

The Stand Out Kit

Your workbook

by Caroline De Kimpe · 15+ years in HR and recruitment

How to use this workbook

This is everything in your online Stand Out Kit, on paper. Use it alongside the online kit, or on its own with a pen and a cuppa.

Every job search has four stages

The kit, and this workbook, follow them in order. Already job hunting? Start with "Where are you stuck?" to see which stage to focus on first.

1. Find what's holding you back · Where are you stuck? · Your Stand Out Score

2. Get ready · Upgrade your CV · Your stand-out skills

3. Reach the right people · Your 4 ways in · Find the hiring manager

4. Land the job · Your first interview · Your stories: the Spider · Your final round

Bonus: your secret weapon · The 90-Second Hello · Write your Hello · Film your Hello · The Holiday Hello

Your progress · Your application tracker

Your details

Fill these in once. Use them in every script.

Your first name

The role you want

The company

Hiring manager's first name

Recruiter's first name

What you do best, in a few words

What you are open to

Your phone number

1 Where are you stuck?

Your job search is a funnel. Find the stage where things stop, and you'll know exactly what to fix.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Most people fix the wrong thing. They rewrite their CV when the real problem is the interview, or practise interviews when nobody's calling. Where you get stuck tells you what to fix.

Tick the one that sounds like you, then work through the questions and fixes.

APPLYING

I'm applying, but nobody calls

What's probably going on: Your CV isn't getting past the first look, or you're relying on one way in. The apply button on its own is the slowest, most crowded way to get hired.

Ask yourself

- [ ] Is your CV a list of duties, or does it show proof?
- [ ] Does your first page use the words from the job ad?
- [ ] Is the apply button your only way in?
- [ ] Have you contacted a single hiring manager this month?

Your fixes

- Upgrade your CV
- Use all 4 ways in, not just job ads
- Find the hiring manager

WAITING

Recruiters don't get back to me

What's probably going on: Recruiters are busy, not ignoring you. Emails get buried. A call gets remembered. And while you wait, the hiring manager doesn't even know you exist.

Ask yourself

- [ ] Did you call, or only email?
- [ ] Did you follow up more than once?
- [ ] Do you know who the hiring manager is?

Your fixes

- Use the call and voicemail scripts
- Go around the pile: find the hiring manager

CALLBACKS

I only get calls for jobs below my level

What's probably going on: Your CV is telling the story of the job you have, not the job you want. If it's all doing and delivering, they see a doer, not a leader. It's your message pitching you a level too low, not your experience.

Ask yourself

- [ ] Does your career statement name the level you want?
- [ ] Are your achievements about tasks, or about business results?
- [ ] Do you talk about strategy, people and money, or only getting things done?
- [ ] Are you going for the next level with this-level language?

Your fixes

- Rewrite your career statement for the next level
- Make your Wow about business results
- Go first and pitch yourself at the next level

FIRST INTERVIEW

I get first interviews, but no second

What's probably going on: They liked your CV, then met someone different. Or your answers drifted, so they couldn't see how you think. When the person in the room doesn't match the person on paper, or the answers aren't structured, they hesitate.

Ask yourself

- [ ] Did you co-create your CV with AI, or give AI free rein?
- [ ] Did you have 4 to 8 stories ready, with a clear structure?
- [ ] Does it clearly sell what you're great at?
- [ ] Do you talk about yourself the same way your CV does?
- [ ] Would they recognise the person they read about when they met you?

Your fixes

- Check your CV and you match
- Build your 4 to 8 stories with the Spider
- Nail your opening pitch

FINAL ROUND

I make the final round, but no offer

What's probably going on: They believe you can do the job. They're not yet sure you'll do it better than the others, or that hiring you is the safe choice. At the final stage it's about confidence and risk.

Ask yourself

- [ ] Did you show how you'd go beyond the job, not just do it?
- [ ] Did you name their biggest risk and how you'd avoid it?
- [ ] Did you face their doubts head-on: a gap, a level jump, an industry switch?
- [ ] Did you follow up with something useful afterwards?

Your fixes

- Find their reservations and handle them first
- Know your audience: talk commercial outcomes
- Use borrowed authority and crack the egg

REACHING OUT

I send messages, but get no replies

What's probably going on: Your message is probably about you, too long, or landing with the wrong person. Or it was one message and no follow-up.

