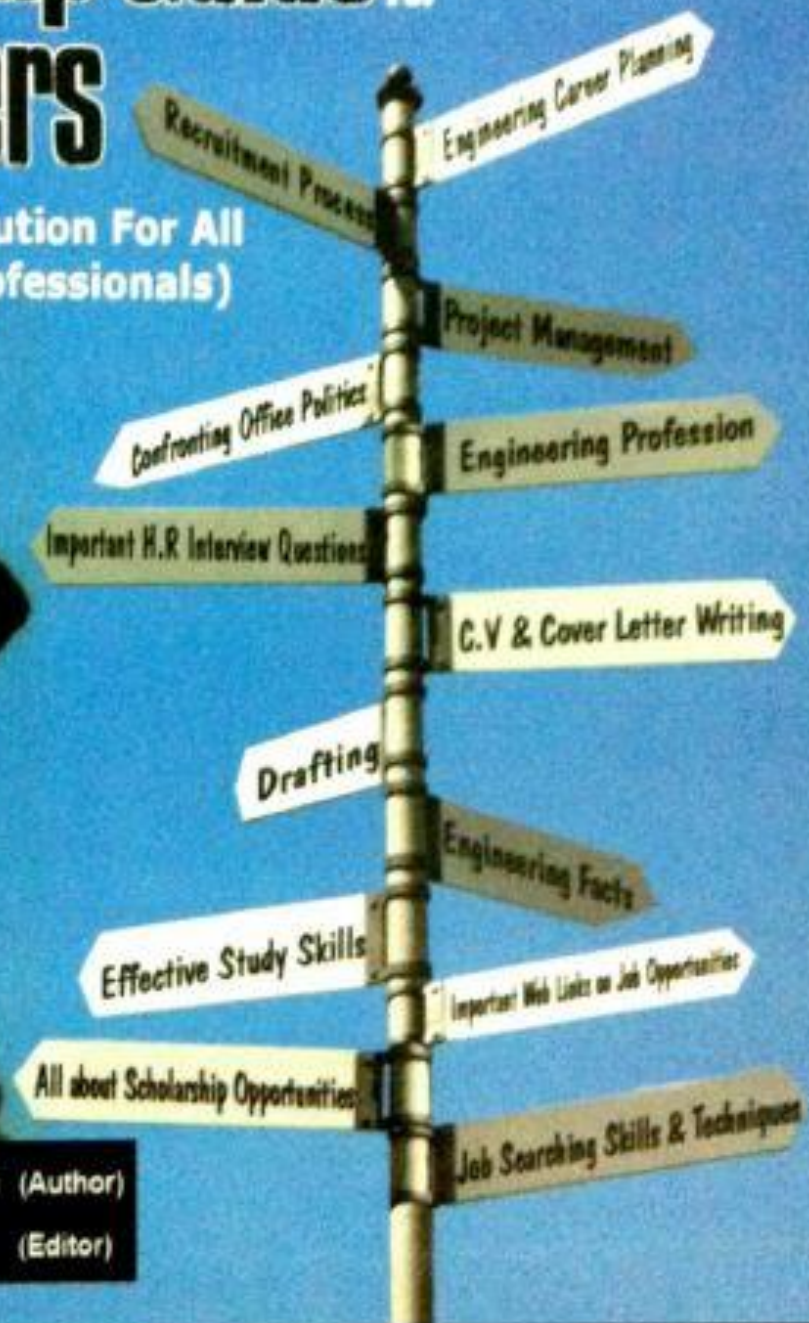


Career Roadmap Guide for Engineers

(A One Stop Solution For All Engineering Professionals)



Engr. Junaid Shaikh (Author)

Dr. B. S. Chowdhry (Editor)

NETWORKING

So many people have heard the importance of networking, but few actually practice it to make an impact on their careers. When you are faced with a job loss or a desired career change, networking is one of the most important strategies to understand and implement.

You can start to make targeted visits to locations where professionals meet and network. You can, in some cases, even do it in time, if you are still employed.

If you are not employed, networking can become very difficult. You may feel isolated from your colleagues and the industry. You may feel embarrassed to show up without a title. You can get a lot of networking done at networking groups for the unemployed, but let's face it; everyone there is typically not working. You want to be able to go to places where you can meet other people who are able to get your foot in the door to a company or position that you have targeted in your plan.

Some people would prefer to hire someone who can help motivate and guide them in their career pursuit.

Education

You may find out that in order to fulfill your dreams, you will have to get continuing education. There are so many teaching institutions that the choices available make it difficult to decide on where to attend. You can choose by price, but that might not give you the credentials that you need to make the career change. You don't want to graduate only to find that you owe lots of money in student debt and have made no inroads in your efforts to fulfill your dreams.

