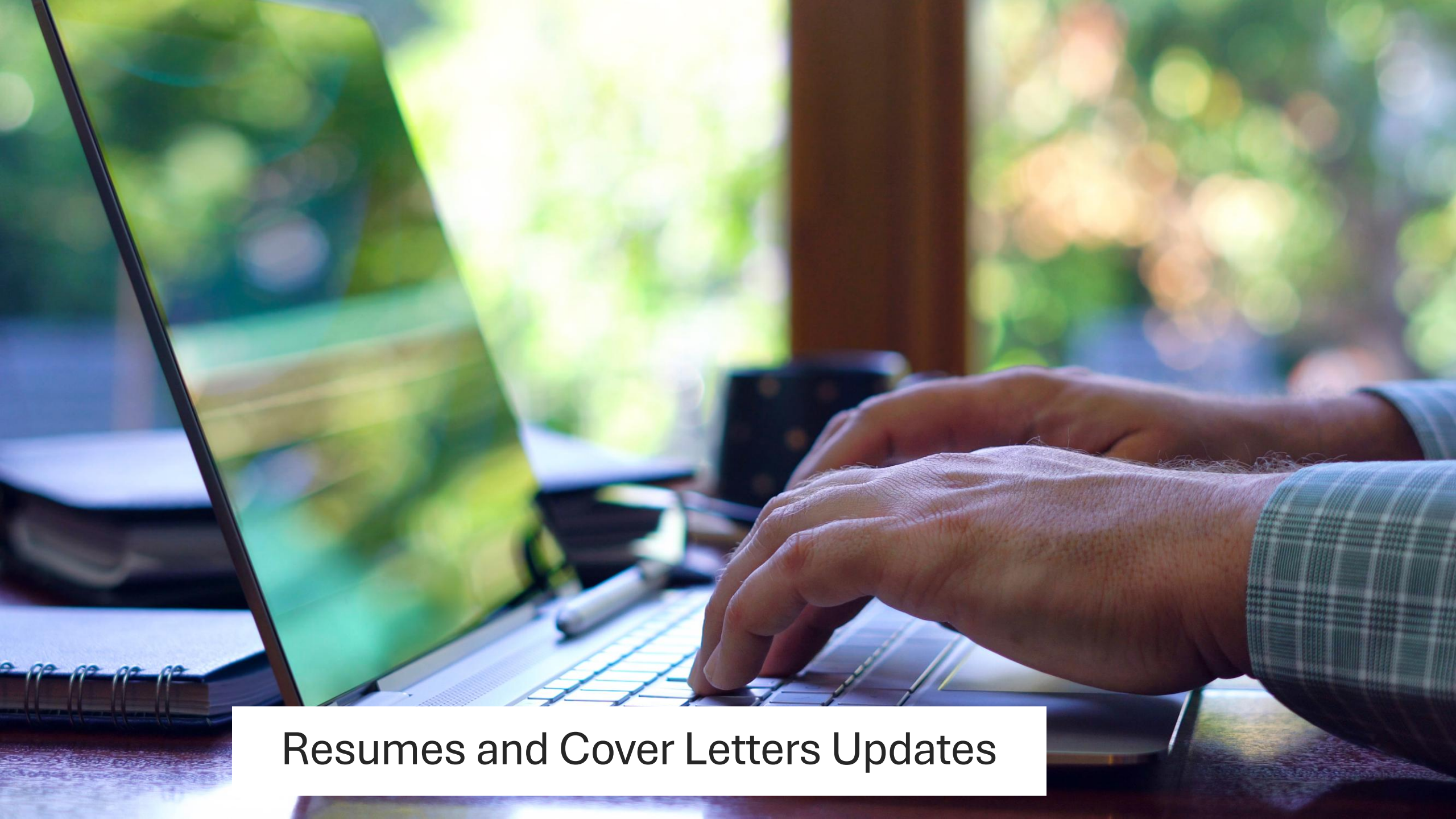
Resumes and Cover Letters Updates

Modern resumes should NOT include:

