



**Job Search  
by Doing Business In English™**

# **JOB SEARCH AS AN ATHLETE**

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## Lessons from Sport to Help with Job Search

When many of us prepare for a sporting event such as a competition or an event such as a half marathon, cycling challenge or long trek we prepare like an amateur athlete. Considering every aspect of our preparation, techniques and performance in a disciplined, planned and intensive manner. Unfortunately, when most people approach a job search, despite its importance, they expect to perform without planning, preparing and practicing. Lessons can be taken from sports that require motivation, perseverance and learning new skills.

Sir David John Brailsford CBE is a British cycling coach and sports performance director. He was the Director of British Cycling and in this role achieved incredible success despite Britain previously having virtually none. He became well known for his theory on marginal gains and work with the psychiatrist Doctor Steve Peters, which has been adopted in elite sport and business. He has shared many of his lessons below and questions added to see how they can be useful in job search.

1. Brailsford believes that success is dependent upon having a detailed understanding and plan covering the goal, strategy, tactics, challenges, skill requirements and workload.

*Do you have a plan that covers every aspect of the job search and how will you ensure you review, revise and refine it?*

2. Brailsford implemented five critical procedures for his cyclists.

(i) Prioritize and determine the areas in which you wish to succeed.

*Have you prioritized the target jobs and companies?*

*If you have several applications in process at one time, how will you prioritize?*

(ii) Determine the necessary steps to achieve success.

*Have you identified all the steps / actions you need to take?*

*Are they clearly shown in your plan?*

*What work are you taking responsibility for?*



(iii) Reverse the process by comparing the desired outcome to your current status.

*What will achieving the targeted jobs give you and how will you ensure you keep reminding yourself of this?*

*What are you committing to achieving?*

(iv) Brailsford tells athletes to create a powerful CORE to achieve excellence.

**Commitment + Ownership + Responsibility = Excellence**

Athletes have to develop and manage their own motivation to achieve what they are committed to, they take responsibility for their performance plus ownership of their training and learning, when all are achieved then excellence can be achieved.

*Can you write down your Job Search CORE?*

*How could it be adapted and improved?*

(v) Implement the plan, follow the commitments you have made to yourself and revise as your experiences, knowledge and awareness of the job market develop.

*How will you ensure you follow your plan every week, incorporate learning and ensure your practice enables you to perform at your best?*

*How will you continually update and customize your cv effectively?*

*How will you continually improve your interview skills and show potential employers you are both the strongest candidate and best suited to the positions?*

*How will you do everything 1% or more better every time to maximize your chances of success?*

3. Steve Peters developed a mind management model (The Chimp Paradox) that athletes learnt and used to maximize their mental performance. The model helped them manage stress, optimize performance and build resilience. A job search is a tough, complex and ambiguous challenge is both of significant importance in life but one most people only face a few times. When the general economy is growing and the job market favors the applicants this is less demanding but when economies are declining and the jobs market favors employers the situation is very different. Perseverance is often the difference between successful job seekers and unsuccessful job seekers.

*How will you prepare yourself for the inevitable setbacks there will be?*

*There will often be delays in potential employers coming back to you that will be difficult to cope with, how can you manage yourself when this happens and maintain motivation for the overall job search?*

*For most jobs, companies will interview several applicants, this means statistically the chances are against you, how will you maintain your motivation, keep your options open and bounce back when you are rejected?*

4. Brailsford uses the "triangle of change" to affect change, athletes must be a) dedicated to improving themselves. b) believe in their ability to change c) be distressed / unhappy enough to make changes. Brailsford believes that change can only be accomplished if both a and b are in place, then either or both the reward of change needs increasing or the pain of not making change increases (c).

*Are you committing enough of your time, energy and focus to your job search?*

*Are you prepared to do things differently, get out of your comfort zone, be uncomfortable, learn new skills and show the best version of yourself?*

*Do you believe you can show you are both the strongest candidate and the most suitable candidate for your target employer?*

*Can you write down concisely why the employer will choose you?*

*If you do not secure a job what will happen? How will your life be?*

*If you secure a job what will happen? How will your life be?*

5. You alone are responsible for managing your performance, your actions and how you do them.

*How frequently will you monitor your performance?*

*How will you learn to become comfortable being uncomfortable?*

*How will you learn from events but not overreact to them?*

*How will you adapt what you are doing to constantly make improvements in your performance?*

*How will you track what is working, improve it further and do it more often?*