



Online Activation Signal Strategy

This is one of the most underutilized executive job search strategies.

The key is to stop searching for **jobs** listed on job boards, and to start searching for **signals**.

Many CEOs, founders, business unit presidents, and functional executives announce hiring on LinkedIn before the role reaches recruiters or job boards. Some never make it to a public posting because they fill them through referrals.

Here are the best approaches.

1. Search Posts (Most Effective)

Use the LinkedIn search bar and switch the filter to **Posts**.

Search for phrases executives commonly use.

Example: Product Leadership:

- looking for a VP of Product
 - hiring product leader
 - looking for a Head of Product
 - building our product team
 - scaling our product organization
 - Chief Product Officer
 - VP Product Innovation
 - Director Product Management
 - product leadership
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Example: Innovation

- looking for innovation leader
 - Head of Innovation
 - VP Innovation
 - innovation executive
 - digital transformation leader
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Example: Executive Searches

- looking for a COO
 - looking for a CIO
 - looking for a CTO
 - looking for a CRO
 - executive search
 - executive opportunity
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Example: Growth Signals

These are gold because they often precede hiring.

- we're growing
- expanding our leadership team
- new business unit
- scaling operations
- Series B
- Series C
- recent acquisition
- new product launch
- international expansion

A CEO announcing a Series C funding round is essentially saying:

"We're about to hire a lot of executives."

2. Use Boolean

LinkedIn supports a limited Boolean syntax.

Example:

CEO AND ("looking for" OR hiring) Product

or

Founder hiring product

or

("VP Product" OR "Head of Product") hiring

3. Search by Industry

Example: Consumer Health.

Search:

- CEO hiring product healthcare
 - CEO innovation medtech
 - digital health hiring
 - medical device leadership
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4. Filter by Recent

This is critical.

Choose

- Past 24 hours
- Past week
- Past month

Fresh posts get the most engagement.

5. Search Company Announcements

Executives often post things like:

- We just secured \$150M in funding.
- Excited to double our engineering team.
- Looking to add world-class product leadership.

Those are far better signals than job boards.

6. Follow the Right Executives

Instead of following recruiters, follow:

- CEOs
- Presidents
- General Managers
- Business Unit Leaders
- Chief Product Officers
- Chief Technology Officers
- Chief Commercial Officers
- Venture Capital Partners
- Portfolio Operating Partners
- Private Equity Operating Partners

These people frequently announce leadership hires before HR does.

7. Search Comments

This is advanced.

Suppose a CEO posts:

- We're growing rapidly.

Read every comment.

- Often someone asks: Are you hiring?

The CEO replies:

- Yes—we're looking for Product, Marketing and Operations leaders.

That information may not appear anywhere else.

8. Save the Search

If you have LinkedIn Premium or LinkedIn Sales Navigator, save the search and enable alerts so you're notified when new matching posts appear.

9. Use Sales Navigator (Best for Executive Searches)

LinkedIn Sales Navigator lets you search for decision-makers and combine filters such as:

- Current title: CEO, Founder, President, General Manager, Chief Product Officer
- Company headcount
- Industry
- Geography
- Recent activity (posted on LinkedIn)

- Years in role
- Company growth
- Funding stage (through some integrations)

You can then review the posts from those leaders to identify hiring signals and engage with them before reaching out directly.

My favorite strategy: "Hiring Signal Monitoring"

This is a proactive approach that works especially well for VP-to-C-suite candidates.

1. **Build a target list of 50–100 companies.**
2. Follow the CEO, President, functional executives (e.g., Product, Technology), and the company page.
3. Save searches for phrases like:
 - "looking for"
 - "hiring"
 - "building"
 - "expanding"
 - "growing"
 - "new business"
 - "launching"
4. Review new posts every morning for 10–15 minutes.
5. **When you spot a hiring or growth signal, engage thoughtfully with the post before sending a personalized outreach message.**

This shifts you from reacting to posted openings to identifying opportunities at the moment organizations begin expanding. It's a much more strategic way to access executive roles that are often filled through networking rather than traditional applications.