

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO FIND YOUR DREAM JOB?

MAC'S LIST JOB BOARD & **THE FIND YOUR DREAM JOB** PODCAST CAN HELP.

By: **Gina Riley**



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I got the chance to interview Mac Prichard, who is an icon in the field of careers and job search. He is the founder and publisher of Mac's List, a job board and career hub for the Pacific Northwest. Founded in 2001, Mac's List serves job seekers and employers in Oregon and Washington with a top-tier job board and careers-related resources that bring people together to find better jobs and happier careers. They accomplish this by sharing company job postings with their audience at a scale that boggles the mind. Their website receives about 75,000 visitors monthly and their weekly newsletter goes out to 10,000 people.



He is also the host of the popular podcast, Find Your Dream Job, featuring career experts, Human Resources leaders, and hiring managers who dole out practical job search advice to job seekers around the globe. Boasting over 3 million downloads in seven years, the podcast has over 470 recorded episodes that are downloaded upwards of 70,000 times per month. Mac is also the author of the book "Land Your Dream Job Anywhere."

I invite you to read my interview with Mac to uncover what has stayed consistent about an effective job search, why his podcast has been so successful, and why he thinks job seekers have the upper hand right now.

Gina

Would you give me a brief career overview and then how you came to create Mac's List?

Mac

I've been in the workplace for over 40 years with a career in communications. I've worked in government, politics, and nonprofits, as a spokesperson for public agencies and elected officials, and for the last 15 years have run my own public relations company. The common denominator in all these jobs was that I

wanted to make a difference in issues I cared about in the community where I worked and lived.

I also had two long periods of unemployment. Those periods taught me the importance of networking, learning job search skills, and being of service to others. One of the most important ways that I found to network effectively was to help other people by giving them useful job search information.

When I left a position in the Oregon state government 20 years ago, my way of staying in touch with my network and being of service to them was to share job postings, which I did informally for almost a decade. It became a very popular service and a part-time job for a person on my public relations team.

With 10+ years running the job board,

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT LESSONS I LEARNED IS YOU CAN'T RELY ON JOB BOARDS ALONE TO FIND YOUR NEXT POSITION.

You need good job search skills - which I certainly knew from my personal experience with unemployment. At Mac's List, we take this to heart and provide lots of free content about how to look for work.

Gina

So, you first started with the website and blog?

Mac

Yes, I needed to focus on my communications business and found sharing job postings for free was time-consuming. We stopped doing it for a while so I could focus on my clients and supporting my team. Then the phone started ringing and the emails started coming and people kept asking what happened to the list. I

realized I was meeting a need, so we turned the job board into a weekly newsletter. It continued to grow, which is why in 2010 we started charging employers to share their job postings and soon this became a revenue-generating business.

Our blog was well received but as you know, people take in information in different ways. Some like to read, some like to listen, and some like presentations. By adding the podcast, we were able to serve many more people than with the newsletter alone. Although I've never been a journalist, with my background in communications, I was taken with the idea of having a radio show one day, so this was something I was excited to do.

I knew we could make a difference and from the start wanted our focus to be on teaching people practical job search skills. One of the reasons our show has been successful is we had clarity about this from the very beginning, along with the energy and the passion to see it through. Our time is limited, so I find it best to do what we are most passionate about. This has been the baseline for our success.

Gina

The Find Your Dream Job podcast is a repository of careers-related topics with conversations from career coaches and hiring managers across the globe. What has changed in job search and what has stayed the same? What has been the most surprising?

Mac

The tools have changed and the way we write and send out resumes has changed. We have the cloud and apps we did not have 20 years ago.

What hasn't changed are job search principles. If you go to Goodwill and find a 1988 edition of *What Color Is Your Parachute* the techniques and tools would seem very dated, but the principles laid out in that book are the same. It is a classic that has been around since the 1970s. The book lays out fundamentals that many of the career coaches and experts I know share again and again in different ways.