- fancy paper
- photos
- fancy fonts
- overly complicated formatting
- your street address in the contact section
- An AOL, Hotmail or yahoo email.
- your landline number
- 2 spaces after your sentences.
- "reference available upon request."
- "dear Sirs/ dear Sir or Madam"
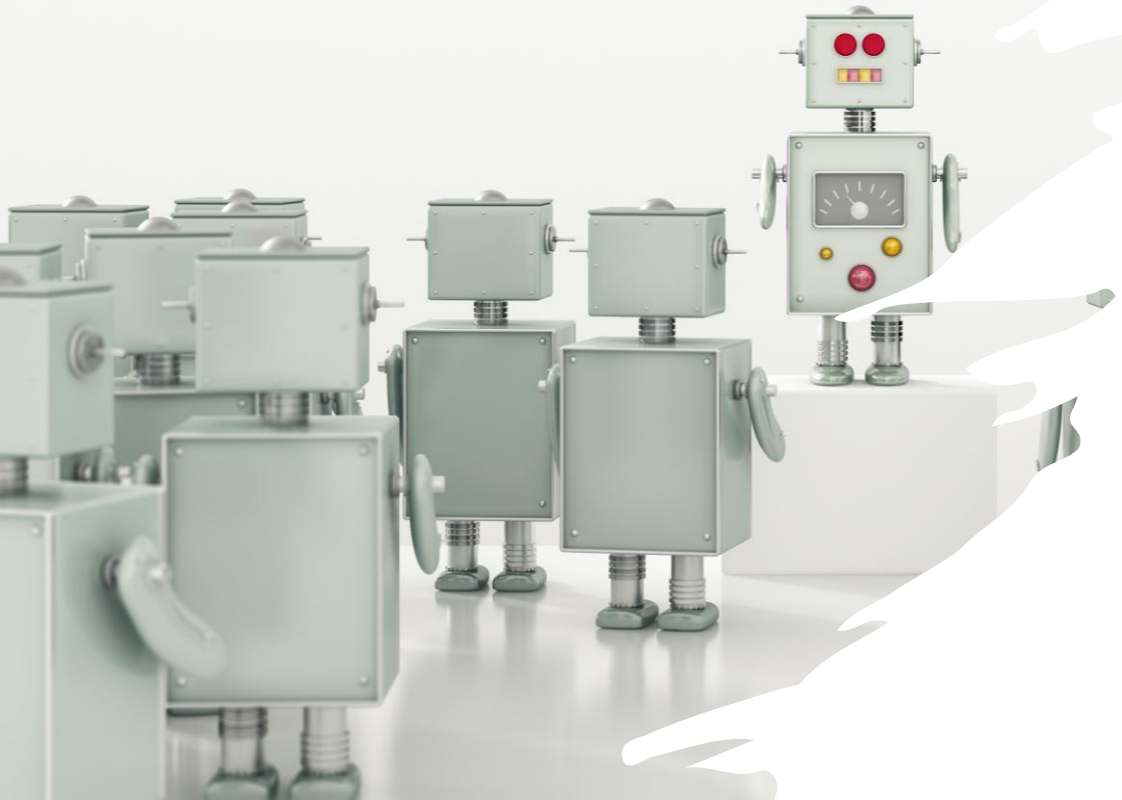- outdated skills
- jobs older than 15 years

- A resume is your chance to be the best you!
- Be honest about your past experiences and play up your strengths.
- Brag about the great work you did but never lie.
- Create a base resume that you can then tailor to specific jobs.
- Make sure it is ATS complaint.

What is ATS?

- ATS stands for Applicant Tracking System

- ATS is a resume scanning software that employers use to collect, sort, scan, and rank the job applications they receive for their open positions.

- It allows the companies to narrow down the candidates to only the ones that meet the position posted requirements and qualifications.

- ATS systems match keywords from the job description to your resume.

Beating the Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS)

- Describe your skills, experiences, certifications and education to match the keywords the job descriptions have.

- You might need to expand upon your previous job titles and roles.

- Use standard headings for each section: Contact Information, Summary, Work History, Education and Skills.

- Write out any abbreviations or acronyms fully.

