

MODULE 4: THE NETWORK | LESSON 2 OF 5

The Informational Interview: Your Job Search Superpower



Build relationships. Gather intelligence. Access the hidden market.

Stop Applying. Start Connecting.

The Standard Approach



- Applying online to cold postings
- High competition
- Resume black holes
- Zero feedback

The Strategic Approach



- Informational Interviewing
- Insider knowledge
- Warm introductions
- Advocacy from the inside

Key Insight: You are not asking for a job. You are learning, connecting, and planting seeds.

The Informational Interview Lifecycle

A repeatable process for strategic connection



The 5-Phase Framework

Key Insight: You are not asking for a job. You are learning, connecting, and planting seeds.

Phase 1: Identify & Research

Quality over Quantity.

Target List Checklist



- ☒ **Career Alignment:** Find people in roles you want to be in.
- ☒ **Connection Points:** Alumni, shared groups, or similar career pivots.
- ☒ **Genuine Interest:** People whose work you actually admire.

The Research Rule



Never ask a question that can be answered by Google.

- ✓ Read their LinkedIn 'About' and 'Experience' sections thoroughly.
- ✓ Search for recent articles, posts, or talks they have given.
- ✓ Goal: Identify a specific reason to speak to *them* specifically.

Key Insight: Targeting the right person with specific knowledge shows respect for their time.

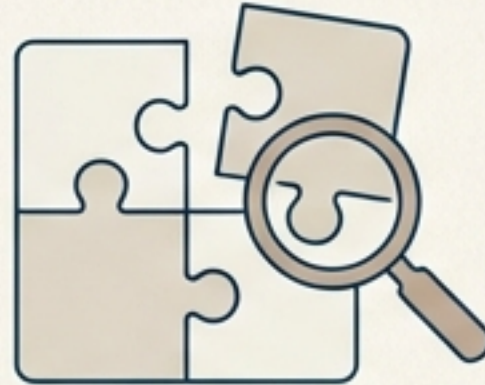
Phase 2: The Request Strategy

Goal:
30%+ Reply
Rate



The 3 Rules of Outreach **1. SHORT**

5 sentences or fewer. Respect their busy schedule. If they have to scroll, it is too long.



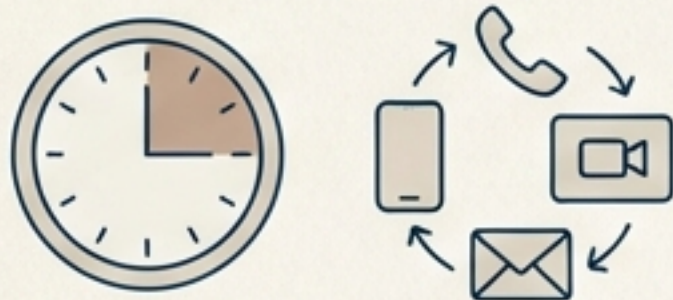
The 3 Rules of Outreach **2. SPECIFIC**

Why them? Reference their specific work or path. Prove you are not spamming generic templates.



The 3 Rules of Outreach **3. FLATTERING**

Show genuine respect for their expertise. Be professional, not sycophantic.

