

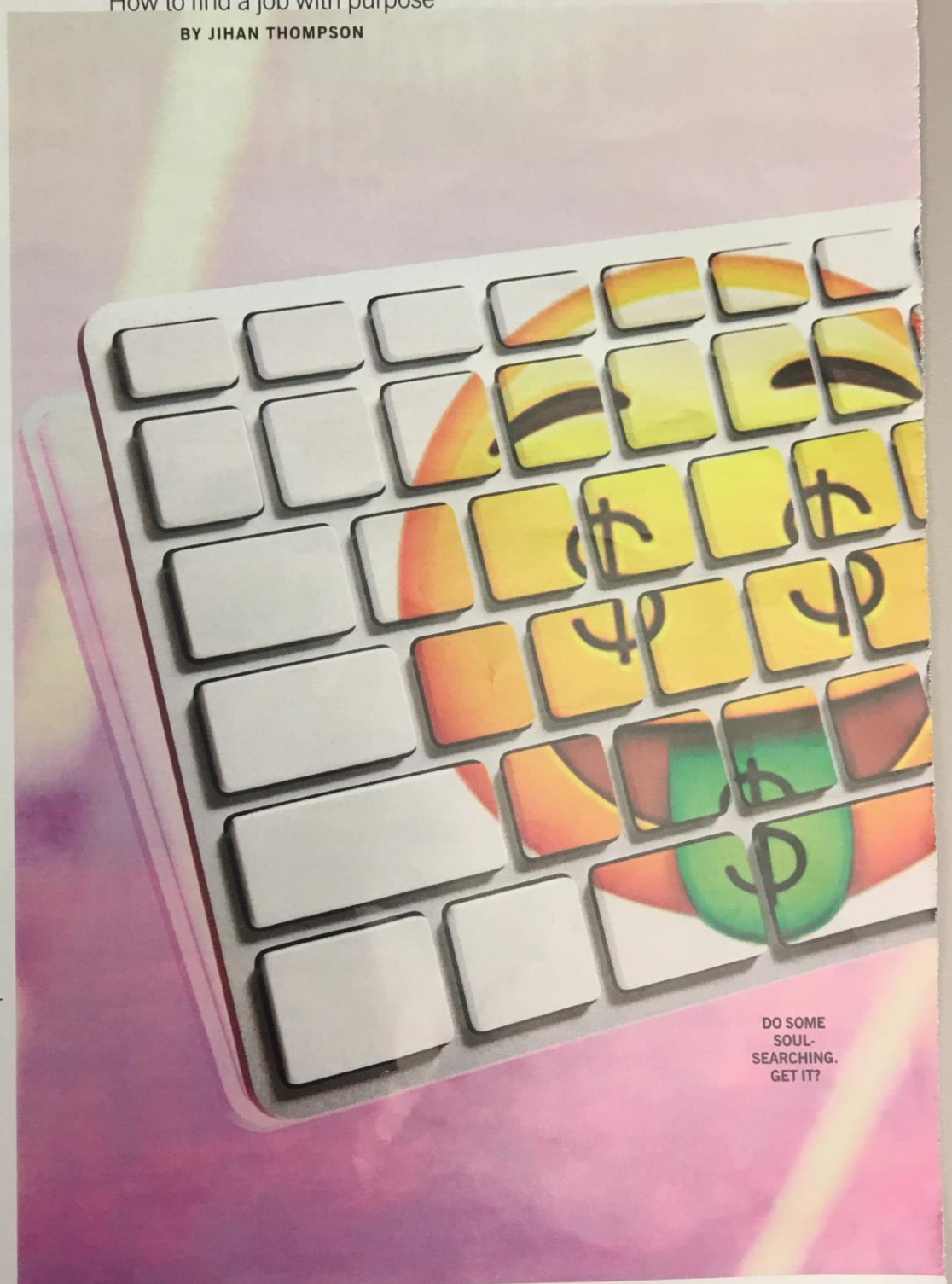
# Is It Worth It? Let Me Work It

How to find a job with purpose

BY JIHAN THOMPSON

Long hours on your feet. Meeting after meeting. Work can be beyond draining when you don't feel like your job truly matters. That may be why nearly 75 percent of people covet positions that not only pay the bills but also deliver a sense of purpose, according to a recent LinkedIn and Imperative survey.

Luckily, more companies are realizing that doing good can be (very!) good for business, and almost anyone can now score more meaningful employment. Step one: Soak up this wisdom from five masters of rewarding work.



