

# 15 Emails That Worked



# Looking for a startup job?

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Crisp, concise, and thoughtful emails can make a huge difference in getting an introduction to the CEO of a hot new startup you'd like to join, or having a venture capitalist (VC) pass your resume along to a portfolio company hiring executive. Great email technique allows you to capitalize on even your casual connections, where you don't necessarily have a strong relationship or past history with them. On the flip side, poorly constructed, rambling emails give busy people in the startup ecosystem a great reason to ignore you.

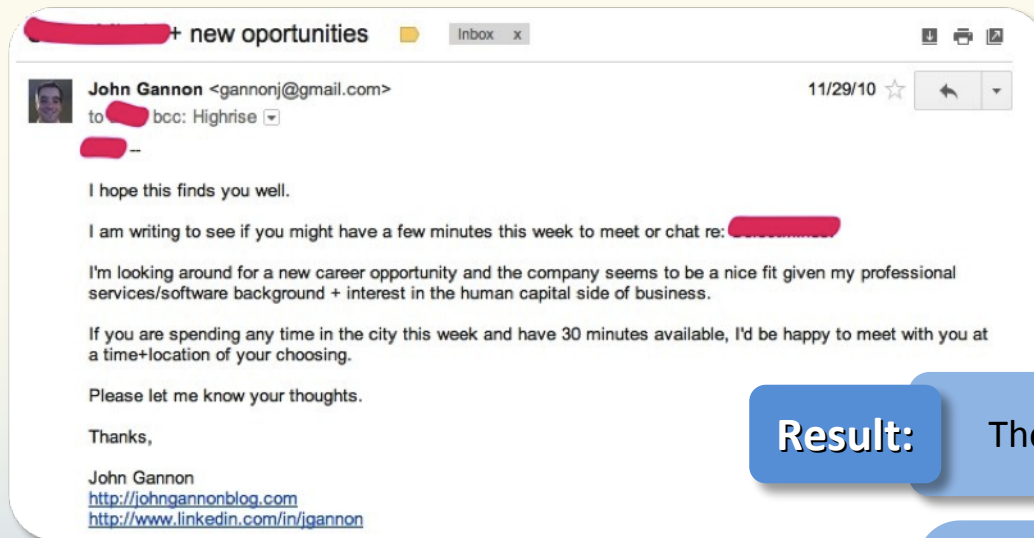
In this eBook, I provide **15 emails that worked** - emails I sent various startup executives and venture capitalists during a recent job hunt that elicited a positive response. For each email, I'll provide context, the best practices I applied, the final result, and some suggestions to make the email even more powerful if you decide to use it. At the end, after all of the emails, I'll close things up with a summary of the best practices that you should use when trying to contact VC's and startup executives during your job hunt.

Happy hunting!

John Gannon

<http://www.johnsjobs.me>

Email to a venture capitalist to whom I had spoken with a few times in the past few years. The purpose of the email was to speak with the VC about one of their portfolio companies where I was interested in working.



### Result:

The VC agreed to take a call with me.

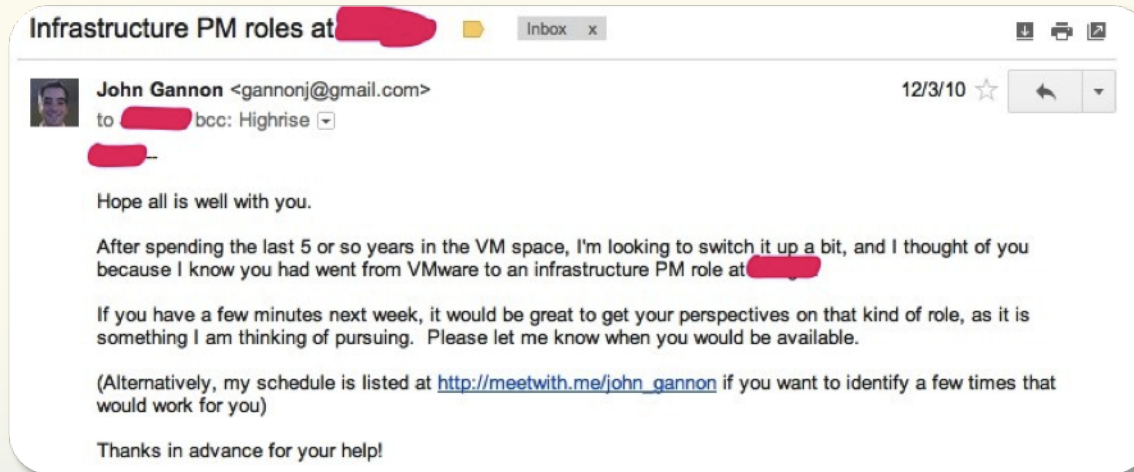
### Best Practices:

