

## Create a Network and Catapult Your Job Search

Written by Teena Rose  
Thursday, 14 August 2003

Networking is still known as a great job-search strategy, yet it eludes some individuals simply because they don't know how to go about it. Individuals also tend to shy away from networking because it's time consuming. Unlike online résumé submission or folding a résumé, stuffing it in an envelope, and adhering a stamp, networking requires far more time and dedication. The results, however, can be quite different than those experienced from traditional résumé submission.

Your network incorporates everyone around you, such as your preacher, doctor, neighbors, friends, colleagues, and/or fellow committee members. The object is to talk, ask, brainstorm, and seek the assistance of others that know of an opportunity or contact that you do not. Have you heard of Stanley Milgrim's theory of "Six Degrees of Separation" (more popularly known by the movie, starring Kevin Bacon)? His theory states that there are only 6 people separating you and someone you'd like to meet or get in touch with, such as a hiring or human resources manager.

Like anything critical in your life, you must be prepared to network. Hold a small portfolio to house several prints of your résumé along with other pertinent material. Collect business cards from everyone you meet and make notation of the place and date on the card. This information is needed should you speak with this person again. You'll make an impression by referencing your previous conversation, along with the date and occasion (e.g. name of seminar or conference).

The card will also be handy when you're given a job lead. Generally the intro paragraph of a cover letter will reference something like, "When I spoke to Sarah McNeil on August 1, 2002, she mentioned that you are looking for a clerk typist and suggested that I contact you." Obtaining a person's card will keep you from misspelling the person's name and remind you of the person that gave you the lead. Effective networking will cause your card portfolio to fill up quickly and make it difficult for you to keep names and companies straight in your mind. BTW, don't forget to give your lead a small gift or handwritten thank-you card if you land the job. Small gestures, such as a job lead, can oftentimes be forgotten.

As I mentioned, networking takes time; but the results can be more rewarding than résumé blasting (sending your résumé to anyone, if not everyone). Steven R. Covey, author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, wrote, "We have the initiative and the responsibility to make things happen." This statement applies to everything in our lives, especially those affecting our careers. Networking (although time consuming) can change the entire face of our beings and open the door to more opportunities than we ever dreamed possible.

Even when employed, your network should be tended. Keep in touch with select individuals through thank-you cards and e-mails. Offer your services and knowledge to them should the opportunity arise - anything that will make his or her life easier.

I also recommend that you present individuals in your network with key opportunities that may come across your desk in the future. The best way to get is to first give. Give your acquaintances the chance to be quoted in an incoming article or book - or opt to purchase products or services from them. A \$15 purchase will show that person that you care about their success.

Another great aspect of networking is to find new friends that will strengthen your network and challenge you to succeed. Within the first three months in business, I met two individuals that I associate with now four years later. One has a degree in journalism and is incredibly smart concerning the English language, and the other is a technical guru that I call immediately if I have trouble with one of my computers. Both are incredibly skilled in their fields, and ultimately make my business stronger because we each look out for the other. We talk, we negotiate, and we bounce ideas off each other. Now that's a network!

Written by Teena Rose, a certified and published resume writer with Resume to Referral (<http://www.resumebycrpw.com/>) and author to "Resume Designs & Job-search Strategies for College Grads" (published by CareerEpublications) --forecasted to release September 2003.  
[admin@resumetoreferral.com](mailto:admin@resumetoreferral.com)