DO SOME  
SOUL-  
SEARCHING.  
GET IT?

# GET INVOLVED FROM 5 TO 9

If you already love—or just need to keep—your job, here's how to find meaning off the clock.

## 1. Figure out what fits into your life.

"Volunteering takes time. Do you have enough to help out at your local hospital? To paint schools? Search [VolunteerMatch.org](http://VolunteerMatch.org) for opportunities. If you can't participate in ongoing projects, jump into one-time events like a climate-change march or breast-cancer walk."

—SUSAN MCPHERSON, founder and CEO of communications consultancy McPherson Strategies

## 2. Join a big squad.

"Last October, I teamed up with thousands of women for an online fund-raising adventure called *If Girls Ran the World*. We ran, tracked our miles, and fund-raised. As a group, we collected more than \$135,000 for organizations like the Women's Refugee Commission, a nonprofit that helps displaced women and children."

—CATHERINE LACOUR, senior vice president of corporate marketing at Blackbaud, a social-good cloud-software company

## 3. Ask how you can help.

"Go out and actually talk to the people you want to support. If that's low-income students, for example, ask their teachers how you can provide them with the tools they need to succeed."

—MICHELE SULLIVAN, president of the Caterpillar Foundation, which champions programs that help alleviate global poverty

### Go Corporate

**Verna Coleman-Hagler, 34**  
Cincinnati, OH



**HER JOB** Brand manager for Procter & Gamble's My Black Is Beautiful (MBIB) platform, a national campaign that empowers African-American women through online conversations, advertising, and local events

**WHY IT MATTERS** In 2012, MBIB launched the Imagine a Future initiative, which included a full-length documentary about one black woman's journey to self-love. "Churches, sororities, and community groups were sharing the film and holding discussions," says Coleman-Hagler. The campaign had a grassroots effect, reaching more than 3 million girls over three years.

**HER BEST ADVICE** "You don't have to work in philanthropy," says Coleman-Hagler. "Big businesses are now using their resources to effect positive change. I'm proud to give a voice to black women in a major company." (Find corporate social-responsibility jobs on sites like [NetImpact.org](http://NetImpact.org).)

### Be Flexible

**Rachel Sumekh, 25**  
Los Angeles, CA



**HER JOB** Founder and CEO of Swipe Out Hunger, a nonprofit that lets students donate unused meal points to disadvantaged classmates and community members

**WHY IT MATTERS** With chapters on 30 campuses, the organization has served more than 1.3 million meals. In a guest book at its UCLA food pantry, one patron wrote, "As a homeless student, this is saving my life." And a middle-aged woman once approached Sumekh to tell her, "If it weren't for this, I wouldn't have thought I could go back to school."

**HER BEST ADVICE** As Swipe Out Hunger expanded, Sumekh had to learn to adapt quickly. "We wouldn't have survived if I'd stayed obsessed with our original model," she says. "Stay committed to your end goal, but remain flexible on how you get there. Be willing to truly listen to people's feedback, respond to changes, and evolve your idea."

### Make It Personal

**Gina Clayton, 34**  
Oakland, CA



**HER JOB** Founder and executive director of Essie Justice Group, which supports and empowers women who have incarcerated loved ones

**WHY IT MATTERS** A nine-week program provides a supportive network and teaches how to petition lawmakers for change. "It's been exciting to see Essie women speak to legislators," says Clayton. "These are women who, two months before, hadn't even told anyone that their family members were in prison."

**HER BEST ADVICE** "The people who lead change are often the people who've been moved by something in their own lives," says Clayton. She became passionate about prison reform after a friend was locked up for 20 years. Think about an experience that motivated you to act, and build from there. Start by connecting with others in similar situations. "See who is working on the cause," says Clayton, "and seek out their mentorship."