- Try a free resume scanner to help your resume get past: **HTTPS://WWW.JOBSCAN.CO/**

Simple ways to improve your resume

- Tailor content to the positions you seek

- Convey your impact but don't exaggerate your accomplishments.

- Focus on results and not tasks

- Write the resume for people who will scan it quickly

- Use active voice & verbs and be concise.

- Volunteer experience should be included- especially if it is relative and fills in resume gaps.

Formatting tips

- Your email should be generic and professional sounding. Replace goCubsgo16@yahoo.com with firstname.lastname@gmail.com

- Place your LinkedIn URL with your contact information

- Use a standard font, be consistent in format and content.

- Make it easy to read and follow with white space.

- List headings in order of importance

- Within headings, list information in reverse chronological order.

- Remove jobs older than 15 years- unless it is relevant to the position you are applying for.

Cover Letter

- Let your authentic voice come through.
- Convey why you're interested or excited about the role in your cover letter.
- Should be customized for that company and job.
- Gives you a chance to explain why you are making a career pivot or transition or returning to the workforce.
- Highlights your soft and transferable skills.

Navigating Job Seach Sites

Using filters

- Filters are tools we can use to narrow down our searches. These filters can be location of the job, pay, and type of jobs.

- We can also use some keywords to narrow down our searches.

- Sites allow us to search by the type of job or by the job title. (administrative secretary as job title vs office as a keyword).

- The search results list also includes featured jobs, that you didn't search for. Employers can pay to have their jobs show up in search results, so it's important to look closely at your results.

Avoiding Scams

- The website you are applying at should start with "https" (a lock icon).

- Ads and sponsored posts can masquerade as a legitimate job listing. Be careful to not click on the advertisements.

- Some sites will try to "spoof" or pretend they are the official corporate website. You will need to examine the website address to make sure you are on the official corporate site.

- Beware of ad or job listings that seem too good to be true. They might offer a lot of money or incentives for that role that far beyond what other listings offer.

- Never send sensitive information during the application process.

Ghost Jobs

- a job listing a company has no intention of filling.
- Why do ghost jobs exist?