FIRST, YOU NEED CLARITY ABOUT THE JOB YOU WANT. YOU NEED TO KNOW WHAT YOU OFFER TO EMPLOYERS AND WHAT MAKES YOU DIFFERENT. WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS? DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO TARGET?



With remote work, you can apply for tens of thousands of jobs. Forty years ago, we were looking at ads in the local newspaper. We have so many more choices now. This makes it even more important that you have clarity about what you want, where you want to go, and what you offer.

ANOTHER THING THAT HAS SURPRISED ME IS THIS PARADOX OF HAVING MORE CHOICES AND HOW IT CAN LEAD TO PARALYSIS AND INACTION. I EXPERIENCED THIS FEELING EARLY IN MY CAREER. WITH GREATER CHOICE, THE PARADOX GETS WORSE. I SEE THIS HAPPENING EVEN MORE WITH INCREASED REMOTE AND HYBRID WORK.

Companies want to hire people who are excited about their position and their opportunity. It doesn't have to be a life sentence. They don't expect you to stay there forever. What they want to avoid is somebody who is going to start a position and quit six months later because they were unsure of what they wanted.

Gina

What do listeners say about the podcast?

Mac

We've gotten several hundred wonderful reviews on Apple podcasts. What comes through is people appreciate the granular advice about the job search process, how to look for jobs, and practical ways to use the advice our guests share. We cover basic job search information like goal setting, how to

explain your value-added, how to target employers and jobs, and how to prepare for interviews.

SOME PEOPLE ARE GOOD AT ONE OR TWO OF THESE THINGS, BUT WE ALL HAVE BLIND SPOTS. MOST PEOPLE ARE AWARE OF WHAT THEY DON'T KNOW. IN FACT, IF YOU THINK YOU KNOW ALL THE ANSWERS YOU WILL HAVE A LONG AND HARD JOB SEARCH.

Even though the questions people have might seem very basic to those who work in the careers field, we also suffer from a well-known phenomenon - which is the curse of knowledge. All this stuff seems obvious to career pros because we've spent a long time learning, teaching, and sharing it with others. If you only look for work every 3 to 4 years you don't get the opportunity to learn as much.

Gina

And you are not taught this stuff in school either, which is challenging for many job seekers. In fact, some have never had to look for work - the work came to them via promotions, getting tapped on the shoulder, or their network.

Mac

Right. In fact, they may have used some of the best practices subconsciously or by instinct and did not understand the value of what they were doing. They may never have been trained in networking. They're good at meeting people, getting involved in community events, or serving on professional boards but they've never been taught how to leverage those experiences and skills on behalf of a job search.

When I ask people who are looking for work to reflect on the best jobs they've had and how they heard about that position, usually it came through a referral or somebody who knew their strengths, their goals, and who was working in the field or in a company of interest. The referral came to them organically and naturally.

THE CHALLENGE PEOPLE HAVE IS WHEN THEY MUST LOOK FOR WORK AND NEED TO LEARN HOW TO CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR THEMSELVES. THEY JUST CAN'T RELY ON HAPPENSTANCE. YOU CAN MAKE THOSE OPPORTUNITIES HAPPEN JUST LIKE YOU CAN MAKE YOUR OWN LUCK, BUT YOU MUST UNDERSTAND HOW IT HAPPENS AND THE SKILLS AND EXPERIENCES NEEDED TO MAKE THAT HAPPEN.



Gina

I call it not being the world's best-kept secret. People need to authentically promote themselves in ways that feel comfortable. They need to showcase their thought leadership and unique value proposition, so they are recognized as a go-to expert in what they do.

So, Mac, you mentioned you experienced two periods of unemployment. I imagine you felt stuck. How did you overcome it?

Mac

That's a great question!

I studied political science and Latin American studies and I wanted to do three things. I wanted to get paid to write, I wanted to work on political campaigns, and I wanted to work on human rights issues in Latin America. I did all three of those things by the time I was 25. I found one of these jobs through a newspaper and the others were from networking. I would call people in my Rolodex and hold conversations that would lead to me asking about job openings.

