

# NETWORKING

First and foremost—seek God’s guidance.

Second, make sure you keep your wife and loved ones informed and seek their prayers and advice.

Set objectives for yourself. How hard are you going to work? Remember, finding a job is a matter of numbers. The more calls you make, the more people you meet, the more interviews you take, the more networking meetings you attend, the more research you do the faster you will be employed. Set goals, and at the end of every week honestly grade your efforts and either commend yourself or recommit yourself.

## SO WHAT IS NETWORKING?

Networking is an essential, organized process of contacting substantial numbers of people to help you find the position you are looking for.

Let’s break this definition down.

### ESSENTIAL

If your search is limited to answering ads, looking on the internet at HOT JOBS or talking to friends and neighbors, then for the most part you are a faceless name who is competing with thousands of other unemployed individuals, and I for one, hope that you are as lucky as you are qualified. In fact, I hope you are really lucky because that is what you are depending on to find a job. To find the job you are looking for involves contacting significant numbers of individuals to help. When I was in the market back in the late 86’s, I was told that a search normally takes one month for every \$10,000 of income you were looking for. I suspect that the number is now a month for every \$20,000.

Today, there are thousands of folks looking for good paying jobs. In the 90’s, I attended a meeting of a networking organization in Evanston named The Executive Network Group, which was attended by over 250 unemployed individuals. All these individuals were seeking positions of director and above. This was just one group in the northern suburbs of Chicago. They were all answering ads and checking the Internet. In addition, they were also learning how to network, attending networking meetings and meeting as many folks as possible. The competition for jobs is intense. When I was CFO at Culligan, we used to get on average 400 responses to ads for director and above. That being said, the most important reason is that **70 TO 75% OF ALL JOB PLACEMENTS COME FROM NETWORKING.**

## ORGANIZED

Tonight after this session, take a pencil and write the names of everyone you know. How many do you think will be on your list? A hundred? Two hundred? Whatever the number, it is not enough. We have all heard of Amway and other multi-level marketing organizations. The object of these organizations is to sell as many products to as many people as they can. Why are they successful? The leaders rely on others to sell the products and they take a small piece of the profit. They recruit others to recruit others to recruit others to sell their products. They do not have large advertising budgets but instead use word of mouth and contacts to get their products sold. This is networking at its most successful state. You want to follow these successful organizations with the product being your particular skills.

To be successful, you need to find a way to track what you have done and where you want to go. If you have a computer then most likely you have Outlook, Act or some other activity tracking software. If you do not have a computer, buy a spiral binder.

List all the names, addresses, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of every one you know.

Next, provide a space to track date contacted, names obtained, comments about the conversation and date and nature of follow-up.

Be religious about keeping your records up-to-date.

It will become your road map to success.

## PROCESS

What does process mean? One of Webster's definitions for process is "A particular method of doing something, generally involving a number of steps or operations".

### WHAT ARE THE STEPS IN THE PROCESS OF FINDING A JOB?

The following is an outline for what I would define as the GAME PLAN for implementing the process of getting a job.

Resume

Organized list of names

Your story, which you Practice, Practice, Practice

List of ways people can help you

Strict discipline of follow-up

Set a goal as to how many people you want to meet each week

Get out and start meeting people

## RESUME

Your resume is critical. It tells people who you are, what you have done, what you are capable of and what you are looking for. Make sure you know the answers to questions like: Why did you leave? What did you learn? What were the challenges? What did you like best and What was a turn off for each position. Keep your resume current. Review the resumes of others for ideas on how to improve it. Seek opinions of knowledgeable professionals, but remember it is your story. It should reflect who you are. Sometimes professional writers will give the reader the wrong impression of who you are. I usually could tell if someone had their resume written. The words in the resume were not the same as those used in an interview.

## STORY

Meeting people is the easy part. What do you tell them? Why are you looking for a position? What are your skills? What kind of position are you looking for? Will you relocate? How much money are you looking for? How can those who don't have a job for you help you? Get your elevator speech down cold.

Before you start your search take some time and make sure you know the answers to the above resume questions. Have an associate ask you these questions and evaluate your responses. Continually critique yourself. Be truthful. With each meeting you should be able to make your story better. Add new questions that are asked of you for which you did not have a smooth and positive answer. Then practice, practice, practice.