Ask yourself

- [ ] Does your message start with their goal, or with you?
- [ ] Is it under 120 words?
- [ ] Did it go to the hiring manager, not a recruiter?
- [ ] Did you follow up after a week?

Your fixes

- Rewrite it with them in mind
- Make sure it's the right person
- Follow up

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Your Stand Out Score

Six quick questions. Every "not yet" is a gap with a section waiting for you.

Where are you focusing right now?

☐ A recruitment agency role ☐ A job ad ☐ No ad, I want to go first ☐ Someone I know

Is your CV upgraded for this kind of role?

☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

Do you know your top 3 stand-out skills?

☐ Yes ☐ Not really

Is your Hello ready?

☐ Ready to send ☐ Half written ☐ Not yet

Do you know the hiring manager's name?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Your next move

Agency: Have you called the recruiter?
Job ads: Have you sent anything to the hiring manager?
Proactive: Do you have a list of 5 target companies?
Network: Have you asked someone for an intro?

☐ Yes ☐ Not yet

My score: ____ / 5

Give yourself 1 point for each "Yes" (questions 2, 3, 5 and 6), 1 for a Hello that's ready, half for half written.

My biggest gap right now is

3 Upgrade your CV

Your CV has to back you up. Build the first page, the only page most people read properly.

WHY THIS MATTERS

Most CVs list duties. The ones that get calls show proof. Keywords get you past the filter. Proof gets you the call. You need both, right on page one.

Step 1: Your career statement

The promise. Who you are and what they get.

Your title

Years of experience

Industries

Known for

My career statement

Step 2: Your 8 key skills

Two columns of four. Use the words from the job ad. That's what the filter looks for.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Step 3: Your proof: Who, How, Wow

Who it was for, how you did it, and the wow: the result, with a number.

Who	How	Wow

Example: Rebuilt onboarding (How) for 300 new starters (Who), cutting first-year turnover by 30% (Wow).

4 Your stand-out skills

Some of your skills AI can already do. Some only you can do, right now. Those are the ones to lead with.

WHY THIS MATTERS

When everyone uses the same AI to write the same CV, the skills AI can't do yet are what make you different. They're your proof in every message you send.

Skill	My proof	Could AI do it yet? No · Partly · Yes	How valued? Gold · Valued · Nice

My top 3

Pick the ones AI can't do yet that employers value most.

5 Your 4 ways in

Diversify your job search. Work through each way in, and run more than one at a time.

Bonus: your secret weapon. Most people stop at the application. If you want to undeniably stand out, turn to the bonus section and find out how to reach the person who decides with a 90-Second Hello.

Recruitment agencies

WHY THIS MATTERS

Recruiters are your door in. They can put you forward, but they don't pick the person. The hiring manager does. So you use the agency properly, then get in front of the person who decides.

Your route

- [ ] **Apply through the agency**
  Use your upgraded CV. Do it properly. This is your ticket in.
- [ ] **Call the recruiter within 2 days**
  Don't wait for them to call you. A voice sticks in a way an email never will.
- [ ] **No answer? Call again**
  Recruiters often don't come back. It's not personal, they're juggling a lot. Keep it friendly and keep going.
- [ ] **Find out who you're being put forward to**
  Once they submit you, ask which team it's in and who the role reports to.
- [ ] **Find the hiring manager**
  Not the recruiter. Use the detective moves.
- [ ] **Send your Hello to the hiring manager**
  Email, LinkedIn or video. Never to the recruiter.
- [ ] **Log it in your tracker**
  Set a follow-up date so it never goes quiet.

Your scripts

Follow-up call

Hi **[recruiter's first name]**, it's **[your first name]**. I applied for the **[the role you want]** role earlier this week and wanted to put a voice to the name. **[what you do best, in a few words]** is what I do best, and I think I'm a really strong fit. Have you had a chance to look at my CV?

Voicemail

Hi **[recruiter's first name]**, **[your first name]** here about the **[the role you want]** role. I'd love five minutes to tell you why I'm a strong fit. I'll try you again tomorrow, or you can reach me on **[your phone number]**. Thanks!

When they put you forward

That's great, thank you **[recruiter's first name]**. Who would the role report to, and which team is it in? I'd love to do my homework so I'm ready.

Job ads

WHY THIS MATTERS

Everyone applies here, so this is where standing out matters most. Your application goes in the pile. Your Hello goes around it, straight to the person who decides.