I kept the email very short and made my 'ask' at the beginning of the email. It also helped that I made a point of concisely explaining how my background and interest would be a good fit with the company.

### What I'd do differently next time:

Whenever you're asking for a meeting or a call, you should always suggest a few potential dates/times. This cuts down on email traffic and also makes it easy for the person on the other end to say 'Yes,' because they can easily check their calendar to see if those slots are open. Despite not following that best practice, I got lucky on this one, possibly because the VC in question worked for a big firm and had an assistant coordinate the meeting. You won't always be so lucky.

Email to a former colleague requesting an informational interview related to his current employer. I hadn't spoken to this former colleague in several years.



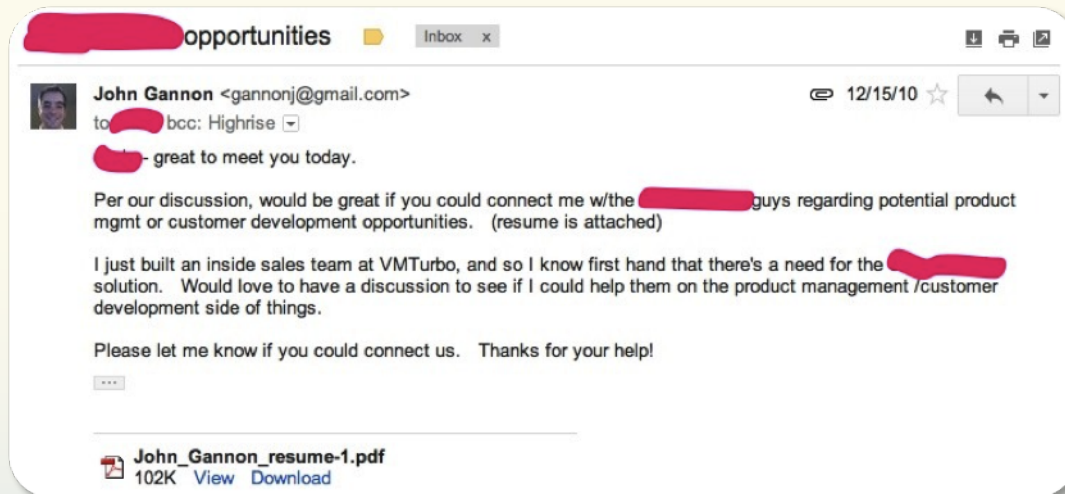
**Result:**

He agreed to have a call with me.

**Best Practices:**

I used Timebridge, a service that allows you to share your free/busy times to others, so they can simply select an open slot. Using these services is a great way to make scheduling "self service" for folks you'd like to meet with. This way, I didn't have to suggest any times – he could pick the ones that worked best for him with just a couple of clicks.

Follow up email to a VC I'd just met to ask him to forward my resume to one of the companies in his portfolio.