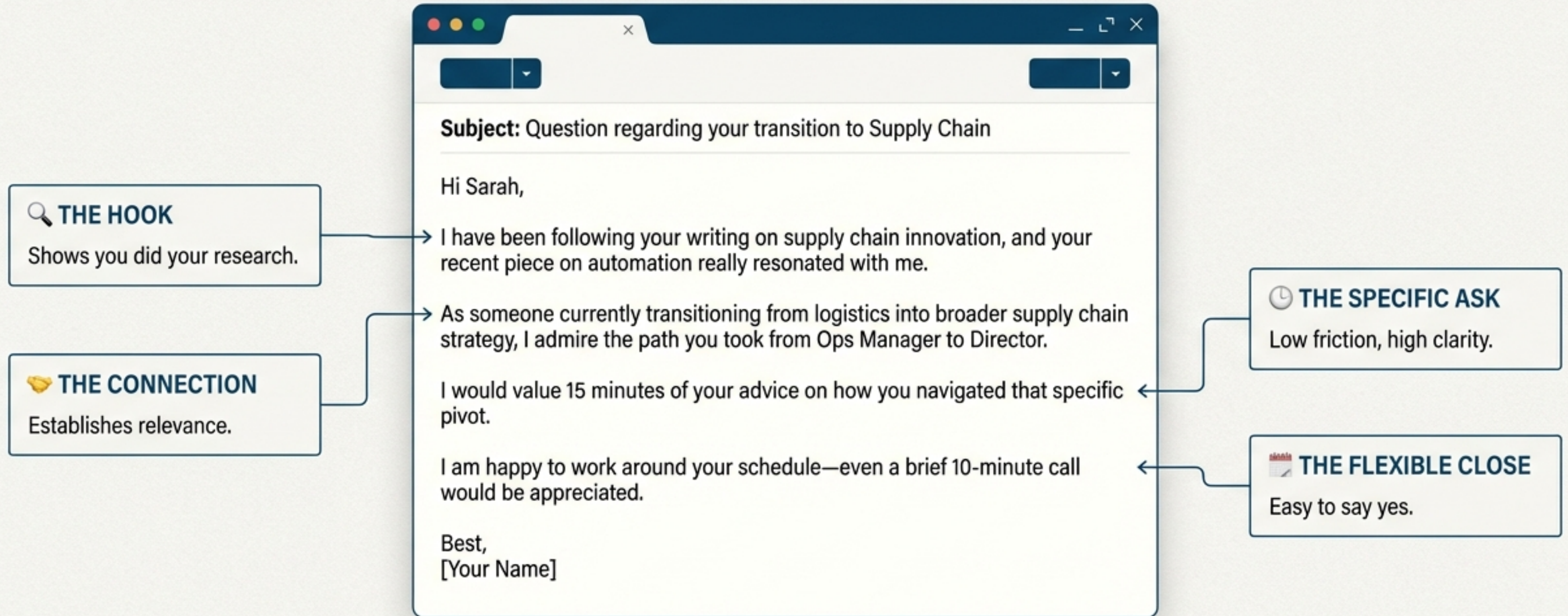


The Tactical Advantage: Ask for 15 Minutes.

Lower commitment = Higher 'Yes' rate. Offer flexibility on phone, video, or email.

Anatomy of the Perfect Outreach

Breaking down a successful cold email



Phase 3: Preparation & The Pitch

The Prep Checklist



- ☒ Review recent company news and press releases.
- ☒ Prepare 8-10 strategic questions (prioritize top 5).
- ☒ Have the 30-Second Pitch rehearsed.

The 30-Second Pitch

[Who You Are]

+

[Why You Are Here]

=

[Rapport]

Purpose: Give context, do not sell.

1. **Who you are:** "I am a marketing manager with 5 years of experience in retail..."
2. **The Pivot:** "...currently looking to move into the tech sector..."
3. **The Reason:** "...which is why I was so interested in your perspective on [Company's] growth."

Phase 4: Conducting the Conversation

The 15-Minute Timeline



The Question Bank

Extracting maximum value.

What do you wish you knew before starting this role?

Intelligence Gained: Insider Reality Check



What is the biggest challenge your team faces right now?

Intelligence Gained: Value Proposition Opportunities



How is this industry or function evolving?

Intelligence Gained: Future-Proofing Insights



What skills separate good performers from great ones?

Intelligence Gained: Positioning Strategy

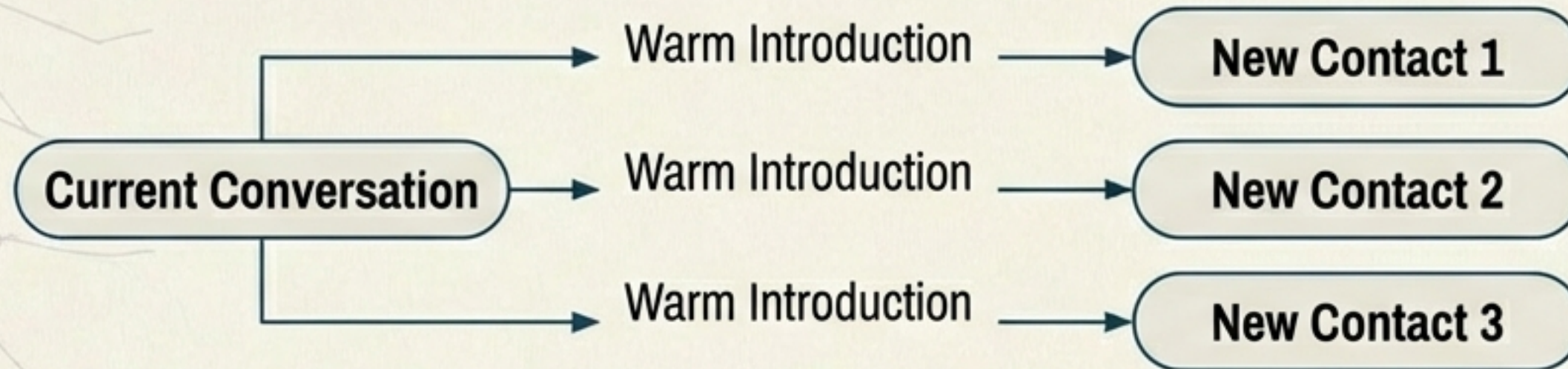


The Golden Question

in Deep Maritime Blue.