Spotting a Ghost job

- Listing was posted several months ago
- Listing does not have a timestamp at all
- Listing is not on the company's website
- Job description is vague and generic. It lacks concrete details about job responsibilities and salary.
- Glassdoor and LinkedIn don't have any people current or formerly in this position.
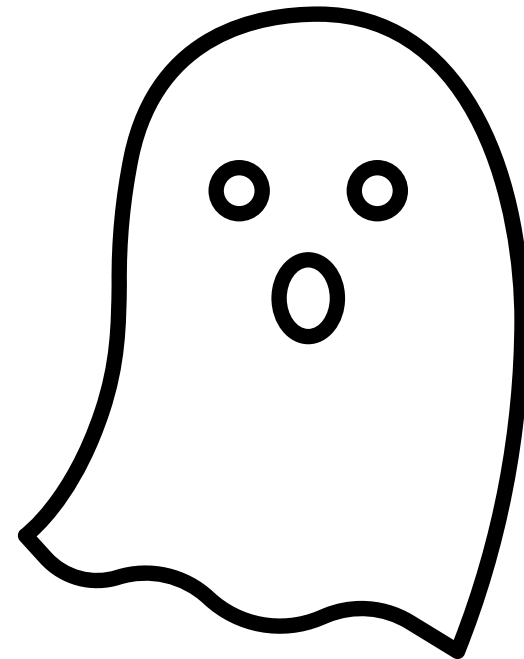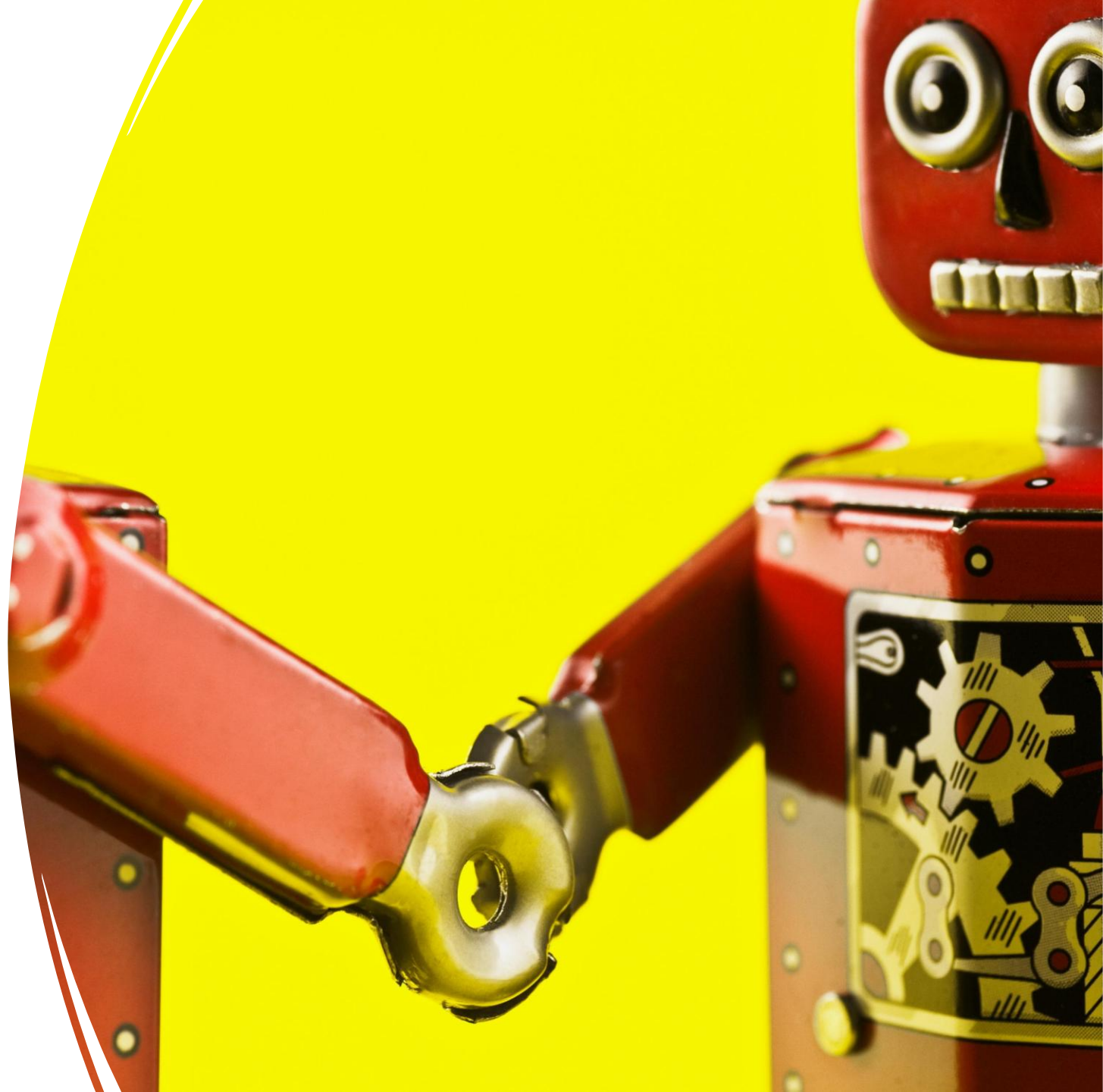
Networking

What is Networking?

- Networking is about building relationships.

- Networking can occur in big events, 1:1 conversations and virtually.

- Networking is transformational and not transactional.

The importance of Networking

- Gives you a chance to build your confidence and practice your elevator speech.

- Helps you gain connections and expand your circles.

- Leads you to job opportunities that might be on "the hidden job market"

- Can help you get a foot in the door when you apply

Building a Network

- If re-entering your field, reach out to former colleagues to reconnect.

- Look at people in jobs you would like to have and offer to take them out for coffee (or connect with a phone call) to learn about their experiences.

- Attend industry conferences and workshops or join professional organizations. Use these events as opportunities to both learn and to network.

- Attend Job Fairs

Building a Network via LinkedIn

- Use the people you may know suggestions to connect with people with similar professional experience.