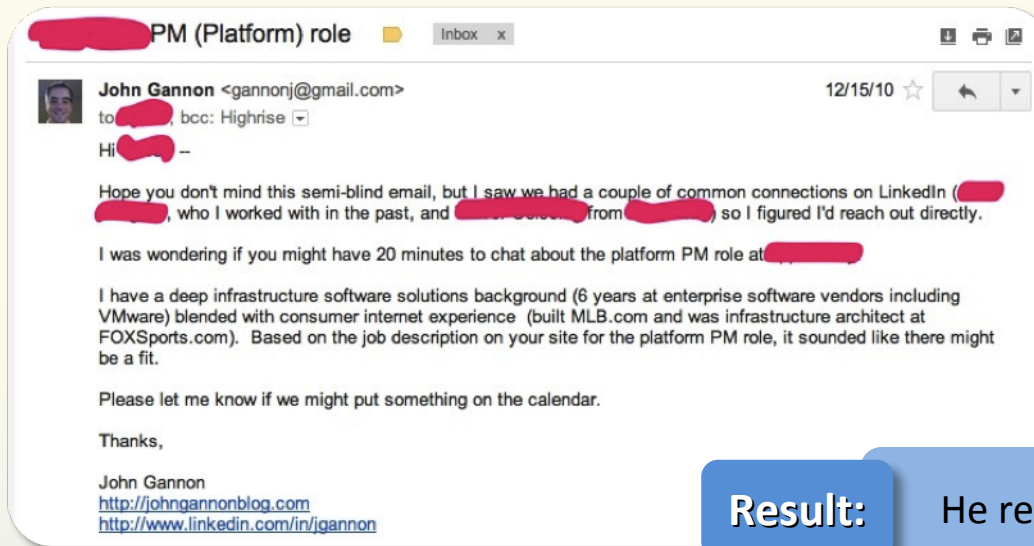
**Result:**

He introduced me to the company's founder, whom I subsequently interviewed with.

**Best Practices:**

I mentioned that he agreed to make the introduction, and then included my resume and a brief background blurb that would make it easy to forward to the company – without having to add a whole lot of additional context. It's all about making it easy for busy people to help!

Cold email to a hiring manager at a startup where I was hoping to interview.



**Result:**

He responded and took the meeting.

**Best Practices:**

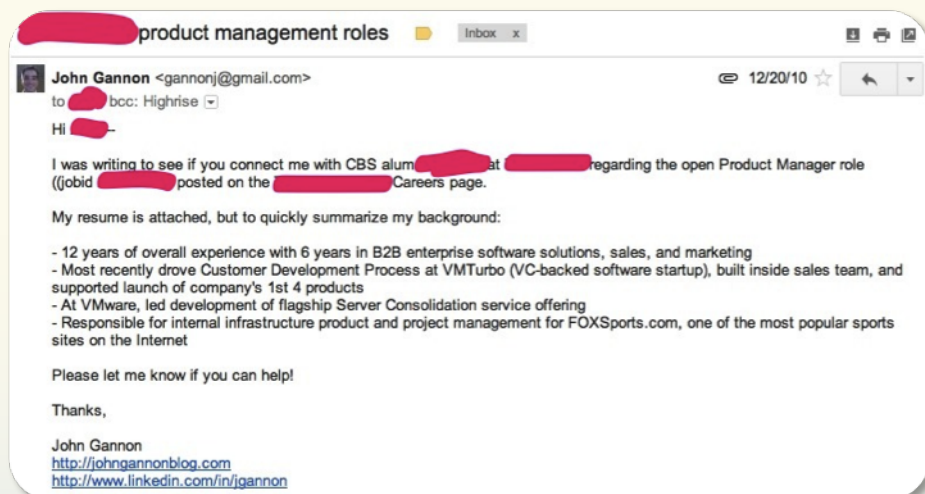
Because he didn't know me, I mentioned two mutual LinkedIn connections to help him see me as someone who ran in the same circles. Establishing some familiarity, even if somewhat tenuous, is extremely important if you're going to succeed with cold emails.

I also made my "ask" early in the email, and kept the time commitment short (20 minutes).

**What I'd do differently next time:**

I would have proposed some specific times to speak, instead of leaving it open-ended.

Email to a business school classmate requesting that he introduce me to his boss, the hiring manager for a role in which I was interested in applying.



