SoftEd

A SOFTED CAREERPRO FIELD GUIDE

Reframing What You Look For

A working job aid — your skills travel further than your title.

PART 1 **See the box** — name the walls and inventory what travels

★ REFRAME IT
Your last title is **one container your skills happened to fill** — packaging, not identity.

★ OWN IT
Nobody handed you the box. You built it — which means you can take it down.

★ WIDEN IT
Search by **skills** and the market widens. Search by title and it shrinks.

The three walls of the box

The title wall
You search the words on your last business card.

The industry wall
One sector, out of habit rather than fit.

The company wall
Only employers shaped like your last one — same size, same model, same work.

The box feels safe. A shrinking, crowded box is the riskier place to stand — and the boiling frog never notices until the industry is gone. Recruiters reinforce the box: they are paid for perfect matches. Go around it through referrals.

Four kinds of transferable skills

Craft
The technical work itself. Under every knowledge job is a craft.

Process
Planning, analysis, delivery — often certifiable. Certify what you already do.

People
Selling, teaching, leading — quantify with stories and outcomes.

Domain
How your industry really works. The most underrated bucket.

"I have emotional intelligence" sells nothing. "I influenced three outcomes in a matrix with no positional power" sells.

Two piles: what stays, what travels

- **Portable (your product):** skills, methods, judgment, track record. "I can scope, plan, and land complex work" is true in any industry.
- **Anchored (stays behind):** one employer's systems, internal politics, house jargon. Real value where you are; worth little on the open market.
- **Sell the portable pile.** The craft is portable. The container is not.

Your 60-second skills audit

- **Name three things you do well that are not in your job title.** Those three travel further than the title does.
- **Which skill do people outside your team come to you for?** Outside demand is the first sign a skill travels.

Get a second set of eyes — coach, mentor, or honest peer. We all have confirmation bias about ourselves.

New eyes are an asset

Outsiders see the holes that veterans' biases hide, and some managers recruit for exactly that. With one who only buys domain-matched resumes, **you are not going to win — accept the loss fast** and find the buyers who see beyond the box.

12.9
jobs held on average, ages 18–58

3.9yrs
median employer tenure, and falling

~27%
of graduates work closely within their major

You will move again — and your skills are built for it. Peer-reviewed labor economics finds workers routinely move to occupations with similar tasks, and the task capital they carry accounts for up to half of wage growth. Skills are more portable than previously considered.

Sources: U.S. BLS, NLSY79 & Employee Tenure; Abel & Deitz, FRBNY; Gathmann & Schönberg, J. Labor Economics (2010).

Where it shows up in our work

The recruiter pushes back

They're paid by the company for same-title, same-industry matches. Don't argue with the box — go around it through referrals, who pitch you for who you are.

Your sector is sinking

Loving the role doesn't mean staying on sinking ground. Read the signals (Part 2) and move the same craft to a healthier industry.

You landed the job

Keep the engine running. The inventory, the map, and the contact database are cheapest to maintain while employed.

PART 2 **Map the adjacencies** — the ecosystem, the doors in, and the living inventory

The four adjacency questions

1
Who sells to it?
Software, services, and products aimed at your profession.

2
Who builds for it?
Companies that need your expertise to shape the product.

3
Who teaches it?
Schools, training firms, and certification bodies.

4
Who tells its story?
Publications and content teams that need insiders.

THE MODEL

Your market = your craft + its ecosystem. *Do the work — or* ***serve the work****: join the companies that sell to it, build for it, and teach it. The map runs on domain knowledge first, craft second.*

One profession, many doors — the lawyer walkthrough

DOOR	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	ON THE GROUND
Teach it	Law classes, CLE, corporate training — and beyond law: contracts, business law.	*Adjunct or curriculum builder in legal education.*
Build it	Product roles at legal software companies, including the AI wave.	*BA or PM at a legal tech firm — a user on the team.*
Sell it	Revenue roles for products aimed at law offices.	*Sales or sales engineering; you speak the customer's language.*
Market it	Marketing for law firms or legal products — a huge spend category.	*Content and campaigns a lawyer can write credibly.*
Write about it	Legal publications, analysis, thought leadership.	*Articles for legal online magazines.*

Run this table on your own profession. Side doors need no job opening: a scoped ***fractional or consulting*** *engagement is an easy yes ("fractional professional," not "entrepreneur"), and a* ***trade-association board*** *in the target industry builds credibility and hands you its network.*

The skills inventory — 5 steps, refreshed quarterly

1 **List**
Every skill, sorted into the four buckets.

2 **Evidence**
An outcome or story behind each one.

3 **Map**
Where else each skill is used and bought.

4 **Rate**
How portable? How current?

5 **Refresh**
A living document. Update quarterly.

A reframe you do not write down evaporates. Hate writing? Talk into a transcription tool. Keep a contact database — a spreadsheet beats memory; LinkedIn is not a CRM.

Make the jump clean

- **Translate the vocabulary.** Rewrite your experience in their words, not yours.
- **Keep craft, change container — expect a ramp, not a rebuild.** The differences are real and workable. Weeks, not years.
- **Network in.** Weak ties drive the most job mobility — the association hands them to you.

The boiling frog — read the ground

- **Warning signs:** layoffs at rivals too, survival mergers, shrinking demand. One firm's layoff is weather; a sector's layoffs are climate.
- **Healthy ground:** broad hiring, capital flowing, rising demand. If the warning column wins: diagnose, inventory, target a growing industry, translate, move. **Same craft, better ground.**

Deliver. Lead. Innovate.

Facilitated by David Mantica
Research: Gathmann & Schönberg (2010); Rajkumar et al. (2022); U.S. BLS; Abel & Deitz (FRBNY)
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