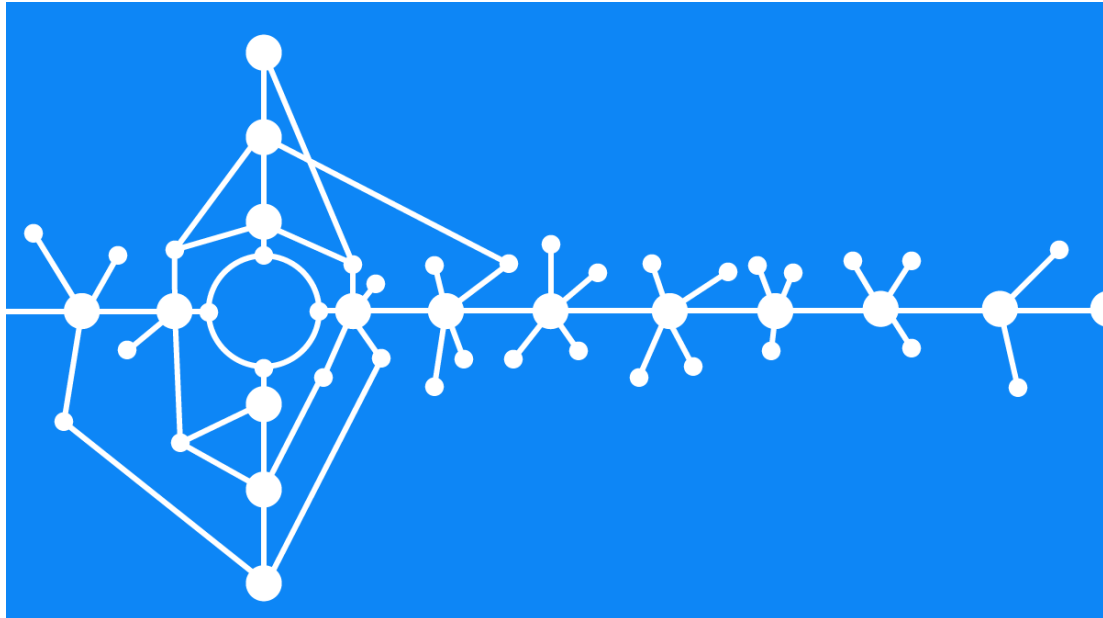# Harvard Business Review

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Strategies for Crowdsourcing Your Job Search

By Lior Zoref

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Careers are very personal things. Most people choose their paths, and make decisions along the way, based on their own thinking and counsel from family, friends, teachers, close colleagues, and mentors. While self-reflection and the gathering of advice from one's immediate circle can be useful, I'd like to suggest a more modern approach. Organizations are increasingly using the wisdom of crowds to drive their strategy, innovation, and marketing initiatives. Why shouldn't you use similar strategies for your job search? Here are four ways to do it right:

Explore your passions. One of the best stories I discovered in researching my book, _Mindsharing_, was that of a 28-year-old woman from Tel Aviv who had grown frustrated by the unpredictable and temporary nature of her television programming job. She decided it was time for a career change and began to brainstorm ideas on her own, seeking advice from friends, and even meeting with a jobs counselor. But her breakthrough came when she posted an appeal on Facebook asking if any of her contacts would be willing to take her to their places of work for a day. Many said yes, and she took five people up on the offer. During each visit, she envisioned herself in that job, industry, or organization — but in the end she realized that none of them excited her as much as her current profession. Crowdsourcing helped her figure out she should stay put. For others, it might spark or invigorate new passions.

If you're uncomfortable being so transparent about your career thinking, I recommend this section of Quora, a website designed to let people ask and answer questions anonymously. This is a place to ask people about any industry or function you're considering. But remember — if you want to stay anonymous that usually means refraining from identifying yourself or referencing the specific companies you're courting. Sometimes saying too much can seriously backfire.

Get inside information. Corporate salaries, interview procedures, employee satisfaction levels used to be well-guarded secrets. Not anymore. Websites such as Glassdoor gives you an amazing inside look at jobs and companies, helping you determine what it's really like to work at various places in different roles. Want to know what interview questions you're likely to get asked at Apple? How much middle managers make at American Express in various cities around the world? Or what the vacation policy is like at McKinsey? The crowd can tell you.

Perfect your resume. The internet is awash with resources on this topic. Perhaps my favorite destination for crowd-sourced advice is the résumés area on Reddit. Here are some threads: "Trying to get a job in Web development, would love your merciless critique on this résumé!"; "I can bullshit my way through anything. How can I put this on my résumé?"; "Should I list "good problem-solving skills" on my résumé?" Reddit users rate the responses so the most useful usually appear at the top. For example, the last question listed above got 17 responses,the most popular of which advised the resume-writer to include details on work experiences in which he or she solved problems, rather than listing it as a generic skill. Quora's CV section is another useful resource. The question "What's the best way to get your resume noticed?" has more than 200 answers. On other websites, such as Craigslist or Fiverr, you can find people who will not just offer advice but also physically edit your résumé or design your business card or website. Here's a short video on many of the sites mentioned above.

Build your experience. If lack of experience has become a stumbling block in your career, you can use the crowd to gain it. Tell your LinkedIn contacts, Facebook friends, and Twitter followers that you're looking to build skills in a particular area and ask if anyone can help. Volunteer to work as an intern or apprentice. Answer relevant help-wanted requests on sites like Craiglist or Fiverr and post your own help-offered ads.

In my early days at Microsoft, I instinctively turned to the crowd for advice. Before planning any new product launch, I would write about it on my blog (this was before Facebook or Twitter) and ask for ideas. The responses were always creative and I implemented the best of the bunch. Thanks to the advance of social media, these methods — what I've come to call mindsharing — can now be used in any arena of life. But they are particularly helpful when it comes to making smart career decisions.

Lior Zoref is a crowd wisdom researcher, speaker, consultant and the author of *Mindsharing: The Art of Crowdsourcing Everything* (Portfolio, 2015.) He worked at Microsoft for 14 years, most recently as vice president of marketing for consumer and online services.