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# **Knock DEAD**

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**How to Take Control Of  
Your Job Search, Career, and Life!**

The Latest From *New York Times* Bestseller

Martin Yate, CPC



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*Savannah, GA*

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## THIS IS YOUR LIFE

Let me tell you a little bit about yourself.

You didn't come to this book for a good time; you came because you need to make changes. You need to get back to work, out of a dead-end job, or perhaps you simply think there must be a better way to make a success of your professional life. *You came to this book today because you decided to change your life for the better.*

Let me tell you something else I know:

- You are somewhere along the path of what will likely be a fifty-year work life.
- During this time you can expect economic recessions to swing by every 7–10 years.
- You will change jobs (not always by choice) about every four years.
- You will probably have three or more distinct careers over the span of your professional life.

These job changes, coming round approximately every four years, add up to twelve or more job changes over fifty years, with three of them involving the much greater challenges and financial dislocation associated with changing, not just your job, but your entire career.

*You know it is time for a radical shift in your career management strategy* because you realize that the advice you've been given—choose one thing you like and stick to it for the next fifty years; get an education, choose a career, settle down to it, and do a good job; patience and loyalty will be rewarded with job security and life success—doesn't make sense in today's uncertain and rapidly changing world. We live in a world where greed has turned your life into a disposable commodity that will be used and discarded, unless you *take control and change the trajectory of your life*. And if you hope to achieve consistent professional success and financial stability in this world, you *must* take control.

The first step is to face the facts of professional life in the twenty-first century:

*Change is constant; it is a given in your professional world.* A successful career is no longer a given; it doesn't come as a gift with the purchase of your college diploma. It's a critical aspect of your life and it needs management. You must adapt to the realities of a professional world where there is no certainty, but perhaps more opportunity. With continual rapid change becoming a constant in our lives, those who learn to live with uncertainty and who can adapt to the needs of an ever-changing professional landscape are perfectly positioned to seize the abundant opportunities that always accompany a changing of the eras. Recognize that change is constant; grasp the fact that, by taking responsibility for your destiny and continuing to adapt and evolve, you can change your situation today, and your tomorrows forever.

*Job search and career management skills are the most important skills you can ever develop.* Companies today have no sense of loyalty to their employees; they have loyalty to the shareholders, and the shareholders are only concerned with profit *now*, this quarter. You are a cog in the moneymaking machine, and if an employer can find a way to make money, or save money by automating or exporting your job, then your head will be on the chopping block. That's the way things are, so cast off any mistaken notions of thick-and-thin fidelity to your employer and focus your attention with laser-like precision on you: What's best for *your* career and for *your* life?

**Consider yourself your own corporation**, make it a mantra. It's easier to evaluate your strengths, to see where weaknesses need fixing, to set plans for where the corporation (you) is going.

Marjean Bean, CPC. President, Medit Staff. Information technology.  
30+ years' experience.

## Enlightened Self-Interest

When a company dispenses with your services, it's nothing personal: The company is doing what it must do to survive and satisfy the shareholders. You need to do the same thing: Take control of your life, your economic survival, and your success by acting with the same forethought, objectivity, and self-interest as a corporation.

Let's take that a step further: Start thinking of yourself as a company—as MeInc, a financial entity that must survive and prosper over the long haul. *You are MeInc*, a brand new start-up with a successful future to be won.

As MeInc, you have products and services to sell: the skills and experience you've accumulated over the course of your working life. *These product and services have to fulfill the needs of your customers, or the sale will go to a competitor.*

This means that MeInc needs to organize and structure its activities. You will need:

- *Research and Development*: to identify and develop products with the maximum marketplace appeal. In other words, you have to monitor market demands and develop the skills employers need, not just now but continually.
- *Marketing and Public Relations*: to establish credibility for the professional services you deliver, and to ensure that this credibility becomes visible to an ever-widening circle, starting with your current department and expanding outwards through the company, your local professional community, and beyond, as your strategic career plans dictate.

- *Sales*: to constantly develop new strategies to sell your products and services, including resume, job search, interviewing, negotiation, and other career management tools.
- *Strategic Planning*: to plan strategies for growth within the company, time strategic career moves that take you to new employers, monitor the health of your profession, and make plans for career change; and all *on your timetable*. Working with R & D and Marketing, Strategic Planning will also constantly monitor opportunities and strategies for the pursuit of completely new revenue streams—alternate entrepreneurial endeavors that minimize disruption of MeInc’s cash flow and maximize the odds of success for these endeavors.
- *Finance*: to ensure you invest wisely in initiatives that will deliver a Return On Investment. You must invest in your future, in your success, rather than fritter away your income on the instant gratification drummed into your head by 24/7 media. This is important: You have been raised to be a good consumer and to live in debt. You probably spend eight hours a day in front of a screen and absorb around 3,000 advertising messages a day. To make your dreams come true, you have to break free of this indoctrination and invest yourself, your time, and your income in the activities that will make MeInc successful and give you the opportunity for a fulfilling life.

