



NETWORKING, THE KEY TO MOST NEW JOBS

The unpublished job market includes all sorts of possibilities, all of which are tapped into through networking alone. Networking is the key to most new jobs. You may find out about a job that has not been published yet, or a proposed new division being added that would rely on just the skills you bring to the table. You might be contacted by a friend, who knows you are looking, when she is getting ready to leave a job that might be perfect for you. There are countless possibilities.



It is also possible to create your own job opportunity. Discussing your skills and abilities may uncover a previously unknown or unrecognized need for someone like you. If you are perceived by senior management, as someone who can solve a major problem they have, they may even create a completely new function or position around your special experience and talents, in order to bring you on board.

Your personal contacts network is one of the best resources for information about industry and company problems, needs and critical issues. Even when a job opening has been identified and published, you will still have to establish a match between the employer's needs and what you bring to the table to meet those needs. Often if you know someone within the hiring company, you can get a better understanding of those factors.

Many job seekers are content to look only into the published job market but those who expend the energy and effort to explore both the published and unpublished job markets at the same time, find jobs significantly faster and find themselves choosing their next job from a much broader and more interesting variety of opportunities. Remember, as you explore the job market, there is no such thing as knowing too many people! Your chances of employment increase with the number of relevant, top-quality contacts you meet and exchange information with.

When it comes to networking for another job, have these thoughts ever crossed your mind?

- Everybody says that networking is the best job search strategy, but I just don't know that many people. And my friends aren't CEO's, they're just regular people.
- I really don't understand this networking thing. Do you just go up to people and ask them for a job? That can't be right. How does this all work?
- Why don't I just answer ads in the newspaper and post my resume online?
- This networking business is just too hard and confusing?

Defining Your Networking Circle:

Networking can be a simple and fun way to get news about opportunities and openings that you might otherwise never hear about. You can use networking to gather information about specific industries, companies, functions, and locations. In fact, just about anything you would like to know, could be the subject of your networking efforts. But the key is knowing how to go about it, as well as how not to go about it. Start with your current and recent coworkers. This group is an important networking resource because they personally know your work experience and capabilities. In addition, they will be able to broaden your networking scope to others in your targeted industry.

An expansion of this category may include vendors and professional contacts you have with people from companies in the same or similar industry, and professional networking groups. Social media services such as LinkedIn, can help the job seeker quickly establish a networking foundation in their targeted industry and expand it exponentially.

In addition to those that you know professionally through your work experience, do not overlook those closest to home – family, friends, and neighbors. While they may not work in your industry, it is likely that they may know someone who does. Do not shy away from utilizing more personal relationships for networking purposes.

Finally, consider people that you may know that are centers of influence. These are individuals who come into contact with many people on a daily basis. This group may include your pastor/rabbi, real estate agents, financial professionals, and even your hair stylist or barber. Simply mentioning your situation and goals may find you headed straight to the perfect networking connection.

Your primary goal is to broaden your personal and professional network so that you come in contact with as many people as possible. Networking is by far the best strategy for securing a new job in a competitive job market. By spending the majority of your time networking, you will greatly enhance your chances of gaining valuable job lead information and obtain your great new job faster!

We encourage you to take time to brainstorm and write down prospective networking contacts. Try to spend at least 20 minutes a day generating new contacts during the early stages of your job search. Do not begin contacting people until you have completed your brand development and have a job search marketing portfolio (resume, cover letters, etc.) finalized.

To accelerate your networking efforts, you will need to establish a **LinkedIn profile** and begin to request connections with individuals who fall within your career space as well as joining professional groups that reside on LinkedIn to quickly build a list of contacts.

Action: Download the Establish Network Worksheet: [This worksheet can be downloaded in Word format under Meridian Career Compass.](#) Complete the exercise requested, and be sure to save a copy for your own records.