I started to think getting the next job would come easily. I was qualified to do many things, but I didn't know exactly what I wanted to do next. I went through a six-month period of unemployment and became discouraged when I'd been on top of the world the year prior. I spoke with a university career services professional who took me through job search basics. She made me think about things I hadn't thought about before. I needed goals. I needed to know my interests and what I was excited about. I needed to talk to people who are doing the work and ask them about opportunities because a lot of jobs don't get advertised. When I used these techniques, I landed a job in four weeks.

People wondered how I landed the job because it hadn't been advertised. It was because I applied the principles the school career services advisor laid out for me. The same principles you'll find in *What Color Is Your Parachute* and from the expert guests on our podcast each week. It took work on my part because I had to go out and find these people and introduce myself and tell them what I was interested in.

My second six-month stint of unemployment happened after I moved to Oregon. I thought I was a smart guy, but I had to relearn old lessons about job search. This ties back to the importance of networking and learning job search skills.

THE BEST NETWORKERS DON'T JUST ASK FOR HELP, THEY GIVE HELP TO OTHERS.

They are in service to others. Service is a hugely important value for me personally and for the Mac's List team.

What I have learned from running Mac's List is the importance and power networking has in the job search process. You should ask for help, be helpful to others and be of service to your community.

Gina

What are you most proud of?

Mac

I am proud we've created an online community that helps readers and our website visitors find work they enjoy and have a satisfying career. And I'm also proud to help companies find the best employees who are excited to work for them. I take pride in the success of the people who use the knowledge and skills our guests





share on the podcast or website to find the job they want and love.

We also provide lots of content for employers on how to hire smarter. It is typical for a smaller company to not hire an HR professional until there are upwards of 25 employees. Oftentimes, the hiring process and interviews are managed by people not formally trained in those areas. They're doing their best, but they can benefit from education and learning about how to do it better.

We talk with hiring managers about their needs and share information to help them with their talent selection process. We offer free content to help them hire smarter. Many of the companies we work with are small and growing. We sometimes find the job postings sent to our board are prepared by people without formal training on how to communicate with candidates. They don't know how to research salary ranges. Or how to design a good hiring process.

Gina

What are the most popular topics?

The most popular topics are career clarity and making career pivots. Interview skills are also a very popular topic. You can tell people are getting ready for an interview on

Monday because we see interview episodes being downloaded – which is how the podcast and materials are designed to be used.

It seems very natural that the most popular episodes are about career clarity or switching careers. The topics reflect subjects that many of us care about because many people change careers two or three times over a 40-year career.

Smart candidates know that they can't wing it when they're applying for a job or interviewing, so they seek out resources to help them prepare. Whether it's updating the resume or getting ready for interviews, they spend time doing homework before they hit send on that application or walk into an interview.

Gina

I would guess a listener might want to tune in to multiple episodes on a particular topic, like interview prep or constructing a resume because they're going to get different opinions and perspectives. There's not just one way to do it.

Mac

I work with my guests in advance to choose the topic, which usually comes from her or him based on their expertise and is something they are excited to talk about. I think this is one of the secrets of our show. Guests are excited to

be there, and they bring a lot of energy to the episode. They know their topic inside and out and this really shines through.

It might be based on a blog or LinkedIn post they've written or a presentation. Maybe there is a question the guest gets over and over. Coming on the show is a way for them to serve many people with a response. It is a way for them to scale their reach to thousands of people. They love this because they want to help people.



Gina

You do a few things very elegantly. One is the laser focus on your service-based mission and the content you provide to your listeners. At the same time, you hold space for your guest and set them up to shine with an opportunity to showcase their expertise. Then, you skillfully guide the information they give to your audience. It shows up episode after episode. Your audience knows what to expect from you as the host.

Mac

Well said. Many of our listeners want to connect and learn from our guests and get a glimpse behind the hiring curtain. It might be the human resources director. How can I get

them to return my call? How can I get in front of her or him? How can I make a case for my candidacy? Or they want to understand why they did not get hired or why their resume wasn't selected.