Your route

- [ ] **Apply through the careers page or internal recruiter**
  Tick the box properly. Your application still matters.
- [ ] **Find the hiring manager**
  Check the ad for "reports to" or the team name, then play detective.
- [ ] **Write your Hello with them in mind**
  Their goal, their problem, your proof. Short.
- [ ] **Send it to the hiring manager**
  Email, LinkedIn or video. Not the internal recruiter.
- [ ] **Log it and set a follow-up date**
  One friendly nudge after a week if it's gone quiet.

Your scripts

Friendly nudge after a week

Hi **[hiring manager's first name]**, just bumping my note back to the top of your inbox. Still really keen on the **[the role you want]** role and happy to chat whenever suits.
[your first name]

Going first (no ad)

WHY THIS MATTERS

No ad means no pile. You're the only one in their inbox, not one of hundreds. And because the role isn't written yet, you get to shape it around what they actually need. It's the boldest move in your job search, and the one most people never make.

Your route

- [ ] **Build your target list**
  Start with competitors of places you've worked. They already value your experience.
- [ ] **Find the hiring manager at each one**
  The person who'd be your boss, not HR.
- [ ] **Think about their world**
  What are they trying to achieve this year? What's getting in the way?
- [ ] **Pick your angle**
  Permanent, contract, fixed-term or a project. A low-risk way to say yes creates desire.
- [ ] **Write your Proactive Hello**
  Lead with their problem, never "do you have any jobs?"
- [ ] **Send it, track it, keep going**
  A few really good messages beat fifty copy-and-paste ones.

My target list

Company	Why them	Hiring manager	Sent

Your scripts

Friendly nudge after a week

Hi **[hiring manager's first name]**, just checking my note landed. Happy to keep it short, even a 10-minute call works. **[your first name]**

Your network

WHY THIS MATTERS

More jobs are filled through people who know people than through job boards. A warm intro skips every queue. Your network already trusts you. They just need to know what you're looking for.

Your route

- [ ] **List 20 people who know your work**
  Old bosses, ex-colleagues, clients, suppliers, friends in your industry.
- [ ] **Tell them exactly what you're looking for**
  "Anything going?" gets nothing. "A senior HR role in health" gets names.
- [ ] **Ask for one small thing**
  A name, an intro or a 15-minute chat. Never "can you get me a job?"
- [ ] **Follow every intro with a Hello**
  The intro opens the door. Your Hello walks you through it.
- [ ] **Say thank you and keep them posted**
  People love hearing how their intro went.

Your scripts

Reconnect

Hi **[their name]**, it's been a while! I'm planning my next move and looking at **[what you are open to]**. You know my work better than most, so I'd love your take. Up for a quick coffee or call?
[your first name]

Ask for an intro

Hi **[their name]**, I noticed you're connected with **[hiring manager]** at **[the company]**. I'm really keen on their team and would love a quick intro if you're comfortable. I can send you a short blurb to forward. Thanks so much!
[your first name]

Thank you

Thank you so much for the intro, **[their name]**. I'll keep you posted on how it goes. I owe you a coffee!
[your first name]

6 Find the hiring manager

Hiring managers rarely post the job themselves. So get creative. Try these in order.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The recruiter manages the process. The hiring manager makes the decision. Getting your message in front of the person who decides is the most intentional move you can make in your job search.

- [ ] **Read the ad again**
  Look for "reports to", the team name or the location. That's your first clue.
- [ ] **Ask the recruiter**
  "Who would this role report to?" It's a normal question. Many will tell you.
- [ ] **Search LinkedIn**
  Go to the company page, tap People, then search the team or titles like "head of" or "manager".
- [ ] **Check the company website**
  Team, leadership or "about us" pages often name the people.
- [ ] **Look at who shared the job**
  Hiring managers often share their own team's roles.
- [ ] **Can't find them? Go one level up**
  A note to the hiring manager's boss still lands, and they'll pass it down.

Find their email

Most companies use one format for everyone. Find any real email from the company (their website, a press release, a job ad, an email signature) to work out which one.

Format	Example for Jane Smith
first.last	jane.smith@company.com
first	jane@company.com
first initial + last	jsmith@company.com
first initial . last	j.smith@company.com
firstlast	janesmith@company.com
first . last initial	jane.s@company.com
first_last	jane_smith@company.com

Check the domain too. Global companies often use one domain for everyone, like company.com. Local offices may use their country's: .com.au in Australia, .co.nz in New Zealand, .co.uk, .be, .nl, .de, .fr, .ca, .ie, .sg, .co.za and many more. A local company usually only has its local one. Always localise it: check the website of the office you're applying to. It won't always work, and that's fine. This is about making more intentional moves.