“

“Who else should I be talking to?”



The Script: “Sarah Chen suggested I reach out to you...”

Why it works: Transforms cold outreach into warm referrals and builds a self-sustaining network.

Phase 5: The Follow-Up

Moving from Transaction to Relationship.

The 24-Hour Rule



Send a thank-you note within one day.

Be specific about an insight they shared to prove you were listening.

The Conversion Loop

Send Thank You



Connect on LinkedIn (Personalized Note)



Act on Advice (Read the book, take the course)



Circle Back ("I read that article you mentioned...")



Transaction becomes Relationship

“Accelerate with AI” using Heldane Display

Use tools to handle the drafting so you can focus on the connection.

The Outreach Crafter



Prompt: Draft a 5-sentence email to a Director of Marketing asking for an interview. Reference their recent post on [Topic].
Tone: Professional and respectful.

The Pre-Interview Researcher



Prompt: Act as a career researcher. Summarize the key strategic challenges facing [Company] and the [Specific Role] over the last 6 months.

The Thank-You Writer



Prompt: Draft a thank-you note for an informational interview. Mention that I appreciated their insight on [Topic] and will follow up on [Recommendation].

Why People Fail

Troubleshooting common pitfalls.

Low Response Rate?



Your message is likely too long, too vague, or too self-serving. Check the 5-sentence rule.

Awkward Conversation?



You didn't prepare good questions, or you spent the whole time pitching yourself instead of listening.

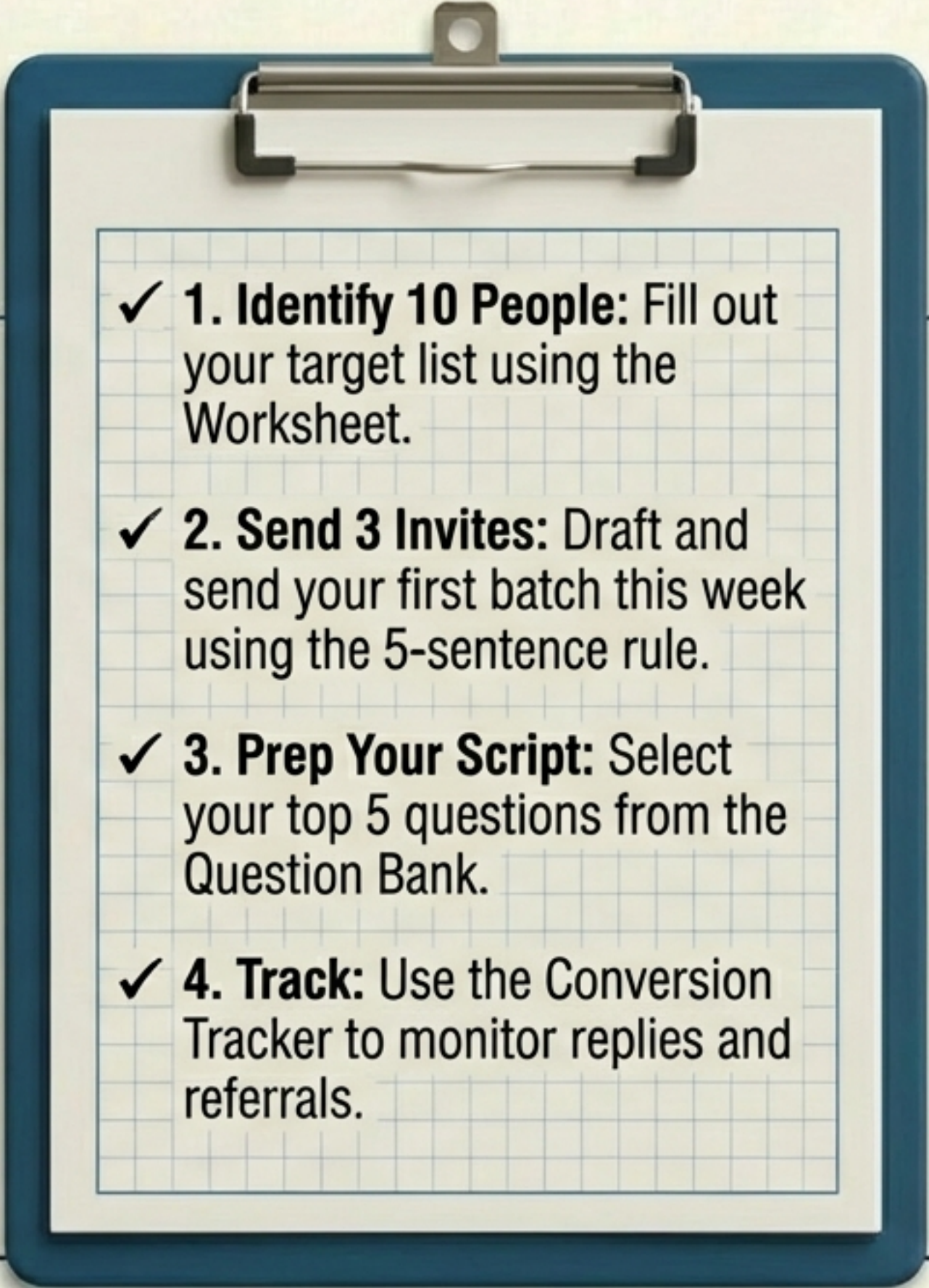
No Long-Term Value?