Recruiters

If you are employed and looking to change companies, you know the dangers of posting your resume online where a supervisor might find it. You also know how that can negatively impact your career and make you a prime candidate for a layoff. So, there are instances when you don't want to do the job search through public means. Hiring a recruiter can be a very thoughtful way of bringing confidentiality to your search and giving you more time to make sure you are meeting the other goals in your plan.

SEVEN-DAYS CAREER ACTION PLAN

It takes a lot of hard work, research & strategic plans to make your career dreams come true. But did you ever imagine what you would do if you suddenly get laid off?

Would you be able to implement the seven-day career plan effectively? Obviously, it takes more than seven days to prepare, but once you are forced to go up to bat, that's when you can be glad you had some idea of how to hit a homerun, instead of striking out.

Day One

Let's assume that day one is the day that you are actually walking out of your previous employer's company into your new life. It doesn't matter if that change came about because you planned it that way. The moment you realize that you are about to head out the door of your old company is the day the clock starts ticking on your seven-day plan.

You get to home and now you know what to do. You take out your career plan with the two choices for careers you had entertained in the past, and you make a decision to either go for one of these or stick with the work you currently do. You will have a clear idea of which of your skills are marketable, if you kept your career plan in shape, and which need to be upgraded.

Day Two

Since you were aware that many people face the prospects of having two or three career paths in their lifetime, you are not caught completely off-guard. You might have a side business that can be expanded already in place. You might have a part-time job that has been offering you some needed training skills. The only things that can derail your plans now are finances, so you start to see if you're in good shape.

Day Three

Having gotten your finances and plan in place, now you want to start to network immediately. Continue to attend the professional organizations you joined. Be sure to carry cards with a contact number that they can reach you. You need to come clean to anyone that you are in the market for a job

or looking to switch into a new career. Now is the time to get returns on any favors you may have made during the time leading up to your layoff.

You will be calling to make appointments with all of the local agencies and recruiters that you investigated earlier. You should have a clear idea of who to call and how to network at this point. If not, the chances of you making a successful career change in seven days are practically zero.

You should be sending out resumes and cover letters to employers that are looking for your skills. One of the first places that might be hiring is your previous company's competitor. If you want to stay in the same type of position, it doesn't hurt to know who they are and contact them when you are laid off. Just make sure you did not sign any non-compete agreements or you won't be able to be hired.

Day Four

After you have made your phone calls and set up appointments to meet with people you know face-to-face, then you should investigate the online resources. If you haven't posted your hiring information online, now is the time to do so. As long as you are not currently employed, the Internet can be a wonderful marketing tool for someone looking for a job.

Now if you are not looking for a job, but seeking to expand a business concept, then you will be working towards expanding your customer base and seeking out new business. You will want to use all the resources at your disposal, both online and offline. Look at what has made you money in the past and just do more of the same to increase your income, for now. You can get more creative after the financial crisis is over.

Day Five

As you continue to network and establish a bigger circle of contacts, you will start receiving feedback on your chances at employment. The feedback can be very subtle, so you have to be on your toes to not miss it. If after calling various people, no one wants to return your calls, then you know you have a problem. It could be you've suffered a loss of reputation, your skills aren't marketable, or everyone is in the market for a job and you are one of many contacting that person. Don't take it personally. If you have established some good contacts throughout your years of association with other professionals, you will eventually get a response from someone who can

help. Remember that it is often a matter of timing and luck as to whether an opportunity comes your way or not. Use that feedback to modify your goals, your presentation, and your public image.

Day Six

When you happen to network and seek openings anywhere, remember to keep your skills up-to-date and your professional image as polished as possible. If means that you take work on a volunteer basis to get you more skills, then that is something that can keep you busy and your spirits up too. Just always seek to make sure that any free work you do is done with the intention of helping your career goals in the future. Don't succumb to using your free time for work that isn't going to contribute to your goals in the end. You have to be somewhat single-minded on placing your feet firmly on a path that is not only satisfying to you personally, but that also can be lucrative.

Take advantage of any free seminars or job placement services offered to people who are unemployed. Spend your time seeking out professionals in the area you are targeting so that you can network with them. Don't just focus on making them your stepping-stone to employment, also show your interest in the career path they are in. This is far more attractive than a person who appears desperate to get a job.

Day Seven

If you've followed all the steps outlined, you will be getting closer to your target day-by-day. It may take seven days, it may take 30 days. It can even take years, if continuing education is involved. The key is to be able to weather a downturn in finances by having several options available to you. This makes you less desperate to take the first offer that comes along and gives you time to make a career change that is meaningful and lasting.

The process can be reviewed every week and re-established, using the same formula.