Email not working? Send it on LinkedIn instead, or meet them in real life: industry events, conferences, a mutual friend.

7 Your first interview

The first interview isn't about going through your CV. It's about three things, and you can prepare for every one.

WHY THIS MATTERS

People get a first interview and no second for two reasons. Either the person they meet doesn't match the person on the CV, or the answers aren't structured, so they can't see how you think. Both are fixable before you walk in.

What they're really testing

Can you do the job?
Your skills and experience, backed by real examples.

How do you think?
Structured answers let them see how your mind works.

Will we work well together?
The vibe. People hire people, so they need to connect with you.

Step 1: Ask what they'll focus on

Not the questions, just the emphasis. Otherwise you're preparing blindfolded.

Ask the recruiter

Hi **[recruiter's first name]**, thanks so much for setting up the interview. To make sure I prepare well: what will the emphasis be? Will it lean more technical, or more on leadership, collaboration or soft skills? And are there particular behaviours they'll be looking for?

Step 2: Make sure your CV and you match

Everyone uses AI for their CV, and you should. The question is whether you co-created it or gave AI free rein. Record a voice note talking through your experience, get the transcript, then paste the job description, your CV and your transcript into ChatGPT or Claude with this check:

The AI check

Here's a job description, my CV, and a transcript of me talking through my experience.

1. Does the person in my transcript match the person on my CV? Where don't they match?
2. If you were the hiring manager for this role, what questions would you ask me?
3. Which of my stories best prove I can do this job, and which are missing?

JOB DESCRIPTION:
[paste it here]

MY CV:
[paste it here]

MY TRANSCRIPT:
[paste it here]

Step 3: Know the attention curve

Typically, their attention starts high and your confidence starts low.

Start: lift yourself to meet them. A killer opening pitch lifts your confidence to match their attention, right from the first minute.

Middle: keep them with you. It's normal for attention to dip a little. Stories with stakes, open loops and cracking the egg keep them engaged.

End: meet them again. "Any questions?" switches them back on. People tend to remember the first and last moments of an experience most, so make your last impression a strategic question, not a flat one.

Step 4: Build your opening pitch

"Tell me about yourself" is not a walk through your CV. Four parts, about a minute.

1. The big picture: what can you deliver for them?

How you've delivered it

2. Who you work with, and what you deliver for them

3. Your leadership, direct or indirect

4. Something personal (for hiring managers, not agency recruiters)

Step 5: Have 3 strategic questions ready

Flat questions like "What's the culture like?" get an answer, and that's it. Strategic questions show you're already thinking like you're in the role. Ideas:

- If I'm successful in this role, what would success look like 12 months from now?
- I know the job description is quite detailed. What would you want me to focus on first, in the next 6 months?
- What do you think the biggest challenge will be in the first 6 to 12 months?
- What's the biggest challenge coming into this role?

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

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Your stories: the Spider

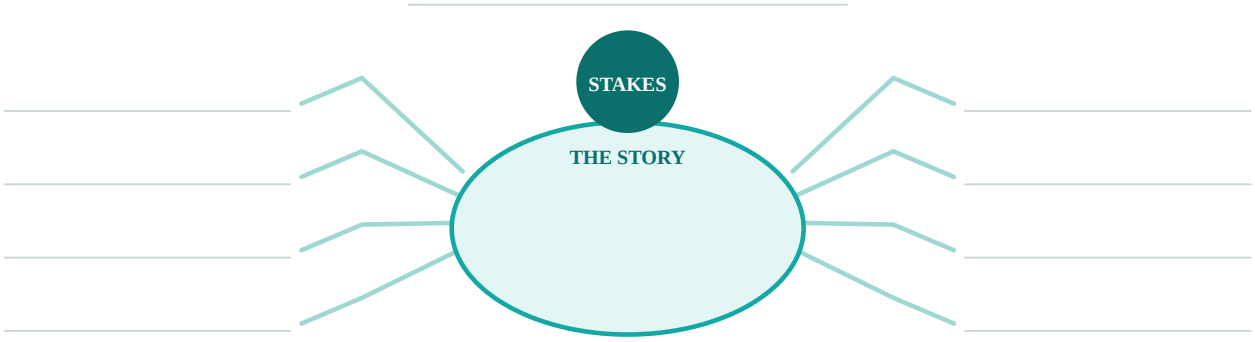
Most interviews use 4 to 8 stories. They can come from the same company, but they need to come from different situations.