**How should I manage my life/my career differently?** Manage your life as if you are your own boss and agent.

Mike Squires, Senior Technical Recruiter, PayPal, an eBay Company.  
15 years’ experience.

If the idea of taking a more businesslike approach to your career makes sense, *Knock 'em Dead: Secrets & Strategies* will give you the tools to make it happen. I’ve been at this for more than thirty years; it’s what I think about every day. Over this time, in fourteen books, countless articles, blogs, presentations, workshops, and webinars I have developed a practical, commonsense approach to achieving suc-

cess in your professional life. It's an approach that weaves resume, job search, interview, career choice, career change, entrepreneurial endeavor, and the many other issues that affect lifetime career management into a single cohesive approach to survival and success; and I include "survival" mindfully, because when you think in terms of a half-century work life—it ain't no sprint, babycakes.

**View career management as a life-long process** and job loss will become much less frequent and much less traumatic when it does occur.

Faith Sheaffer-Polen, Senior Career Coach, CareerCurve. Organizational psychology. 15 years' experience.

The problem is that to absorb all this knowledge, up until now you would have had to read my fourteen books, as well as all my articles and blogs, and attended many of those workshops and webinars, because this approach has evolved over the many years I have spent thinking, writing, and talking about these issues.

*Knock 'em Dead: Secrets & Strategies* brings all these diverse threads together in a single narrative, giving you the *must-have* knowledge and tools to get your career and your life back on the right track and keep them there.

I didn't set out in life to become a career management expert; just as your ultimate career path may not be the one you initially chose, neither was mine. My career and expertise evolved as a result of other jobs giving me an unusually comprehensive understanding of the world of work, and these professional experiences combined with an ability to communicate, an inquiring mind, and a passion for helping others. The result is that almost thirty-five years later I have thought through these job search, career management, and success issues very carefully. It isn't ivory tower theory either: I've been in the trenches as an international technology headhunter, a Director of HR for a publicly traded technology company, and a Director of Training and Development for a division of a *Fortune* 500 company. In these capacities I have been at the table for countless hires, promotions, and terminations.

*Knock 'em Dead: Secrets & Strategies* is going to be a conversation in which I talk to you about the issues that are crucial to getting out of this tough spot in your life and into a better place for the future, so that you understand how integrated job search and career management work and how to play the game to win.

**Bosses are less and less able** to make promises to their workers about tenure of employment, even if they want to.

Dr. Jim Bright, Partner, Bright & Associates, Australia. Author, *Chaos Theory of Careers*. 22 years' experience.

Along the path of my career, I've met thousands of professionals in fields related to employment, and I've chosen a select group of forty-two resume writers, headhunters, corporate recruiters, HR professionals, and career management experts to join us; and as you have already begun to see, they will be adding another dimension to our dialogue.

What you hold in your hands are the essentials for building a successful professional life, and you'll see my esteemed professional colleagues adding to the conversation in very perceptive ways. If you hope to achieve consistent professional success and the financial stability that accompanies it, I have a plan and we're here to help.

—*Martin Yate, CPC*

## THE PANEL OF EXPERTS

I'd like to introduce you to my panel of experts: forty-two extremely savvy career management professionals. They bring expertise in a wide range of professional disciplines and hail from all over the United States and from as far away as the United Kingdom and Australia. I've known a few of them for thirty years or more, and we've worked, played, and argued together about the issues in this book for years. There are only three things they hold in common: They know what they're talking about, they don't pussyfoot around, and they each genuinely care. Meet the gang:

**Wendy Adams**, Founder, The Career Coach. Transitions. 20 years' experience.

**Nancy C. Anton**, CPC. Talent Consultant, CIGNA. 20 years' experience.

**Marjean Bean**, CPC. President, Medit Staff. Information technology. 30+ years' experience.

**Alesia Benedict**, CPRW, JCTC. CEO, GetInterviews.com. Resumes, social media. 20+ years' experience.

**Jay Block**, President, The Jay Block Companies. Employment and workplace strategist. Author, *The Proteus Solution*. 20+ years' experience.

