



Job-Hunting Quietly While You're Employed (HVAC & BAS Edition)

Editor's Note: This playbook is inspired by career search frameworks from CIO, adapted specifically for the high-visibility world of HVAC and BAS. The goal is to help you explore the market while protecting your current reputation and paycheck.

The 8 Core Moves (translated for our industry)

1) Start by calibrating the market and your goals

Step back, scan what's out there, and get honest about what you want next (scope, schedule, tech stack, culture), *before* you signal interest. It's smart to benchmark your value even if you stay.

2) Don't ignore internal options

If you need flexibility, different work mix, or training, you may be able to get it right where you are. Have a grown-up conversation with your manager about what would make this role "future-proof" for you and propose a plan.

3) Keep your search confidential and professional

Protect your relationships, deliver like a pro, and don't telegraph a wobbly commitment. Proceed as if your current employer will someday hear about the process because they actually might.

4) Tidy your online presence very quietly

Optimize your professional profile for clarity of skills and outcomes, but turn off public notifications and avoid sudden, dramatic changes that scream "I'm leaving."

5) Network intentionally, not loudly

Re-activate trusted peers, vendors, contractors, and former managers for market intel and perspective, not for "help me get a job" pleas. Quiet conversations > broadcast activity.

6) Schedule interviews with discipline

Assume the process will take time and multiple rounds. Protect your workday, use PTO for critical steps, and never "phone-it-in" on your current commitments as your reputation follows you.

7) Do real due diligence on fit, leadership, delivery model

A role is open for a reason. Ask pointed questions about scope, success metrics, and team dynamics; fast, frictionless processes can be a red flag.

8) Don't resign until you have a written offer (and start date)

Even in a strong market, approvals and timing slip. Keep your income (and leverage) until you've signed and cleared contingencies.

Role-Specific Playbooks (discreet actions you can take now)

Below are practical steps that make you discoverable and credible without "announcing" anything.

BAS Technicians, Programmers & Engineers

- Quietly refresh your profile with platforms & protocols (Niagara/BACnet/Modbus), commissioning wins, and first-time-fix reductions; add two sanitized proof points (graphics/sequence highlights). (Keep notifications off.)
- If you want more complex retrofits internally, bring your manager a 90-day plan (sites, sequences, training) before looking out.



- When interviewing, ask how commissioning success is measured (hours, defects escaped, handover criteria) to test operational maturity.

Sales Professionals & Sales Leaders (HVAC & BAS)

- Publish low-key, anonymized wins (vertical, problem, outcome) and relationship capital (contractors/owners/design-assist) without signaling flight. (Again, no public alerts.)
- Explore internal territory shifts or vertical pilots first; you might get the growth you want without moving.
- Due diligence: ask about GTM motion (direct/MC/GC/hybrid), quota logic, and how top reps actually hit plan.

Project Managers & Estimators (HVAC & BAS)

- Make your value legible: PPC/critical-path recoveries, buy-out deltas vs. estimate, approved COs, safety, cash-flow discipline and try to make these updates calmly, not drastically.
- Consider an internal scope reset (higher-risk projects, earlier pre-construction handoff) before you shop.
- Interview lens: RFI cadence, decision logs, vendor strategy; rush-free but structured processes are a green flag.

Engineers & Designers (HVAC & BAS)

- Surface sequences authored, measured energy deltas vs. baseline, and commissioning hours eliminated through design clarity. Keep the tone “portfolio,” not “goodbye.”
- Start internal cross-training or design-to-programming loops as a growth path before external outreach.
- Due diligence: ask about integration with programming/field teams and how alternates/VE are managed.

Service Coordinators & Dispatchers (HVAC & BAS)

- Quiet metrics speak loudly: FTFR, SLA hit rate, collapse recoveries, and customer kudos updated without fanfare.
- Explore internal tool/process upgrades or role expansion (capacity planning, exception boards) first.
- In interviews, probe route/visibility systems and escalation rules to avoid walking into chaos.

Service Operations Leaders (HVAC & BAS)

- Share crisp turnarounds (callbacks ↓, productivity ↑, safety streaks, NPS) and systemization you installed (cadences, dashboards) without spiking activity alerts.
- Consider an internal redesign (org structure, KPIs, tool stack) as a first move.
- Evaluate prospects on operating rhythm, change authority, and executive sponsorship --- speed for speed's sake can be a warning sign.

Construction Operations Leaders (HVAC & BAS)

- Document schedule variance reductions, claim prevention/mitigation, and GC relationship wins; post a single, modest case study rather than a flurry.
- Ask internally for ownership of high-risk resequencing pilots before you look out.
- Interview lens: project-health signals beyond “on-time/on-budget,” and how blockers move through the org.



Executive Leaders & General Managers (HVAC & BAS)

- Showcase P&L results, org-design improvements, bench strength, and market expansion in a sober, steady profile update (no dramatic edits).
- Consider internal role shaping like strategy horizon, investments, and culture work before external steps.
- Don't resign without a signed offer and clear start logistics; executive timelines slip.

A discreet 30-day plan (no "I'm looking" vibe)

Week 1 – Quiet refresh

Update your professional profile with skills & outcomes and disable public notifications so changes don't blast your network.

Week 2 – Internal first

If 1–2 specific changes would keep you engaged (scope, training, flexibility), propose them to your manager with a simple plan.

Week 3 – Selective conversations

Take 1–2 exploratory calls off-hours or on PTO. Ask pointed questions about scope, success metrics, cadence, and leadership style; avoid rushing.

Week 4 – Decision hygiene

Only advance if the fit is strong. Otherwise, bank the market intel and keep performing where you are. Never resign without a written offer and start date.

Source & Attribution

- **CIO** — [“How to find a new job while you're still employed”](#) (Johanna Ambrosio): practical guidance on discretion, timing, and internal options.
- **CIO** — [“How to look for a job while you're still employed”](#) (Sharon Florentine): specific tactics like turning off public profile notifications.