WHY THIS MATTERS

STAR is a great structure, but on its own it's just a process. A real story starts with a bang. Your hook is the stakes: what would have happened if you hadn't done what you did? No drama or embellishing, just the real consequence.

Draw your spider

Body: your example. Head: the stakes (write them on the line above). 8 legs: everything involved, a mix of soft and hard skills that match the role. Make one for each of your 4 to 8 stories.



Tell it with STAR, plus the stakes

Start with the stakes

Situation

Challenge

Action: "I did three things..."

1.

2.

3.

Result

3 techniques that make you stand out

Open a loop

In your Action, say how many things you did before you say them. It guides them through your answer, so they don't drift. Three is the magic number.

Instead of "So then I talked to the stakeholders and, um, we did some workshops, and also..."

Try "I did three things. First... Second... And third..."

Crack the egg

Nobody wants an egg cooked with the shell on. Before your example, go wide: show the breadth of your experience. Then go deep with one story.

Instead of "Stakeholder management? So at ABC, there was this project..."

Try "Stakeholder management has been a big part of my last 20 years, from senior leaders to teams across the country. Let me give you one example..."

Borrowed authority

Don't describe yourself. Let someone else do it. Quote real feedback from a manager, the board or your team. Only ever use real feedback.

Instead of "I'm a collaborative, transformational leader."

Try "In my last performance review, my general manager said my leadership style is really collaborative."

Weak story vs strong story. A weak story is a process: I did this, then this, then this. A strong story starts with the stakes. Storytelling is what sells, and the product you're selling is you.

9 Your final round

They already know you can do the job. Now they're checking your commercial thinking, and whether hiring you is the safe choice.

WHY THIS MATTERS

In the back of every interviewer's mind are reservations: reasons you might not be the one. If you know them, you can name them and handle them before they become the reason you didn't get the job.

Step 1: Know your audience

How much do they know about your area? If they're not experts, drop the jargon and talk about commercial outcomes: money, risk, growth, time.

Who I'm meeting, and what they care about

Step 2: Their likely reservations

Common ones: I haven't managed budgets · I haven't managed a team · I'm from a different industry · The scope is bigger than my last role · I don't have strategic experience yet · There's a gap in my CV.

Their reservation	How I'll handle it

Step 3: Name it before they do

"There might be a reservation that I haven't managed a team. Here's why that's not a risk..." Bringing it up yourself shows confidence.

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Bonus: your secret weapon, the 90-Second Hello

Everyone is applying the same way. The Hello is how you step outside of that and reach a real person.

WHY THIS MATTERS

In a world where most applications are read by machines first, the fastest way to stand out is to be human. A short, personal Hello to the hiring manager gets you remembered. Almost nobody does it, which is exactly why it works.

What is a Hello?

A short, personal intro to the person who actually decides: the hiring manager. It's not a cover letter and it's not your CV. It's about them: what they're trying to achieve, and how you can help. It takes about 90 seconds to watch or read.

THE GOLDEN RULE

Your application goes to the recruiter. Your Hello goes to the hiring manager.

Three ways to send it

Email: the fast track. Short, about them, and in their inbox today.
LinkedIn message: a quick note when you connect. Perfect when you can't find their email.
90-second video: the stand-out move. They see your face and hear your voice before you've even met.

When to send one

- After you apply for a job, to get around the pile
- When you're going first and there's no job ad yet
- After someone in your network introduces you
- As a follow-up after a recruiter puts you forward

11 Write your Hello

Short. About them. Backed by proof. Then pick how you send it: email, LinkedIn or video.

WHY THIS MATTERS

The biggest mistake? Making it about you. "I have done this, I have done that." Nobody reads that. Hiring managers read messages about their problem. And the job ad isn't gospel. It's often written by a recruiter or AI from an old job description. The hiring manager usually needs something a little different, so read between the lines.

Step 1: Think like the hiring manager

What are they trying to achieve?

What do they want to fix or improve?

What risk do they want to avoid?

What isn't in the ad? Read between the lines.

Step 2: Your proof

One result that solves their problem

Step 3: Applying or going first?