- Send a note with why you want to connect ("I see we both went to U of I. Did you have Professor Smith?" "I see you work with teapots. What do you think of the new teapot design?")

- Be active on LinkedIn groups. Find groups according to your interests and engage with their members.

- Explore LinkedIn events.

- Post Open for Work on LinkedIn

Researching Companies

Search employee reviews of companies

- Glassdoor
- The Muse
- Fairygodboss
- Career Bliss

*For most of these websites, you need to make an account with the sites first

How do I find these resources?

Visit the Library's website at www.ahml.info

- Select **Research**
  - Go to **All Databases**
   - Select **Business & Nonprofits** on the left-hand filter

Use library resources to research companies.

- Business Source Complete: Includes articles, market research, industry reports and company profiles on businesses.

- Company Dossier (from Nexis Uni): Millions of public and private companies, with contact information, analysis and news/industry links.

- Gale Business Insights : This is a one-stop source for company profiles and analysis. It includes SWOT analyses, investment reports, industry overviews, market information, case studies, in-depth news & articles, and Plunkett Research Reports.

- Reference Solutions : This is a business directory that includes residential listings, demographics, and health care listings. You can download records for mailing/contact lists.

Other places to research

- Look at their social media

- The company's website

- Company mission statements

- Read their budget and shareholder reports.

- Read articles from business journals/newspapers

- Search social media for current news about the company.

- Find in-depth business reports using library resources.
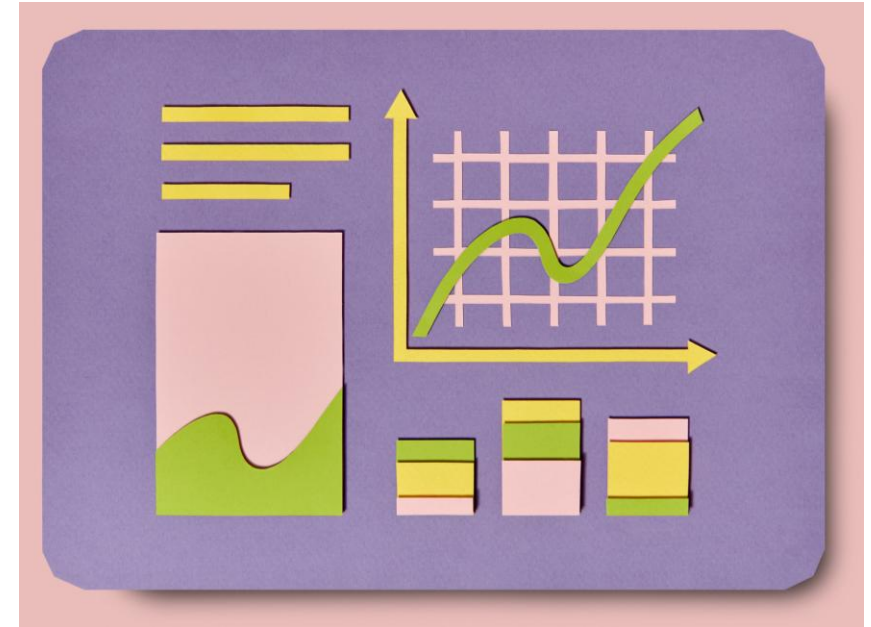
Staying Motivated

Staying motivated

- Schedule a time each week to job search or work on career goals.
- Set small goals for yourself each week.
- Track the companies you've applied for with a simple chart.
- Reconnect with your network.
- Take a class or attend a seminar on something related to your career goals   (include this one)
- Rely on your own support systems (friends, family, hobbies) to de-stress.

Take advantage of Library Resources

Library Resources for Job Seekers

- Make an appointment with our LinkedIn consultant to strengthen your LinkedIn Profile *

- Make an appointment with our resume consultants to strengthen your resume. *

- Make an appointment with me for personalized Job Search Strategy tips! *

- Use a library database to research a company, learn a new skill or get interviewing tips.

- Check out a laptop for a virtual interview

- Book a conference room for a virtual interview.

*AHML cardholders only

Questions?

Thanks for attending!

Stop by the Information Desk for any additional questions

You can also reach me at my email and phone extension.

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