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**Build Your Rolodex of Networking Contacts**

**By Linda Matias**

How important is networking in your job search? Take a look at the astonishing numbers surrounding how job hunters ultimately become gainfully employed.

- 14% of job hunters get jobs through newspaper classifieds.
- 13% of job hunters get jobs through employment agencies.
- 5% of job hunters get jobs through career services on college campuses.

**NEARLY 64% OF JOB HUNTERS GET JOBS THROUGH NETWORKING!**

Does this mean that you should concentrate only on networking and neglect all other resources available to you? The answer is NO. An effective job campaign is well-rounded and does not rely on any one method to achieve results. The numbers are provided as a guide for you to recognize how much time should be spent on each activity. Most job hunters limit their job search to looking through classified ads. That is a big mistake. As you can see, the bulk of job search activity should be spent networking.

Most job hunters purposely neglect networking because they feel it can be uncomfortable and believe it takes too much effort—and they are right. A job search can have its uncomfortable moments—especially when you are unprepared—and looking for a job is in itself a full-time job. The process could be less intimidating if you (1) are committed, (2) get organized, and (3) start your search with an action plan. To make networking work for you, let's take a look at your options and how to prepare your contacts to help you.

Make a list of all the people you know and split the list into three distinct areas:

**1. Business Contacts**

These are individuals who know your industry. They have contacts of their own and they can make phone calls on your behalf. Their main function is to help you gain employment in your chosen field.

## Build Your Rolodex of Networking Contacts

### 2. Support System

Identify those individuals on your contact list who would not necessarily be able to help you land a job, but who are capable of helping you in your job search in another capacity: as a sounding board.

### 3. Don't Waste Your Time

Differentiate between who can help you and who can't. Don't spend energy on the contacts who mean well but are not in a position to help you. A good networking contact is one who has the resources to help you and is willing to share them.

#### Preparing Your Business Contacts

Once a contact agrees to help you in your job search, it is important that you properly prepare him.

Your contact must be armed with information concerning your immediate and long-term goals and a copy of your résumé (on quality paper).

Example: "Hey John, if you hear of a job opening in the IT field, keep me in mind" is just not enough. Educate your contact on what specific job titles, companies, and locations you are considering. Be as specific as you can. When your contact agrees to help you, DON'T stop there. Ask them a follow-up question. An example would be, "Thanks, John, for agreeing to show my résumé around. I really appreciate it. Can I ask you a question? In the circles that you run in, who might you think would be able to help me?"

Guiding your contact into thinking of potential opportunities can get the ball rolling. Empty promises will not get you results. Educated "yeses" will.

#### Preparing Your Support Network

Carefully choose the individuals who are going to help you through emotionally. Creating a team of unsupportive players will undoubtedly make your job search that much more difficult. Let your supporters know how it is that they can help you. If you don't want unsolicited advice, let them know. Prepare them to be the motivators you need.

Example: "John, thanks for agreeing to be part of my support system. I wanted to share with you my feelings regarding the job search process and how I see you fitting in. At times I may just need to ramble and vent and I just need a friendly shoulder to lean on. I will not be necessarily looking for answers, but rather a sympathetic ear. Do you think you will be able to help me out on this?"

Make a conscious choice as to whom you are going to confide in. Make sure that they have the following characteristics: supportive, non-judgmental, positive, a motivator, a sense of humor, and reliable.

Realize You Are Job Hunting ALL of the Time ... whether you realize it or not. Companies have job

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openings constantly and your contacts often are aware of these opportunities. When you freely discuss your negative work habits, two things are likely to occur: your contacts will know of a "hidden" opportunity and will not feel comfortable referring you, and when you are actively looking for employment, you will be surprised at how many of your contacts will not return your phone calls.

Happy networking!

Career Coach Inc. is run by Linda Matias and Bryan Cadicamo where their objective is twofold: to coach professionals during the interview process and those who are in a career transition and are looking to reawaken or discover their life's passion. To learn more visit

[www.careercoachinc.com](http://www.careercoachinc.com)

or

send an email to

[coach@careercoachinc.com](mailto:coach@careercoachinc.com)

### **Build Your Own No-Cost Mailing List**

**By Martha Retallick**

#### **Build Your Own No-Cost Mailing List by Martha Retallick**

I've never used a mailing list broker. Reason? When I first started doing postcard mailings back in 1996, I could barely afford to pay my house rent. So, renting a mailing list was out of the question.

One of the advantages of operating on a low budget is that you can't spend your way out of problems, you have to think your way out. In the case of my mailing list, the thinking centered around the question of Who Do I Know?

A spin through my desktop Rolodex yielded a treasure trove of names. Then there were those helpful family members and friends who referred names to the list. (Most of the time, I didn't even have to ask these people for names. But it never hurts to ask!) And thumbing through the directories of organizations I belonged to was also useful.

So, there you have it, four readily available sources of names:

1. Your Rolodex (or some other business card file)
2. Family and friends
3. People referred by your family and friends (ask them!)
4. Membership directories from organizations you belong to.

You'll be able to build up quite a list in no time. And if you keep postcarding over the years, your list will

grow some more.



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