

NETWORKING... beats not working

SMART WAYS TO JOB SEARCH

Searching for a job can be done in a variety of ways. Making telephone calls, using the Internet, or networking are just a few. It's important to use these "job search tools" in the most efficient way so that you don't waste time. Prospective employers will expect to see a resume and other documentation, not to mention interview you to decide if you are a potential employee.

It's Never Too Early ...

A simple rule to remember about job hunting is that many jobs become available well before the opening is actually advertised online or in a newspaper.

To better understand the impact of a good job search, look at the stages of a job opening:

1. There are no formal job openings, but employers are always looking for good workers.
2. The need to hire additional resources is clear to an employer, but no action is taken.
3. A job opening officially exists. Referrals are desired and applications are accepted.
4. A "help wanted" ad is placed in the newspaper. This generates many responses.

Get "In the Know"

More than 80 percent of today's jobs aren't advertised, according to respected researchers. This is referred to as the hidden job market. Networking is how you tap into this hidden job market.

Networking is not about who you know, but about finding out "who knows who." It's discovering and using connections between people. A friend or acquaintance who knows someone looking to hire a new employee or working in the industry or firm you're interested in just may be what helps you find a job. Results from a Drake, Beam, Morin Career Transition Study show that 64% of the 7,500 people surveyed said they found their new jobs through networking.

Networking begins with planning. Know what you want and be specific when telling others. This means the type of job you are looking for and the companies that interest you. In short, before you can network with people in a chosen field, you must first do research and know enough about that field in order to have productive discussions with professionals in that field.

Know who to contact and develop your network. Start with familiar contacts. Open the address book on your PDA, phone, e-mail account, or Facebook page. This is the beginning of your network. Expand your network by adding to your list.

Begin with:

- Professional associations
- Family
- Friends
- Former coworkers
- Former employers
- Former schoolmates
- Neighbors
- Spouse
- Spouse's friends
- Physician, minister
- Civic organizations
- Religious organizations
- Service industry

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Define Yourself Professionally... Create a Marketing Profile

A marketing profile is a brief summary of the skills, benefits and experience you bring to an organization. Begin by describing your work experience and profession. Follow with a statement of broad or specialized expertise. Add two to three statements focused on any of the following:

- Breadth or depth of skills
- Unique mix of skills
- Range of environments where you have experience
- A special or well-documented accomplishment
- One or more professional or appropriate personal characteristics
- A sentence describing professional objective or interest

Here's a Marketing Profile example:

I am a well-qualified administrative assistant with extensive experience in the health industry. I possess a strong combination of business and technical expertise and have supported senior management of two nationally recognized hospitals. I have been formally recognized for team leadership in promoting volunteerism within hospitals. I am currently seeking an administrative management position in a medium-sized clinic or small hospital.

Practice the art of clearly summarizing your strengths, skills, and accomplishments in 30 seconds. Get comfortable talking about yourself — you will do a lot of that when speaking to employers.

Cold-Calling: Direct, Distinctive and Effective

Using the telephone for your job search separates you from other job seekers. You demonstrate initiative and self-confidence when you make a “cold call” to an employer. The employer is able to associate a person with a resume and will believe you are serious about making a personal connection.

It helps to prepare a script in advance, including your accomplishment statements and marketing profile.

Practice with a friend or fellow job seeker to sharpen skills and overcome hesitation and fear.

Face-to-Face Time

Person-to-person networking has long been and continues to be a great way to meet local professionals in your chosen field. Actually getting out and meeting new people face-to-face at events and professional networking groups instantly adds personality to any resume for an online posting.

Online Social and Professional Networking Sites

Using online social and professional networking sites, such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, is a relatively new way to look for work. It also allows you to keep in touch with former co-workers and employers. You can use these sites to “stay in front of people” and remain up-to-date on industry changes and advancements in your field.

Remember that with a little work, employers might see your personal posts as well as your professional profiles. Make sure that your online presence makes a good impression to potential employers.

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