**Dr. Jim Bright**, Partner, Bright & Associates, Australia. Author, *Chaos Theory of Careers*. 22 years' experience.

**Glenna Cose Brin**, CPC. President, AllianceStaff. High-end administration. 30+ years' experience.

**Joe Camarada**, President, CAM Search and Consulting. HR and Finance search. 25 years' experience.

**Paul Cameron**, President, DriveStaff Inc. Technology recruitment. 14 years' experience.

**Maynard G. Charron**, President, Paper Industry Recruitment. 30+ years' experience.

**Lisa Chenofsky Singer**, Chenofsky Singer and Associates. Communications and Human Resources Consulting. 20+ years' experience.

**Allison Farber Cheston**, Career Advisor, Allison Cheston & Associates. Author, *In the Driver's Seat: Work-Life Skills for Young Adults*. 28 years' experience.

**Marsha Connolly**, Managing Partner, The New River Group. Certified Executive Coach. 30 years' experience.

**Grant Cooper**, President, Careerpro of New Orleans. Strategic Resumes. 17 years' experience.

**Al Daum**, CPC. Alan N. Daum & Associates. Process automation engineering. 36 years' experience.

**Rich Gold**, CPC. Senior Recruiter, Smith Arnold Partners. Finance recruiter. 20 years' experience.

**Meg Guiseppi**, C-level Executive Job Search Coach, Executive Career Brand. 20+ years' experience.

**Michelle Hagans**, Recruiter, Anu Resources Unlimited. IT and medical. 20+ years' experience.

**Rick Kean**, Consultant Emeritus, A. M. Hamilton, Inc. Staffing and training. 30+ years' experience.

**Sean Koppelman**, President, The Talent Magnet. Advertising, beauty, and entertainment. 16 years' experience.

**Eric Kramer**, Chief Innovation Officer, Innovative Career Services. Psychologist, career and interview coaching. 10 years' experience.

**Janice Litvin**, Executive Search Consultant, Micro Search. High-tech, marketing. 20 years' experience.

**Rob Lockard**, SPHR. HR Manager, The Centech Group. 9 years' experience.

**Valentino Martinez**, President, Martinez Group. Recruitment and University Relations. 38 years' experience.

**Karen McGrath**, PHR. Talent Acquisition Manager, Enterprise Rent-A-Car. 22 years' experience.

**Jackie Mills**, Office Angels, Birmingham, United Kingdom. Administration recruitment. 14 years' experience.

**John Mooney**, J. Mooney dba Consultive Source. 20+ years' experience.

**Bob Morris**, Owner, Storage Placements. Data storage sales/marketing. 44 years' experience.

**Joe Murawski**, CPC. Executive Search Consultant, Focused Hire. Aerospace, defense, and high-tech electronics. 15 years' experience.

**Perry Newman**, CPC/CSMS. Executive Resume Writer/Career Coach. 25 years' experience.

**Olga Ocon**, Executive Recruiter, Busch International. VP and CEO-level searches in high-tech. 15 years' experience.

**George Olmstead**, Managing Partner, Olmstead Lynch & Kreutz. Senior management recruitment. 30 years' experience.

**Don Orlando**, MBA, CPRW, JCTC. Owner, The McLean Group. Coaching senior executives. 17 years' experience.

**Faith Sheaffer-Polen**, Senior Career Coach, CareerCurve. Organizational psychology. 15 years' experience.

**Jim Rohan**, Senior Partner, J P Canon Associates. Supply chain management. 25 years' experience.

**Nancy Schuman**, CSP. Corporate VP Marketing, Lloyd Staffing. 30 years' experience.

**Mike Squires**, Senior Technical Recruiter, PayPal, an eBay Company. 15 years' experience.

**Dean Swett**, President, Paramour Group. Gaming and 3D graphics. 26 years' experience.

**Bob Waldo**, Principal Consultant, Best Hire Consulting Services. 20 years' experience.

**Ron Weisinger**, Principal Development, LINKS Consulting. Human Resources. 20 years' experience.

**Bill Wilhelm**, CPC. Executive Recruiter, Wilhelm and Associates, Inc. Industrial Sales and Manufacturing Management. 38 years' experience.

**Denise Wilkerson**, RN, CPC. Executive Search Director, Global Edge Recruiting. Medical devices, biotech, pharma, sales/marketing management. 14+ years' experience.