Gina

The content in your episodes is evergreen because the tactics are something that can be used year after year. I was grateful to be a guest on your show. To your point, I refer to the episode we recorded again and again. I use it with every single coaching client prior to interview prep. It has been great to have that one little standalone half-hour earworm to get them started.

What are newer topics that have evolved? What are we talking about post-pandemic?

Mac

There has been more on DE&I (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) and searching for a job as a person of color. We are also seeing more on the topic of mental health, coping with depression after being laid off, imposter syndrome, and what to do when your job search drags on.

It is a jobseeker's market right now. We are seeing highly publicized layoffs at big tech companies, yet the national unemployment rate is still near historic lows. This is a big deal. It's the first time since the 1970s that job seekers are in the driver's seat, and it gives applicants more choices. Ultimately this leads to higher wages and better benefits.

Hiring managers had become accustomed to an employer's market. To compete successfully to land the best candidates they must work harder and recruit better. Everybody wants to find the best people, and

the best hiring managers are learning new recruitment and interviewing skills. This is a big change.

I think another big change is remote and hybrid work is here to stay. Some employers believed the disappearance of federal stimulus checks or the increase in the unemployment rate would give them leverage and force workers to return to the workplace five days a week. So far, this hasn't happened. After being in the driver's seat, hiring managers are struggling with this change. They put out job postings and think they will have their pick of resumes.

Five years ago, it was the exceptional employer who let people work from home one day a week, and now two days a week seems to be table stakes. Employers are arguing about whether the workers are coming back three or two days a week - that's a huge change. Also, as leases come up for renewal, we will see offices continue to change. Employers are shrinking the amount of office space they want, which I expect to see happen over the next couple of years. And finally, with remote workers becoming commonplace, there will be new opportunities for applicants to work from across the country and for hiring managers to recruit nationally.

Gina

How did the pandemic affect you and your team?

Mac

I had both a public relations firm, Prichard Communications and Mac's List. Several of us worked at both companies with about eight people in a seventh-floor office that was a couple of thousand square feet. We had two conference rooms and seven private offices.

After March 2020, nobody came back. I was fortunate my landlord let me renegotiate the lease. I shrunk my office down to a one-person, 200-square-foot office. Our team had been working remotely on Fridays for three or four years, so we had that foundation to build on. Our team was ready to get back to work but they were not ready to come back to the office.

I learned from this experience that people can be just as productive or more productive working remotely as they can in a traditional office. I would not have believed that before the pandemic. I've told my team I'm a believer because my employee retention, productivity, and profitability are way up.

I hear employees who think that you need to have everybody in the office for hallway conversations and collaboration, but my team uses Slack channels and G-chats, and they talk and collaborate electronically all the time. We had to learn new management skills because we haven't had the luxury of walking down the hall, so we must be crystal clear about expectations when doing check-ins via Zoom. I think that's made me a better manager.

Gina

From your perspective, what are THE most critical aspects of career transition?



Mac

It is the same as when you're looking for a job.

YOU MUST KNOW AND BE CLEAR ABOUT WHAT YOU WANT. THE BEST WAY TO ANSWER THAT QUESTION IS TO MAKE A LIST OF THE ONE, TWO, OR EVEN THREE FIELDS THAT INTEREST YOU AND THEN GO OUT AND TALK TO PEOPLE WHO NOT ONLY ARE WORKING IN THOSE FIELDS BUT HAVE TRANSITIONED INTO THEM.

For example, I spoke with a woman last year who worked in the supply chain, and she wanted to move into nonprofit management. Coincidentally I knew an executive director for a nonprofit here in Oregon who had worked in the supply chain world and who'd made a similar transition. I connected them and he was able to answer relevant questions and share experiences she was about to have. She found the conversation to be very helpful.

