

Career Edge

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Experience and Preparedness Give You the Competitive Edge

The Employment Process: Consider All Avenues in YOUR Job Search

What are the most effective means and methods to obtain employment leads and career information?

Networking? Scanning the classified advertisements? College career centers? Employment and temp agencies? Recruiters? Job fairs? Job search networking groups? The Internet?

Do mass mailings of resumes to employers work? What about cold-calling recruiters or human resource departments?

The truth is that the most efficient job search strategy will use a combination of these methods, with networking as the best strategy.

Classified Advertisements

Newspaper advertisements can be a resource; however, only 20 percent of job openings are advertised, and 80 percent of job opportunities are never posted. Many major corporations do not place job advertisements in the paper. Advertised positions are often entry-level, as many companies promote from within. Consequently, higher-level positions will not be advertised.

Competition is severe when candidates apply through classified advertisements. Employers often receive hundreds of resumes for one position. Remember, if the job sounds “too good to be true,” it probably is. Read advertisements very carefully.

College Career Services Centers

These centers assist individuals with job search preparation, provide employment listings and opportunities, and act as a resource center with videos, books, reference materials and resume development software.

Employment/Temporary Agencies

The workplace has changed significantly in the past 10 years. In response, many types of agencies have been created to assist employers in filling their work force needs. As a result, most job seekers are confused about what each agency can do for them. These agencies recruit candidates for temporary, temporary-to-permanent, part-time and full-time opportunities. Should you decide to use such agencies, research its reputation, professional practices and fee.

Job Fairs

During a job fair, your goal should be to meet and discuss your background with possible employers. It is important to develop a three-minute “elevator speech.”

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“Do what you love. The money will follow.”

Marsha Sinetar,
Psychologist

The purpose for the short sales pitch is to highlight your best skills and experience, and to ask for assistance. Whether you are networking with your personal/professional contacts or at a networking function, you want to give a clear summary of your qualifications, along with your targeted career objective. Careful preparation and practice of your elevator speech will achieve the desired result.

The elevator speech should include the following:

- A summary statement that includes key power words and phrases that emphasize the scope of your professional experience, special abilities, general accomplishments and expertise. Key words and phrases can be: building and managing successful teams, communicating, organizing, making group presentations, developing effective processes, demonstrating stellar customer service, etc.
- A targeted position that would utilize these skills and abilities.
- Targeted companies, other networking contacts or additional resources that could be used in your job search.

Job Search Networking Groups

In a structured networking group, the association sets up meetings for members to join together for the purpose of networking for job leads. The group is usually led by facilitators. It is recommended that new members attend at least four meetings and master their sales pitches before initiating contacts. Consider joining more than one networking group.

Even in the structured settings, networking group environments range from formal to informal. Networking groups are available for profit, not-for-profit or state-sponsored organizations. Profession, income level, geography and demographics can also define the groups. They are ideal for those who have difficulty seeking referrals and leads through others. You will find both employed and unemployed individuals at all levels of income at these networking sessions.

The most exciting parts of attending large groups are the volume of information exchanged among members, and the high volume of contacts. Be sure to have plenty of business cards and resumes ready to share with other attendees.

The Employment Application

An often-overlooked component of the job search is the employment application. Like your resume and cover letter, the employment application gives employers an important impression of you. It is another example of your work; thus, it should be neat, complete and error free. The following are guidelines for completing this important form.

Because it is a legal and binding document for an employer, it should be filled out accurately.

- Look over the entire form before you start.
- If possible, complete the form at home so you can take your time.
- Use black ink or type.
- Respond to all items either by providing the requested information or by writing “N/A” (not applicable) if the item does not apply to you.
- If you submit a resume with the application, never write “see resume” on the application instead of completing the information. The application is considered a legal document.
- Be prepared. Bring the information you will need in case you need to complete the application at the time of the interview. This can be done by completing a sample application for your records, or by writing information on a separate piece of paper.
- If an application requests information about your sex, marital status, race, creed, religion, age, or other factors on which it is illegal to base a hiring decision, you are not required to supply it.
- When appropriate, supply work samples or a portfolio.

“Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like work.”

Thomas Alva Edison,
Inventor

“The most fortunate people of all... are those for whom the line between work and play gets rubbed out, for whom work is pleasure and pleasure is work.”

Joseph Epstein,
Essayist,
The American Scholar

Establishing Strong Networking Relationships (Networking)

Networking is the process of requesting assistance from people who might be able to help in your job search. This is how you access “The Hidden Job Market.”

Networking is crucial to an effective job search. The more people you network with, the greater your odds of being at the right place at the right time. The contacts you make may lead to job referrals. Combining networking with the other job search methods, such as Internet searching, classified ads, college career centers and employment agencies, will be the key to your success.

Networking Realities

Approximately 65 to 70 percent of all positions are found through networking. With that success rate, networking should be your primary method of job searching.

Employers are becoming increasingly cautious and selective with new hires, so a recommendation from a colleague is welcome. The average cost of hiring and/or recruiting one individual is more than \$5,000, and it is increasing.

Start Networking

The first step is to make a list of people you know. This list should include:

Personal Contacts

- Friends
- Family
- Relatives of your childrens' friends
- Neighbors
- Social and event contacts

Professional Contacts

- College alumni and associates
- Past co-workers and supervisors
- Customers and clients
- Professional trade associates
- Teachers
- Classmates

Community Contacts

- Clergypersons and church members
- Support groups
- Other volunteers

Service Contacts

- Stock brokers
- Insurance agents
- Social workers
- Bankers
- Lawyers
- Accountants
- Medical personnel



These contacts do not have to be your “best friends,” but they should have the potential for referring you for possible career opportunities. Many times job seekers believe that the only useful networking contacts are those in a related industry or in positions of high authority within the organization. This is not true. Any network contact has the possibility of being the indirect link to an organization looking for an employee with your skills and abilities.

The second step in networking is to prepare a sample telephone script that briefly describes your job target, related skills, experience and education. It should be a short summary that is approximately 30 seconds to one minute in length.

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The third step is to contact individuals from your networking list. Telephone calls are likely to be more effective than letters in obtaining a potential job contact. In your telephone conversation, cover the following information:

- Present your job target and qualifications.
- Ask for input and job search advice.
- Request possible networking referrals and, if appropriate, try to obtain the names of two referrals from each network contact.

The fourth step is to initiate contact with the referral. Repeat the above third step process when talking to this person.

The fifth step is to keep your initial networking contact informed about the outcome of your meeting. Sending

thank-you notes can increase the likelihood of them remaining involved in your job search.

Try to meet people daily and grow your networking list. This is true even while you are working. Networking should become a way of life.

Networking becomes NetWORTHing!



The DEN

DuPage Executive Network

Mission:

To cultivate a synergistic environment for experienced and senior level executives in a career assessment period, including pre/post job transition, throughout the Chicago metropolitan area. To assist and enhance members' abilities to assess, explore and market their skills to achieve new, exciting and rewarding careers.

The DEN Member Benefits:

- Network-building meetings featuring open exchange of valuable career and industry information and business contacts
- Keynote speakers on topics of interest to senior management executives in transition
- Career and job search advice from professionals
- Survival strategies including career counseling, support groups and other resources in preparation for the next career
- Access to the extensive resources of the College of DuPage Library

Qualifying Backgrounds

Professional and senior management executives with a minimum base annual salary of \$75,000 in the last position held

College of DuPage

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DEN Member Annual Fee: \$75
DEN Members Monthly Fee: \$5
Guest Meeting Fee: \$15