



Connection Pros

As The Networking Guy, I don't go a day without someone asking me for help to find something. It might be a good graphic design person or a computer expert or the best golf course in town. Whatever it is, I can either find it or I know someone who can.

Ever since September 11, 2001, I have been asked most often to help find people work.

While I might not know of any specific job openings, I always provide people with lots of tips on how to find their next great job faster. These tips have been very helpful to many of the clients I have been working with over the past six to eight weeks. They include Execunet, a support and networking group for transitioning CEOs; the Layoff Lounge, a national networking group that helps people find work; and Bernard Haldane Associates, the largest and oldest executive search firm in the country.

For the people reading this article who are looking for their next great employment adventure, I would like to provide you with some of the best networking tips I know to help you find a job easier. For all of the employed people reading this article, please rip out this page and give it to someone who might be struggling to find that next great job.

It has been said that we are currently experiencing the worst job market in almost 50 years. Thousands of people are mass mailing their resumes to companies but less than 7% of jobs are found this way. Thousands more are looking for work through the newspaper, but less than 9% of jobs are found this way. Millions of people are spending days on the computer looking for that perfect job on the Internet but only 15% of jobs are ever found using this method. So, how do you network your way to a great job these days? I'm so glad you asked.

One of the simplest ways to start networking for a great job is to tell people you are looking for work. Some of you are probably saying "DUH!" but I can't tell you how many people are too embarrassed to tell people they're looking for work. One of the biggest challenges is how to say you're unemployed. Try saying "I'm currently between employment opportunities" or "I'm currently searching for that next great employment adventure" or you can always tell people the truth. Being unemployed isn't looked at the same way today as it was 20 years ago. With the massive layoffs and all the corporate downsizing, people are far more empathetic towards your situation. Always remember that if people don't know you're looking for something, **THEY CAN'T HELP YOU!!**

Now that you have started telling people about your job search, the first people you should start networking with is your family and your friends. Who knows more about you, cares more about you, and wants to help you more than your family and your friends? If you are nervous about telling them you're out of work, try not to be. Your real friends and family will still love you whether you're working or not. Plus, real friends and family will normally bend over backwards to help you. In times of need, always start with those who love you most.



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After you have networked with your family and all of your friends, the next people to network with are those who have the greatest experience in your field or your area of expertise. Who better to talk to about finding a great job than people in your industry? They might have inside knowledge of job openings, upcoming trade or association functions, or other people in your industry who can help you. Remember that true networking is providing people with the best information possible about your search so they can find other people to help you too.

Speaking of helping, the best thing you can do for people is to make it easy for them to help you. How do you do this? Provide them with as much information as possible about your job search. If people ask you what kind of job you are looking for, don't say "something in High Tech" or "something in management." These responses are far too vague for most people. If you want a job in High Tech, tell them specific companies you would like to work for or specific projects or products with which you would like to be involved. Most people are more than willing to help you but you must at least meet them halfway. Don't make them do all the work.

Next month, I'm going to focus on specific things to say and how to say them so people will listen to you, learn from you, and really go out of their way to help you. See you in April.