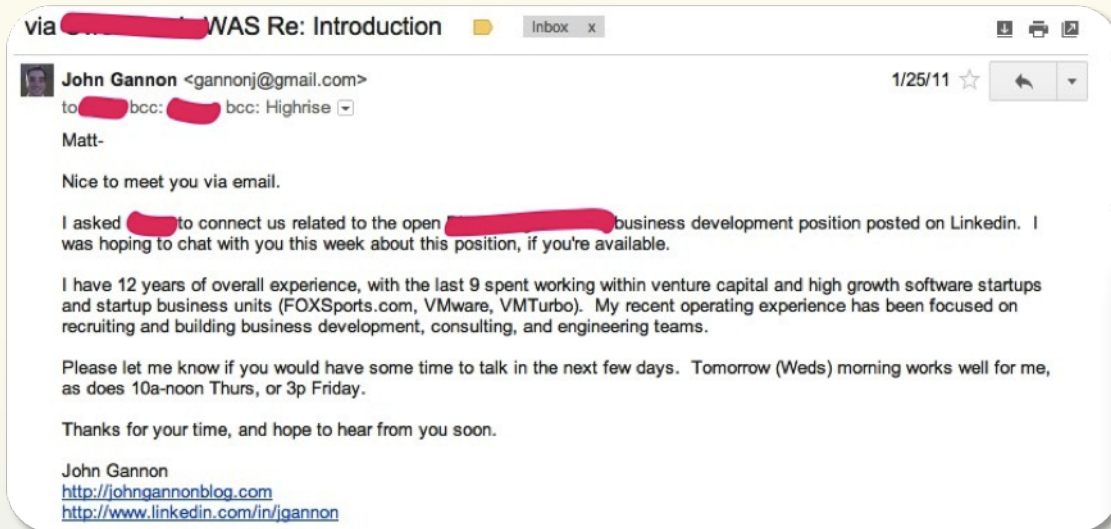
### Result:

He forwarded the email to his boss, and his boss met with me.

### Best Practices:

I made it very easy for my classmate to forward the email to his boss without him having to add much context. I mentioned the specific role in which I wanted to apply for and I put in a few short bullet points highlighting relevant experience. No one, especially busy people, has the time to read long emails from people they don't already know well. Long emails are a great way to derail a potentially fruitful introduction. Also, I'd be remiss if I didn't give some credit to the fact that we were all part of the same alumni network.

Email to someone within a hiring VC firm who was introduced to me by another VC.



### Result:

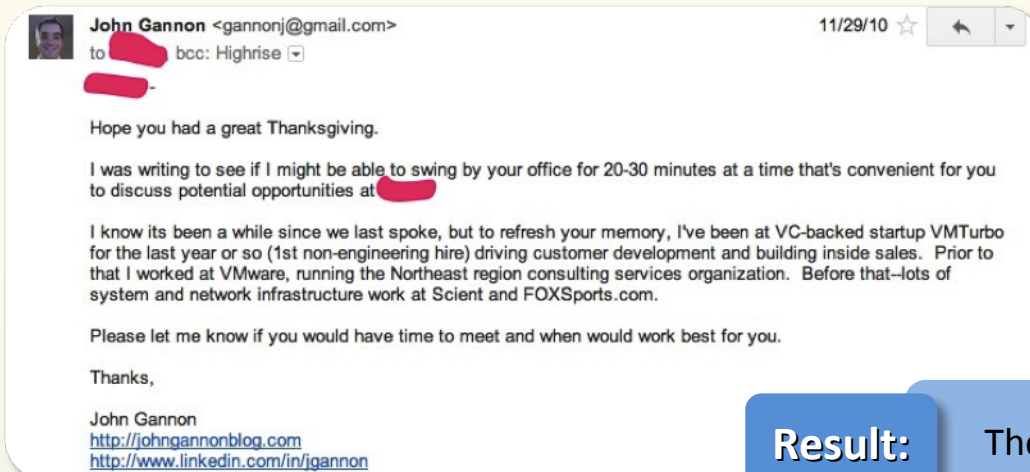
The VC at the hiring firm forwarded my email to the person leading their hiring process, and I subsequently had a series of interviews with the VC firm.

### Best Practices:

I made the “ask” up front, and concisely summarized the relevant experience in my background. I also provided some specific times when I’d be available to make it easier for the VC at the hiring firm to say “yes.”



Email to the CEO of a startup who I had met just twice in the past three years.



**Result:**

The entrepreneur agreed to meet with me.

**Best Practices:**

I made a point of concisely explaining how my background and interests would be a good fit with the company. I also offered to do the meeting at the entrepreneur's office. This meant that we could really keep the meeting to 20-30 minutes as promised, and the entrepreneur wouldn't burn any travel time meeting me at a coffee shop or restaurant. Again, you always want to keep things as simple as possible for the other person, especially when that person is a busy CEO of a VC backed company.

**What I'd do differently next time:**

Again, I might have proposed some specific times that I could meet with him, in order to minimize the back-and-forth emails.

Email to a VC I knew asking them to connect me with one of their connections at a startup company (outside of their portfolio).



**Result:**

The VC passed my resume on to the company, and I ended up having a series of interviews regarding an open position.