NO MATTER THE LEAP YOU WANT TO MAKE, SOMEBODY ELSE HAS DONE IT. TALK TO THEM ABOUT HOW THEY DID IT, THE BARRIERS THEY OVERCAME, AND THEN MAKE A LIST OF ALL THE REASONS IN YOUR HEAD WHY YOU'RE NEVER GOING TO GET A JOB IN THAT SPACE, LIKE 'I AM TOO OLD,' 'I DON'T HAVE THE RIGHT DEGREE,' OR 'I DON'T KNOW ANYBODY.'

We all carry these objections around. Turn these into questions you ask people in informational conversations about your concerns and how you might overcome them. Ask how you can make connections and build networks in the field. What are ways you can hear about jobs that never get posted? Turn your negatives into positives and you'll get great advice about how to address the objections in your head.

Gina

What can be done to holistically improve the recruiting process?

Mac

Better communication.

It is shocking to me, Gina, how often I hear from candidates who say I applied and never received an acknowledgment. I had an interview and I never heard about the next step.



Communication matters. It's not only wrong to treat people this way but it is bad for business. Everybody who has that experience talks about it afterward and they will always talk badly about that company. We are in an era where it's so easy to send out automated emails saying your application was received but we are sorry you didn't meet our needs. We wish you the best of luck or thanks for spending 20 minutes on the phone with me. We decided to move ahead with another candidate, but I wish you the best. Nobody likes to get those messages, but at least the candidate is not hanging and can stop thinking about the opportunity and cross it off the list.

This might happen because managers aren't well trained or organizations are understaffed, but I don't think those are good excuses.

Gina

In my mind, it comes down to bad manners. I had an executive-level coaching client who interviewed with the CEO of a reputable company and never heard back after sending two thank you emails. My client finally heard back almost three weeks later from the HR contact they were not moving ahead.

Mac

Sometimes I hear a manager does not have time to deal with the calls or the emails. When I post a position, I put my cell phone in the posting. I've never gotten a call. I think it's a myth that you're going to be overwhelmed by calls or emails if you make it easy to communicate with the hiring manager.

Gina

What is next for you, Mac? Do you have any career pivots or plans?

Mac

I just made a career pivot. After a good 15-year run, I closed Prichard Communications. While it was always profitable and I got to work with wonderful clients, I am at a stage of life where I want to focus on Mac's List and pursue other projects that are meaningful to me. I am by no means semi-retired! That is not for me.

Gina

Do you have a most memorable moment on the podcast you could share?

Mac

In the past, I was one of those guys who never took a sick day. I am much more sensible about this now. About 10 years ago I woke up on a podcast recording day and had laryngitis. I've never had laryngitis before! I had to ask our managing Director and my co-host, Ben Forstag, to take over and he did a great job. The next day I was fine.

One of my favorite moments was when we did the live recording for the 100th episode at the Fremont Theater. At the time I had three co-hosts: Becky Thomas, Ben Forstag, and Jessica Black. It was a fun evening with 75 audience members in the theater for our live show. We had a band who played our theme music and our local television station, KGW, featured us on their six o'clock show.





We did a live stand-up before going on air. I hired a writer to help me plan out the show and we did a game show parody about job search. The idea of me doing comedy was out of my comfort zone but we practiced, and it worked out well.

It was a wonderful evening. People can listen to it. It was our 100th episode.

Gina

I will have to go back and listen to that! Thank you so much Mac. I know readers of Industry Expert Magazine will enjoy getting a view behind the curtain.

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If you are a job seeker, I encourage you to check out the Find Your Dream Job podcast. If you are looking for interview prep advice, check out my conversation with Mac by downloading podcast episode 279, "How to Answer Any Behavioral Interview Question," which has been downloaded over 21,000 times.

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CONTRIBUTING WRITER'S PROFILE



Gina Riley Consulting & creator of the Career Velocity™ System. She is a career transition coach who helps leaders customize their career stories to land jobs where they can leave a legacy. She is an Executive Search Consultant for Talence Group.



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