# LIFE

## Work Your Passion

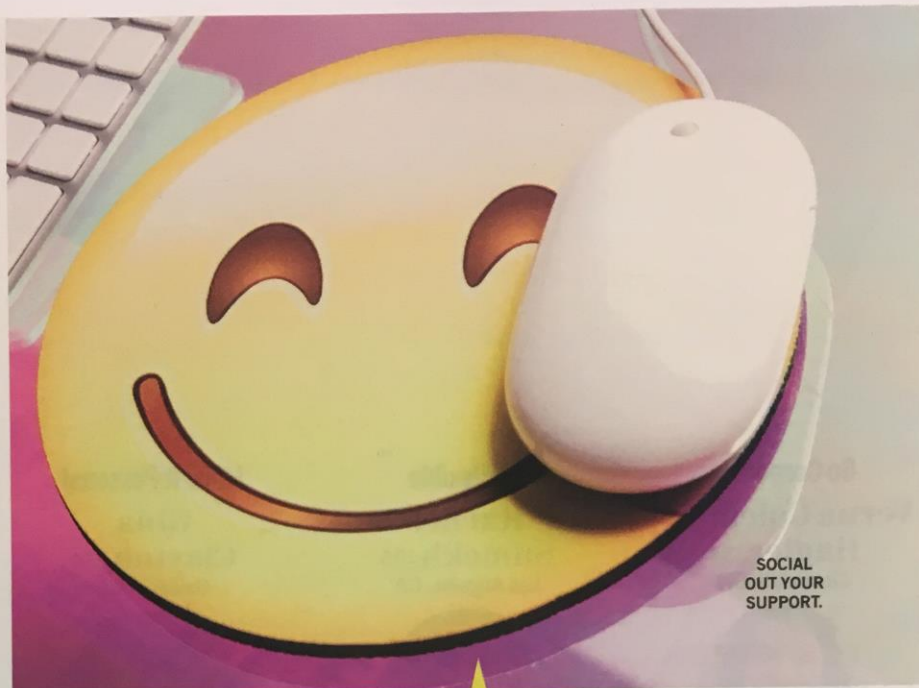
**Alessandra Carreon, 32**  
Detroit, MI



**HER JOB** Materials regulatory engineer in the department of sustainability and vehicle environmental matters at the Ford Motor Company, where she leads eco-friendly strategies like high-voltage-battery recycling

**WHY IT MATTERS** Carreon's position puts her at the forefront of the green movement. Her team is helping to reduce manufacturing waste and promote sustainable practices on a huge scale. "We're able to work with more than 3,300 suppliers in 40 countries to ensure that they improve their environmental footprint," she says.

**HER BEST ADVICE** Sometimes you *should* bring your job home with you to build up your contacts and share your expertise. Carreon is involved with sustainability initiatives across Detroit. "I'm helping make sure that as my city develops, everyone has a high quality of life," she says. "I'm being authentic to who I am at work and in my neighborhood." (To find similar planet-protecting jobs, try searching GoingGreenJobs.com.)



SOCIAL  
OUT YOUR  
SUPPORT.

## Think Global

**Leila Janah, 34**  
San Francisco, CA



**HER JOB** Founder and CEO of the organic skin-care brand LXMI. Its products are made with nilotica, a nut-based butter harvested by local women in Uganda.

**WHY IT MATTERS** "I love doing work that reduces poverty," says Janah. "LXMI promotes job creation among the world's poorest women. One of our harvesters now has a four-bedroom house!"

**HER BEST ADVICE** If you want to launch your own thing, start smart. "Don't go whole hog immediately," says Janah. "In your free time, immerse yourself in what you want to do. Find and understand the problem you want to solve." (Job-recruiting sites like ReWork can connect you with international gigs at socially conscious organizations.)

## USE YOUR KEYBOARD FOR GOOD

Communications consultant **Susan McPherson** makes the case for trying out "slacktivism."

"Some people call online advocacy—retweeting social-good campaigns, sharing links to Change.org petitions, etc.—slacktivism or slacker activism. But spreading the word is key to getting people to act. If you're helping drive awareness of something by tweeting, you are indeed contributing to a movement. So next time you post on Instagram, consider saying 'Here's a cause I support' instead of 'Here's my cute boyfriend.'"

80%



OF WOMEN SAY THAT HELPING OTHERS MAKES THEM FEEL STRONGER.

SOURCE: SPECIAL K "THE NEW FACE OF STRENGTH" GLOBAL WHITE PAPER

76%



OF YOUNG PEOPLE THINK BUSINESSES CAN MAKE POSITIVE SOCIAL IMPACTS.

SOURCE: THE 2017 DELOITTE MILLENNIAL SURVEY

54%



OF MILLENNIALS SAY THEY ARE GIVEN OPPORTUNITIES TO CONTRIBUTE TO GOOD CAUSES AT WORK.

SOURCE: THE 2017 DELOITTE MILLENNIAL SURVEY

ALLIE HOLLOWAY HEADSHOTS COURTESY SUBJECTS