**Best Practices:**

I supplied brief, relevant bullets that mapped well to the job requirements and desired experience.

**What I'd do differently next time:**

Nothing. In fact, here's how the VC responded...



The takeaway? VC's are much more inclined to help you out if you can help them to add value to their portfolio companies and people working in the startup ecosystem. Give them a great reason to make an introduction by writing concise, relevant emails that clearly show how you can help people in their network.

Email to a VC (who I had only met once) asking him to connect me to a hiring manager at AWS.



**Result:**

The VC passed my resume onto the company. I went on to interview, and received an offer!

**Best Practices:**

I referred to a trusted mutual connection, and explained concisely why I was a great fit for the position.

**What I'd do differently next time:**

Nothing.

Email introduction to a hiring company by an entrepreneur I had met at a co-working/incubator space.



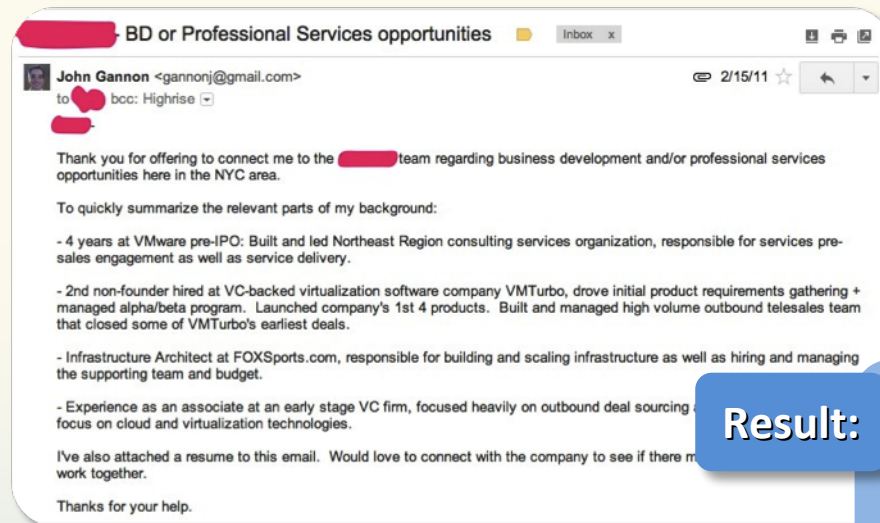
### Result:

One of the founders responded to the introduction and agreed to set up a time to speak with me.

### Best Practices:

In the startup and VC communities, people are very willing to help people – even people that they don't know very well. In this case, the entrepreneur who made the intro had seen me working at the co-working space for several weeks, but we didn't know each other beyond that context. What's the takeaway? Don't be afraid to ask for help!

Email to a VC and board member of a hiring startup requesting an introduction to the startup. I was introduced to the VC by someone who used to work with him.



### Result:

The VC connected me to the CEO of the company, who spoke with me via phone soon after the introduction was made.

### Best Practices:

At the start of the email, I reminded the VC that we had spoken before and that I was following up to connect with one of their companies about the open position. VC's are insanely busy people, so it's always good to make sure you give them a soft reminder about who you are and why you're contacting them.

### What I'd do differently next time:

I achieved the desired result with this email, but it was a little longer than it had to be. For example, I doubt the company cared that I had worked as a VC. Sure, it's only one bullet, but anything you can do to make an email shorter is almost always appreciated by the receiver – and makes them more likely to respond.

LinkedIn request via a former co-worker (who I hardly knew!) to a recruiter at a SaaS company.

**INTRODUCTION: ACCEPTED**

[REDACTED] has accepted your request.

**Email:** [REDACTED]

**Title:** Help connecting to [REDACTED]: Customer Success Manager position

Hi John,

Thanks for reaching out. Please send me an updated resume along with your availability for a call to discuss our openings in more detail. My email is [REDACTED]

thanks,

[REDACTED]

On 2/7/11 7:42 PM, John Gannon wrote:

[REDACTED]

I have asked [REDACTED] who I worked with at VMware, to connect me with you regarding the position you posted, entitled 'Customer Success Manager'. Here's a link to the job:

[REDACTED]

This role seems like a great way to leverage my past experience leading VMware's Northeast US consulting services organization, as the job spec indicates you're looking for a mix of sales, solutions, and delivery skills to help drive adoption in enterprise accounts.