☐ I've applied ☐ No ad, I'm going first

Going first? Pick your angle: **Permanent** · **Contract** · **Fixed-term** · **A project**. A low-risk way to say yes creates desire.

Your Hello, three ways

Email (the fast track) · under 120 words

Subject: [the role]: a quick hello

Hi **[hiring manager]**,

Looks like you're working towards **[their goal]**. **[Your proof]**

I can help with **[what they want to improve]**, and help you avoid **[their risk]**.

I've applied through the normal channel too. Would you be open to a quick chat?

[your name]

LinkedIn message · under 300 characters

Hi **[hiring manager]**, looks like you're working towards **[their goal]**. **[Your proof]** Would love to connect and share how I could help. **[your name]**

90-second video

0-10s Hello: Hi **[hiring manager]**, I'm **[your name]**. **[Who you are in one line]**
10-30s Their world: Looks like you're working towards **[their goal]**.
30-60s Your proof: **[Your proof]**
60-80s How you help: I can help with **[what they want to improve]**, and help you avoid **[their risk]**.
80-90s The ask: I'd love the chance to chat.

My draft

12 Film your Hello

No fancy gear. Your phone and 20 minutes.

WHY THIS MATTERS

An email gets read. A video gets remembered. Almost nobody sends one, so the hiring manager sees your face, hears your voice and feels like they've already met you before the interview.

- [ ] **Write your script**
  Use the Hello builder, video version. Read it out loud twice.
- [ ] **Load a teleprompter**
  The free Edits app by Instagram has one built in. Paste your script, set the speed slow.
- [ ] **Set up your shot**
  Phone at eye level, light in front of you, quiet room. Tidy what's behind you.
- [ ] **Film it**
  Smile before you start talking. Three takes max. Done beats perfect.
- [ ] **Host it**
  Upload to YouTube as Unlisted, or Loom, or Google Drive set to "anyone with the link". Test the link in a private window.
- [ ] **Name it properly**
  "Hello from **[your first name]** - **[the role you want]**". It looks professional before they even press play.

Nervous? Good. It means you're doing something most people won't. Speaking on camera is a skill, like riding a bike. The first one is wobbly. The third one flies.

13 The Holiday Hello

The one time of year you can message anyone and it feels natural, not needy.

WHY THIS MATTERS

While everyone else switches off, you stay warm in the right inboxes. When hiring picks up in the new year, you're already on their mind.

- [ ] **Write a list of 10 people**
  Old bosses, ex-colleagues, people at companies you'd love to work for.
- [ ] **Send your season's greetings**
  Short and warm. Use the scripts below.
- [ ] **Mention what you're open to in one line**
  Light touch. Planting a seed, not asking for a job.
- [ ] **Fill in your January plan**
  So you start the new year moving, not deciding.
- [ ] **Have a real break**
  Seriously. You've set it up. Now rest.

Old boss

Hi **[their name]**, hope you're winding down for a good break! I was thinking about our time together the other day and still smile about it. I'm exploring **[what you are open to]** in the new year, so if anything crosses your desk, I'd love to hear about it.

Merry Christmas,
[your first name]

Ex-colleague

Hi **[their name]**! Merry Christmas. Hope this year treated you well. Quick one: I'm looking at **[what you are open to]** in the new year. If you hear of anything, I'd really appreciate a nudge. Would love to catch up in January too.
[your first name]

Someone at a dream company

Hi **[their name]**, just a quick season's greetings from me. I've loved watching what your team is doing this year. I'd love to connect properly in the new year if you're open to it. Have a great break!
[your first name]

My January plan

Company #1 I'll send a Hello to

Company #2

Company #3

My Hello is sent by

My first dare of the new year

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Your application tracker

Every application, every Hello, every follow-up, in one place. Repetition wins.

WHY THIS MATTERS

When you run several ways in at once, things slip. This shows you who to follow up with, and where your job search is getting stuck.

Date	Company	Role	Way in	Hello: how / to	Follow up	Status

Way in: Job ad · Agency · Proactive · Network. Hello: Email · LinkedIn · Video · In person. Status: Applied · Hello sent · Followed up · Chat booked · Interview · Final interview · Offer · Not this time.

My funnel this month

Count them up. Where the numbers drop is where to look in "Where are you stuck?"

Applications

With a Hello

Chats and interviews

Offers



Now go. Dare to stand out.

You've got everything you need. The only thing left is to press send.

Dare to Stand Out · New Horizon Coaching · newhorizoncoaching.com.au