**Christine Wunderlin**, Christine Wunderlin Consulting. Career development. 14+ years' experience.

## CHAPTER 1

# WAKE UP, STAND UP, LIVELY UP YOUR LIFE

You may have come to these pages fully employed and ready for that next step, or you may have been laid off. If the latter, your overwhelming emotion right now is probably panic. Your brain whispers, “Maybe this is it; maybe I’ll never find another job; maybe my career is in ruins.”

Some of this is a natural reaction to losing a job—grieving mixed with anger manifests itself as an anxiety crisis. It’s understandable because today’s world is completely different from five or ten years ago, and the pace of change is accelerating. Your panic also reflects the fact that, like most people, you probably hadn’t planned for this: You had your sweet blond curls stuck in the sand.

If you are going to survive and prosper over the long haul, you have to pull your head out of the sand—or wherever else you had it stuck—and start getting actively involved in the management of your life. This is *your* life, and what you make of it is up to you, because no one else gives a damn. I’ll show you how to get your professional life under control and onto the right track, and I’ll give you many of the tools to do it, but bottom line: *It’s your life, and what you make of it is up to you.*

**There is no promise of a future reward** unless you make it happen.

Rick Kean, Consultant Emeritus, A. M. Hamilton, Inc. Staffing and training.  
30+ years’ experience.

I'm going to share a plan with you that will help you achieve a *complete career management makeover* as you organize and execute your job search and get a fresh start with a good new job. You are going to learn a reasoned approach to building a killer resume; a plan of attack for your job search that integrates networking into every strategy; how to turn job interviews into job offers; and how to negotiate salary.

You will also learn how to get off on the right foot in your new job; how to make your job more secure and how to pursue and win promotions; how to plan and execute career changes on *your* timetable; and how to simultaneously pursue those alternate entrepreneurial and dream careers you barely dare dream about. You haven't read a book like this before, so relax and go with the program; I won't waste your time.

## Think about Your Goals

*What do I want out of life?* The more clearly you can envision life goals, including those dreams everyone told you not to waste your time with, and see a real path to achieving some of them, the more effort you will put into the work that has to be done today and every day along the path that brings them to reality.

*Evaluate your career to date.* Be honest with yourself about where you stand today and why. It isn't someone else's fault—like it or not, you are largely responsible for where you are. Honestly accepting this is the first step along a path that takes you to greater financial security and professional success. What should you have done differently? What can you learn from your mistakes so that you can move forward, rather than live condemned to repeating them?

Now look at where you want to be ten or twenty years from now. And those interests and dreams that give meaning to your life? Stop cramming them under the bed: Haul them out and re-examine them as you read and learn—you might find they don't belong there. Bring all these long-term goals and dreams into focus; own them, don't be scared by what others might think and don't give up before you've started.

This is not an either/or world. You *can* have multiple career goals and multiple career paths: for climbing the corporate ladder, for starting your own business, for writing that book or becoming a painter; other people have made it happen, and you can too. But like many others, you have been told: “Find *one* thing you like, make it your career and settle down to it for a lifetime.” But most of what you have been told doesn’t make sense; life isn’t that simple and you are too complex a being. I like to write; but all day, every day for fifty years? *Sweet baby Jesus, I’m ready, take me now.*

**Broaden the sources of your income.** Do not rely on one source of income but rather a portfolio of options.

Lisa Chenofsky Singer, Chenofsky Singer and Associates. Communications and Human Resources Consulting. 20+ years’ experience.

You might have dreams for career paths that seem impossible or that common sense tells you are hare-brained; yet all of them hold value and could well be achievable. Whatever those dreams might be, they are going to fall into one of three categories:

1. *Core career:* I’ll show you how best to land that next job and how to make it as secure as it can possibly be; how to land the plum assignments, win raises and promotions; how to navigate strategic career moves within your industry; even how to decide on new career paths including when and how to make the migration and become successful in your new field.
2. *Dream career:* Your dream might be to become a writer, painter, singer in the band, or a landscape gardener. I’ll show you the key strategies that can bring your dreams to life.
3. *Entrepreneurial career:* You’ll learn how to seamlessly integrate plans for an entrepreneurial career into the continuing pursuit of success in your *core career*. You’ll recognize that they aren’t mutually exclusive: They are attainable and can even be complementary.

We'll develop the means for achieving them throughout the book and bring them together in Chapter 16. But don't jump ahead: There's a plan, a methodology, and a new way of looking at your professional life that you need to soak up before it will all make sense and enable you to pursue *multiple parallel career paths*.