Please let me know if you would have some time to speak about this position.

Thanks,

- John Gannon

**Result:**

The recruiter responded and we set up an introductory call.

**Best Practices:**

Because your profile page is just a click away when someone receives a LinkedIn message, I only included a short summary of my background.

Email to an entrepreneur who had pitched the VC firm where I had worked a few years prior.



### Result:

He responded, we spoke via phone, and I went on to have a full round of interviews with the company.

### Best Practices:

At the start of the email, I reminded him about when we last spoke and referred to a trusted mutual connection.

### What I'd do differently next time:

I didn't specify specific times for the phone discussion. It would have been better if I had provided 2-3 potential times for a phone call.



Email to a pair of cofounders who I had interviewed with several years ago, and had been in touch with once or twice in the intervening years. I reached out to them to see if they'd talk to me about some open roles.



### Result:

They forwarded my email to the President of their company, who brought me in for an interview.

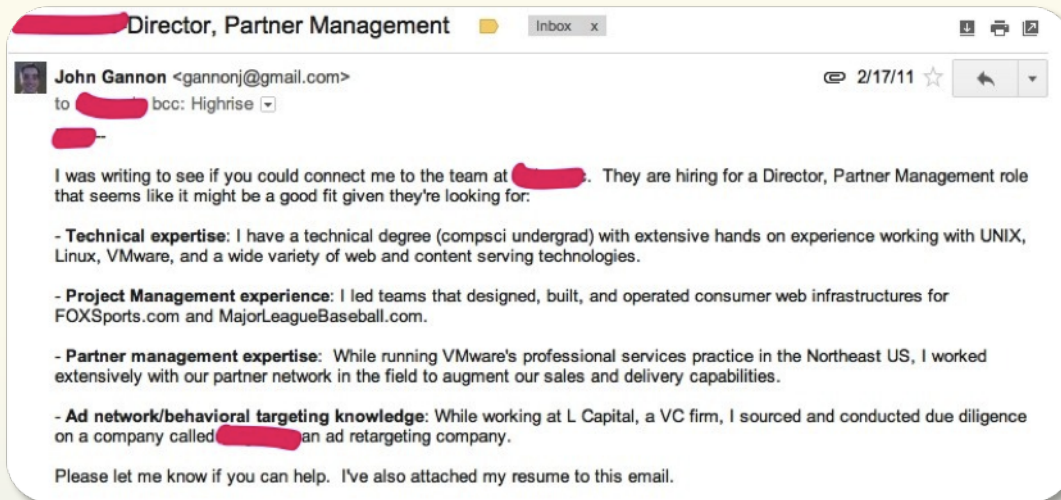
### Best Practices:

I mentioned some key accomplishments to get them up to speed with what I had been working on and to attract their attention. And yes, I kept the email short and sweet.

### What I'd do differently next time:

I would have suggested some specific times I was available to chat.

Email introduction from a friend-of-a-friend to a hiring advertising technology startup.



**Result:**

He sent my resume to the CEO, who subsequently brought me in for interviews.

**Best Practices:**

I listed (from the job posting on the company's website) all of the key requirements for the role, and then mapped them to specific experiences I had at other companies.

# Key Takeaways

Before we go, let's summarize the best practices and techniques we've learned here:

- ✓ VC's are a great conduit for connecting with hiring startups – assuming you make it easy for them to help you (i.e. by following the tips below).
- ✓ Keep your emails as short as possible. Nobody reads long emails (except maybe your Mom).
- ✓ The first sentence of the email should clearly state what you're asking for and why you're asking for it.
- ✓ When emailing to propose a phone call or meeting, suggest multiple days and times for that call or meeting to make it easy for the person on the receiving end to accept.
- ✓ Put in the effort to write a grammatically correct email with no spelling errors.
- ✓ If you're interested in a specific company job posting, make sure that your email clearly maps your skills and experience to the job requirements.
- ✓ When emailing someone you don't know, refer to a mutual LinkedIn connection in the 1<sup>st</sup> line of the email to increase the likelihood of receiving a response. Maximize your chances of success by picking a person who worked with them at a previous company.

Good luck in your hunt!

John Gannon

<http://www.johnsjobs.me>