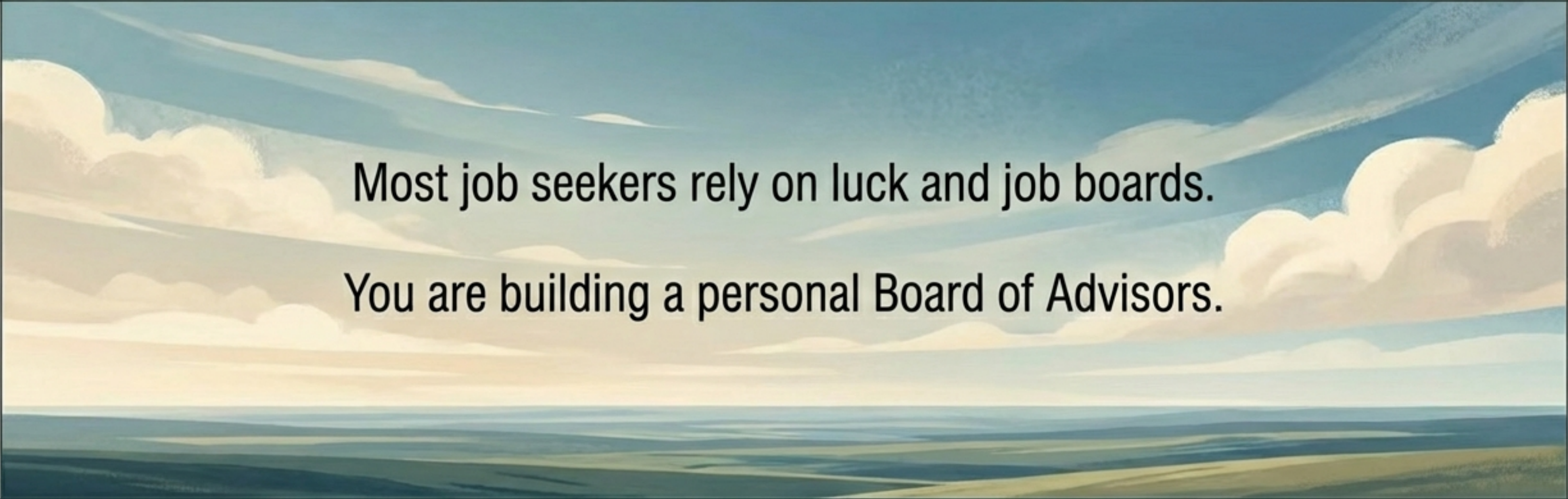
You failed to follow up or ask "The Golden Question" for referrals.

THE CARDINAL SIN: Never ask for a job directly during an informational interview. It breaks trust instantly.

Your Action Plan

- 
- ✓ **1. Identify 10 People:** Fill out your target list using the Worksheet.
 - ✓ **2. Send 3 Invites:** Draft and send your first batch this week using the 5-sentence rule.
 - ✓ **3. Prep Your Script:** Select your top 5 questions from the Question Bank.
 - ✓ **4. Track:** Use the Conversion Tracker to monitor replies and referrals.

Your Unfair Advantage

A landscape illustration featuring rolling hills in shades of green and blue under a sky with large, soft, white and yellowish clouds. The text is centered over this background.

Most job seekers rely on luck and job boards.
You are building a personal Board of Advisors.

Go send your first invite today.