**Understand the rules of the workplace as they are today.** Stay one step ahead instead of two steps behind the changes.

Perry Newman, CPC/CSMS. Executive Resume Writer/Career Coach.  
25 years' experience.

## Start Toward Your Goals *Now*

Your successful career is a marathon, not a sprint, so whatever your goals, the sooner you start toward them the better. Start imagining what you want your life to be like, not just for this job search and that next job, but a detailed picture of what a fulfilling life would look like for you.

With achievable goals, you will be re-energized and your life will be enriched by their pursuit, knowing you have a real chance of making them come true. Every day, when you wake up on the right side of the grass you are ahead of the game: You are alive, and you have a plan to make your dreams come true, one that takes you step-by-step from where you stand today to where you want to stand tomorrow.

All these things are possible, but it starts with getting your priorities straight, and your priority right now is getting back to work or out of that hell-hole cubicle in the high-rise salt mine that you inhabit today.

A long time ago, President Calvin Coolidge said, "The business of America is business." You might not agree, but it's certainly true that business is at the heart of American prosperity. Even in times when unemployment has soared and banks have crumbled, across the country the wheels continue to turn, stuff continues to get made, and people continue to get jobs.

Even during an economic downturn—remember, they’re cyclical and will occur regularly throughout your work life—there are jobs. We have a huge economy; there are *always* jobs. Even in the worst months of the current recession, at least *four million new jobs* were posted every month on Internet job sites. But companies won’t always show up on your doorstep, begging you to accept generous offers. Finding a job and advancing your career is *work*. It takes concentrated effort, and begins with understanding why jobs exist.

## How Business Works

Companies exist to make money for the owners, as quickly, efficiently, and reliably as possible. They make money by selling a product or service, and they prosper by becoming better and more efficient at it. When a company saves time, it saves money, and then has more time to make more money; this is called productivity.

If a company can make money without employees, it will do so, because that means more money for the owners. Unfortunately for the owners, a company requires a complex machinery to deliver those products and services that bring in revenue. Every job is a small but important cog in this complex moneymaking machine, and every cog has to be oiled and maintained. That costs money. If the company can redesign the machinery to do without that cog (automation) or can find a cheaper cog (outsourcing that job to Mumbai), of course it is going to do so.

**You are responsible for your own job security.** Watch for the “writing on the wall” at work, for signs of reorganizations or downsizing.

Christine Wunderlin, aka Coach Christine on the *Career Czar*. Wunderlin Consulting. 30+ years’ experience.

There are two reasons job exist. First, as I’ve said, every job is a small but important cog in the corporation’s complex moneymaking machine. Second, the company hasn’t been able to automate

that job out of existence because in your area of technical expertise, problems arise.

Consequently, the company hires someone who has the *technical skills* to solve these problems when they occur and who knows the territory well enough to predict and prevent many of these problems from arising in the first place. It doesn't matter what your job title is, you are always hired to be a problem-solver with a specific area of expertise.

Think about the nuts and bolts of a job you've held. Whatever the job, it always comes down to *anticipating, preventing, and solving problems*. This enables the company to make money for the owners as quickly, efficiently, and reliably as possible.

These aren't the only factors that are critical to your success and that all jobs have in common. In the next chapter you'll learn about a specific set of *transferable skills* and *professional values* that all employers are anxious to find in candidates, whom they then hire just as quickly as they can find them. The skills and values that you'll learn in this book have applications far beyond your core career.

## CHAPTER 2

# WE ARE ALL PROFESSIONAL SCHIZOPHRENICS

Over the years I've read a lot of books about finding jobs, winning promotions, and managing your career. A few were insightful and many were innocuous, but one theme that runs through them all is plain harmful: Just be yourself.

“Who you are is just fine. Be yourself and you'll do fine.” Wrong. Remember that first day on your first job, when you went to get your first cup of coffee? You found the coffee machine, and there, stuck on the wall behind it, was a handwritten sign reading:

*YOUR MOTHER DOESN'T WORK HERE  
PICK UP AFTER YOURSELF*

You thought, “Pick up after myself? Gee, that means I can't behave like I do at home and get away with it.” And so you started to observe and emulate the more successful professionals around you. You behaved in a way that was appropriate to the environment, and in doing so demonstrated *emotional intelligence*. Over time you developed many new ways of conducting yourself at work in order to be accepted as a professional in your field. You weren't born this way. You developed a behavioral profile, a *professional persona* that enabled you to survive in the professional world.