Consider videotaping an interview with a potential employer (again use the help of an associate). Replay the interview. Where are your hands? Are you smiling? Are you relaxed? Are you someone you would hire?

Each meeting and each interview is a learning experience. I used to make it a game with myself. Could I meet or interview without using oh, a, or other filler or thinker words that indicated I was not prepared? I had an image that I wanted to portray to the person I was speaking to. I wanted the person to remember me so if and when they came in contact with a job opportunity, they would remember me. That is one of the ways you get others to help you.

## OTHER WAYS PEOPLE COULD HELP ME

When searching for a position, you spend the majority of your time trying to get an interview or a meeting with someone who could be helpful. Meeting and interview time are as precious as gold. **GET THE MOST OUT OF IT. MAXIMIZE THE BENEFIT OF YOUR TIME.**

MOST OF THE PEOPLE YOU MEET WOULD LIKE TO HELP YOU.

HOW DO YOU HELP THEM HELP YOU?

Have a list of companies you are trying to get an interview with. Do they know anyone on your list or at similar companies like the ones you have noted?

Have a list of people you want to meet. Again, do they know any one on your list or individuals in similar positions?

What source would the person you are meeting with use if they had an open position for which you are qualified? Ask for the name of their contact. Could you use the individual's name in a letter of introduction? Referencing a contact in a letter to a headhunter or executive will get a better response than just a plain letter of introduction.

Can you send them up-dated lists every six weeks? Without being pushy you want to reestablish contact every six weeks to keep your need in front of the person you have just met.

Are there any constructive suggestions they have on your resume or interview style? Would they want you to keep them posted on the progress of your search? Say by e-mail every six weeks or so.

FOLLOW UP

Finding a position takes persistence and attention to detail. Keep your contact list up-to-date. When you meet people, learn to listen for details that would give you a chance to make a follow-up call or follow-up note. When I was looking for a position, I always had a small pad of paper and a pen on me. That way, when I met someone socially, I could make a note of their name and anything of interest. People like it when you make a follow-up gesture which indicates you were paying attention to what they were saying when you met. In an interview, I always have a pad with me to take notes. I just didn't want to trust my memory.

FINALLY MEETING PEOPLE

You can't find a job watching a ball game on TV or playing games on the Internet. Those who get jobs are those who go out and find them. You may not think so, but there are many jobs going unfilled now or in the hands of search firms. With so many people available, why are search firms being paid big bucks to fill open positions? Maybe because the employers are being swamped by resumes from faceless folks who have not taken the time to find a way to meet them personally via networking. When I

had a real job it gave me real pleasure to hire someone recommended by a friend of mine. I felt good and saved money. A double win!

Find and join a networking organization. WHY? Knowing others who are looking for a job is very beneficial. I once got a job from a referral of a fellow job seeker. In fact, I got him a job within two weeks of me finding a position. I was also very interested in other people's resumes. How did mine compare? What was the competition offering or saying?

I also found alumni associations and church groups helpful. I first started networking for a job in 1986 and I have never stopped. I am always looking to meet new people and new opportunities. After I attained a position in 1986, I kept networking, and a year and half later found a much better opportunity. This should not be a one time learning skill.

## NETWORKING TOOL KIT

A well-rehearsed two minute elevator speech.

List of companies you are trying to network into. Keep it updated and resend.

List of individuals you want to meet. Keep it updated and resend.

Remember to ask for 2 to 3 referrals as future networking contacts.

Remember to ask for contacts in executive search or recruiting business.

Note any personal data on person you are networking with for future referral.

Have at least three quality references, preferably folks you have worked for.

Keep references informed and if you use them let them know of pending contact.

Answers to why you are unemployed.

Answers to why you made moves noted on your resume.

Answers to what are your strengths and weaknesses.

Answers to what are your likes and dislikes relating to prior positions held.

If you asked for 20 minutes for a networking meeting, keep promise.

Always send a thank you note to an interviewer or the host of a networking meeting.

Get a set of business cards.

Have your own e-mail address and cell phone. Note this information on your resume.

Read one best selling novel a month. *The World is Flat* is a great book for knowledge about current events. Also try *From Good to Great*. Read the *Wall Street Journal*. Every library has a copy.

Remember what you do not use you lose. Keep informed about what is going on in your chosen industry and business in general.

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