

A group of diverse business professionals in an office setting. In the foreground, a woman with long blonde hair, wearing a black blazer over a light-colored blouse, is smiling warmly at the camera. Behind her, several other people are visible, including a woman with glasses and a man with a beard, all appearing to be in a professional environment.

TOP 10 NETWORKING SOURCES FOR JOB OPPORTUNITIES



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Finding the right job today is much more involved than simply sending a resume - especially at the executive level. While it is certainly possible to get a job with an outstanding resume, recent months have seen many people with excellent skills being passed over - and often out of work for many months on end. In describing how things have rapidly changed, one writer at the New York Times, Farhad Manjoo, said: "Like everything else in business, the job-search process has undergone a revolution since the advent of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and other social networking sites."

Sending a resume alone is not as important today as remembering that a live face, a friendly smile, and a warm heart may take you much further - and faster - in getting the job you want through old-fashioned networking. Incorporating the power of networking into your job search enables you to add leverage to your job hunt. It is also important to remember that a large portion of job opportunities never get advertised.

As a professional, you already know a lot of people - but it's never too late to expand your network and benefit from a wider circle of contacts and friends. Imagine, as often said, that every person knows on average around 250 people. Even if you were to

befriend just 50 new people this year, then through these 50 people, you might have the potential of contacting each of their 250 contacts, thereby multiplying your network to another 12,500 more people - many of whom could keep their eyes and ears open about a new job for you, if you will simply let them know you're interested in being kept informed. Now consider if you get connected to "master networkers" like sales people, recruiters, and association leaders that you could see your potential source of contacts grow exponentially. Certainly, such an army of referral sources could help you find out about many more opportunities than you could find on your own.

By taking time to actively network with a wide variety of people who are in the know, you greatly increase the possibility of finding the opportunities you want - possibly even before other candidates become aware of them. Much better than making a cold call, is when someone talks to a potential employer on your behalf in glowing terms - even before they see your resume!

Here is a look at some of the places that you certainly want to include in your search for quality networking opportunities.



CAREER FIELD ASSOCIATIONS AND TRADE SHOWS

Focus on meeting people at association events, trade shows, symposiums, seminars, and the like – especially those that are within your career field, even better those that focus on a particular niche that you know well. This will put you in touch with people who will be aware of the moving and shaking that takes place in the industry where you are most qualified, enabling you to stay well informed of possible new opportunities and job openings.

LINKEDIN

This social network is a powerful tool you need to use to help those great career opportunities find you. Posting solid and positive information about yourself and keeping your LinkedIn profile fresh and up to date is an essential key to any networking plan. Since many headhunters, recruiters, and HR professionals search LinkedIn for prospects, they should be able to find your name as well. LinkedIn also lists special networking meetings that you will want to attend. The Undercover Recruiter also strongly recommends that you get involved in groups and virtual discussions on LinkedIn to show your expertise, as well as get recommendations from others placed on your profile to greatly increase your visibility.

VENDORS AND SUPPLIERS

These people are in touch with many companies in the same field as yours, and as a result they often know when there are vacancies in executive positions. Ideally these would be people that you have dealt with in the past. Contact them and let them know what you

are interested in. If they are no longer there, introduce yourself to their replacements and offer to help them when they could use your assistance.

COMPETITORS

You know who your present or past competitors were in the companies you worked for. Contact them about possible job opportunities. You never know; they may be very interested in someone with your qualities – especially if you can hit the ground running and will need less training than other candidates.

CUSTOMERS

Chances are good that some of your customers are in touch with people in the know at other companies you may not even be aware of. Don't overlook customers or the valuable information they may be able to provide. In fact, who knows, the hiring manager in one of the companies you would like to work for may be networked to one of your favorite customers.

BUSINESS NETWORKING EVENTS

In most communities there are a number of events sponsored throughout the year that are created primarily for networking purposes. Business networking events are often sponsored by the different Chambers of Commerce, Economic Development Groups, Executive Associations, Merchants Associations, business networks or industry groups. Networking meetings may also be held for special groups, like for women, investors, religious groups, job hunters, etc. Career organizations for job hunters like ExecuNet advertise that they have meetings in 50 cities in the US and Canada.

OTHER JOB SEEKERS

In your job search, you will probably have contact with other executives who are also seeking new opportunities. Help them out - provide referrals to opportunities that aren't right for you. Helping them and regularly talking to them may enable you to learn about other opportunities or may simply help you learn some profitable job hunting tips - or where to go for even more networking contacts.

CONTACTS IN YOUR CELL PHONE OR ROLODEX

It has probably taken you several years to build up your present list of contacts within Outlook, your Cell phone, or Rolodex. Now, put this list to use and contact these people again - letting them know of your interests - and rekindle that relationship with them, especially if it has been awhile since they last heard from you.

MAXIMIZE THOSE DAILY PERSONAL ENCOUNTERS

You never really know whom you will happen to meet on the street, in the store, in a restaurant, or on the plane. Greet people, talk with them, and give them your business card. Start with a smile and then be a friend to people around you, as this can help you get your message out. People like to help others. Don't be afraid to reach outside your comfort zone.

CONTINUE TO LEARN BETTER AND MORE WAYS TO NETWORK

There are many books on the subject of networking and websites packed with information about networking tips. It's always a good idea to continue to study and to be open to learning new and more powerful tips to stay ahead of the changing technological landscape.

In closing it is important to remember what the definition of networking is: a supportive system of sharing information and services among individuals and groups having a common interest.

In an article called "Too late to network?" written in an Ask the Headhunter newsletter, Nick Corcodilos wrote this about networking: "Here's the thing that confuses people and frustrates them: They think we network to get our next job. That's absolutely wrong. We network to get smarter, to make new friends, to build our value and our credibility in our professional community, to help others, and to enjoy our work outside of the job. Job opportunities arise out of networking; they are not the reason to do it."

Written in an article at Entrepreneur.com, Ivan Misner (founder of BNI.com, and often called the Father of modern networking) advises people of all ranks to constantly work at building a network - even when you are not looking for a job. He advises that you should practice to make a wellpolished one-minute networking plug about yourself, to make it as effective and powerful as possible. He also adds that practice will enable you to be a better networker, and that you should be sure to offer value in return if you want the relationship to continue.



SO HAPPY HUNTING - THE PERFECT OPPORTUNITY FOR YOU COULD BE JUST A CONTACT OR TWO AWAY!



ABOUT ROPELLA

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We believe nobody should have to waste time screening resumes of candidates who aren't qualified, don't fit your compensation parameters, aren't serious about the role or aren't ready to relocate. That's why we developed the SMART Search System® to provide our clients with precise and predictable hiring results, giving them a huge competitive advantage.