

What to Say on LinkedIn When Your Search Isn't Moving Fast Enough

A Free Training Companion Guide by CareerBlue
Executive Job Search Training

Watch the Free Training First

This guide is your companion to the CareerBlue free training video. Watch the video first, then use this as your reference and action guide.

Video: [Career Advancement Outreach Training](#)

Where Are You Right Now?

Most executives in a job search fall into one of three places and all three are more common than you think.

You're invisible. You've done the work. Updated your profile, maybe applied to a few roles. And the phone isn't ringing. No recruiter has reached out. Nothing is moving.

You're getting conversations that go cold. You're connecting with people, having promising exchanges and then silence. The conversation dies. Nothing converts.

You're interviewing but not landing. You're making it into the room. You're a finalist. And you keep coming out without the offer, without a clear reason why.

Here's what matters: in all three situations, the issue is almost never your experience or your credentials. It's a gap in the system specifically, in how you're generating quality conversations and how you're moving them forward.

This training is about closing that gap.

The Insight That Changes Everything

There is a version of the job search most executives are running and then there is the version that actually works.

The version most people run looks like this: optimize the profile, apply to posted roles, wait for recruiters to reach out, hope something sticks.

The version that works looks like this: use your LinkedIn presence as a starting point, not a finish line and build a system for turning visibility into conversations before a role is ever posted publicly.

Here's the reality. The majority of senior executive roles are filled before they ever reach a job board. They're filled through relationships, through referrals, through someone being in the right conversation at the right time. The executives who move fastest in their search aren't always the most qualified. They're the most intentional about getting into those conversations.

That starts with knowing who to reach and what your message needs to do when you get there.

What Every Message Needs to Do

Most outreach fails for the same reasons. The message is too long. It leads with credentials instead of relevance. It makes a big ask too early. Or it says nothing memorable at all.

The messages that actually get responses... the ones that start real conversations do three specific things, regardless of who they're sent to.

1. Lead With Them, Not You

This is the single biggest shift most executives need to make.

The instinct is to open with your title, your years of experience, your background. And while that context matters, it's not what makes someone stop and respond.

What makes someone respond is recognizing themselves in what you wrote. A challenge they're navigating. A priority that's top of mind for them right now. A result that's directly relevant to their world.

One sentence about you, framed entirely around their problem. That outperforms a paragraph about your career every single time.

Before you write any outreach message, ask yourself: What is this person thinking about right now? What would make them feel like I actually understand their world? Start there.

2. Make the Ask Small

The size of your ask in the first message is inversely proportional to your response rate.

A request for a 30-minute call, a resume review, a referral, or an introduction to someone's network - those are large asks from a cold connection. They require effort, trust, and time the other person hasn't committed to yet.

A small ask such as a brief conversation, a quick reaction to something you shared, a simple yes or no removes the friction entirely. And small asks compound. A yes to a 10-minute call becomes a 45-minute conversation. A warm introduction starts with a single low pressure message.

Start small. Build from there.

3. Give Before You Ask

The messages with the highest response rates don't just ask, they offer something first.

It doesn't have to be elaborate. A relevant insight. A connection in your network who might be valuable to them. A perspective on something happening in their industry. The act of offering something before making any request creates a dynamic that credentials alone never can.

This is called reciprocity and it's one of the most powerful psychological drivers in professional relationships. When you lead by adding value, people are far more likely to want to engage with you. Not because they owe you something, but because you've already shown you're worth their time.

The Two People You Need to Be Reaching

Once you understand what your messages need to do, the next question is: who are you sending them to?

There are two distinct groups that matter most in an executive job search and they need to be approached differently, because they play completely different roles in your search.

Decision-Makers

These are the VPs, Directors, C-Suite leaders, and functional heads at companies you want to be part of. The reason they matter isn't just because they hire, it's because they can create a conversation that leads to an opportunity even when no role exists publicly.

When you reach out to a decision-maker, you are not asking for a job. You are starting a peer-level conversation. Your goal is to be relevant, to be memorable, and to give them a reason to want to stay connected.

The three principles above - lead with them, make the ask small, give before you ask - are the foundation of every decision-maker message that works.

💡 The blank connection request: Data consistently shows that sending a connection request with no message gets accepted more often with decision-makers. Let your optimized LinkedIn profile do the work at that stage. Save your first real message for after they've accepted.

Recruiters

Recruiters, internal HR leaders, external headhunters, and executive search professionals are actively working to fill open roles. That's what makes them different from decision-makers, and it's why the approach shifts.

With recruiters, being direct and clear about who you are and what you're looking for is not just acceptable, it's what they need to quickly assess whether you could be a fit for something they're working on right now. Clarity is your competitive advantage here.

That said, recruiters are professionals building their own networks. A genuine, human connection with a recruiter, not just a transactional message, can lead to conversations and introductions that extend well beyond a single search. Lead with clarity, but bring your full professional self to the relationship.

💡 The recruiter connection request is different: Unlike with decision-makers, a brief note with your connection request works well here. Let them know who you are, your function, your industry, and that you're exploring your next opportunity. That's all they need to decide whether to accept and continue the conversation.

The Part Most Executives Skip Entirely

Here is where most job searches stall and where CareerBlue's approach is most different from anything else out there.

Follow-up.

Not aggressive follow-up. Not daily messages. Professional, consistent, well-timed follow-up.

Most executives send one message. They wait. They hear nothing. And they move on assuming silence means no.

But silence almost never means no. It means busy. It means bad timing. It means the message got buried under forty other things that week.

Here is what professional follow-up actually does:

It keeps your name visible. On LinkedIn, every follow-up message resurfaces your conversation thread. Your name, your profile, your message... all of it rises back to the top of their inbox. You stay present without being pushy.

It catches the right moment. Needs change fast. A company that had no openings when you first reached out may have an urgent gap three weeks later. The candidate who stayed professionally visible is the one who gets the call. Not because they were the most qualified because they were there.

It signals something important about you. Executives who know their value follow up. They don't disappear after one try. Consistent, professional persistence tells the people you're reaching out to that you are serious, that you are confident, and that you operate with intention. Those are qualities hiring leaders and recruiters notice and respect.

Most job seekers miss this entirely. They interpret no response as rejection and move on. The CareerBlue system is built around the insight that the follow-up is not a backup plan, it is the plan. It is how conversations that seem dormant suddenly come alive. And it is one of the biggest differences between a search that stalls and one that creates consistent momentum.

What's Missing Isn't More Applications

If you take one thing from this training, let it be this:

The executives who get to their next role fastest are not the ones who applied to the most jobs. They're the ones who had the most quality conversations with the right people, at the right time, with the right message.

That takes a system. It takes knowing who to target, how to show up in a way that stands out, how to keep conversations moving, and how to identify the gaps whether you're just getting started or you're making it to final rounds and still not landing.

That is exactly what CareerBlue is built to give you.

Ready to Build the Full System?

Package	What's Included
Starter	LinkedIn profile optimization, professional value proposition, network foundation
Foundation	Starter + the complete outreach strategy and follow-up sequencing for decision-makers, recruiters, and talent firms
Acceleration	Foundation + automated outreach setup and management
Advisory	Ongoing executive coaching and strategic search support

Reach out if you have any questions.

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[Message me on LinkedIn](#)