

PEOPLE HIRE PEOPLE

-Not Resumes

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Introduction

Have you ever heard of “the perfect job candidate”? This person possesses the exact skills and experiences that a job requires, and the hiring manager is waiting for this person to contact them and take the job.

In my experience, the perfect candidate is a well-worn myth. In every job transition that I’ve made, I have fit the basic requirements of the job, but the reason that I was seriously considered and ultimately offered the position was **because the hiring managers knew me personally**. *People Hire People -Not Resumes* draws from the truth of my experiences: employers hire job candidates based on the complete person, not a resume. The only way that hiring managers can appreciate you as a complete person is by meeting with you in person, and the most effective method of meeting hiring managers face-to-face is networking.

Although I was taught this lesson early in my career, I didn’t actually learn the lesson until I was asked to leave a company that I had faithfully served for over 20 years. Only then did I realize the importance of networking. Since that time, I’ve taught hundreds of people how to network, assisted them in developing their own networks and helped them succeed in making their own job transitions. The purpose of this book is to help you transition jobs via a proven, real-world system, while also sharing many of the tips that I’ve learned through my own experiences. The true measure of my success is how quickly you land and ultimately how strong your network is years from today. Networking is not a “find-a-job-today” effort. It is meeting people and developing relationships that stand the test of time.

When you’ve finished this book, you’ll know how to conduct a successful job search or career change that will be under your control.

Together, we will take each step to:

- ✓ Hold yourself accountable to ensure your success
- ✓ Develop a Personal Marketing Plan to guide your search
- ✓ Make your resume stand out by passing the 30 second thumb test
- ✓ Identify, meet and develop relationships with people that can make a difference in your career and your life
- ✓ Make phone calls that will generate networking meetings
- ✓ Write letters that will generate networking meetings
- ✓ Make your networking meetings productive
- ✓ Present yourself as the most qualified candidate to hiring managers
- ✓ Take control of your career
- ✓ Build powerful relationships that will last a lifetime

Every person I've worked with has been successful because they followed this system. Take the system seriously; it works.

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My Story

It was mid-morning and I was sitting in a department meeting with human resources professionals from all over the country when I received an e-mail on my Blackberry. Like a good corporate soldier, I immediately popped it off my belt, and saw that the Vice President of Sales' Assistant needed me to call her. After excusing myself from the meeting, I called his assistant, who asked me to attend a 1:00 P.M. meeting in the Vice President's office. When I inquired about the topic of the meeting, she said she was unsure. I immediately called my boss to see if he could offer any insight. He told me that he was aware of the meeting; however, he would not be in attendance. In respect to the subject of the meeting, he commented that it concerned "your future with the company". At that point, I knew what was coming.

Six months earlier, my boss of seven years and several of his peers had traded positions. My new boss was irritated by the changes as he felt it took him out of the mainstream of the company and off course to become President. It was common knowledge he felt being President was the natural next step in his career. I knew it was just a matter of time before he would leave.

Three weeks before my call he had resigned and the political wheels started spinning. It was time for a reorganization and when the dust settled, my job had been eliminated. Twenty years and two million air miles later, I was on the outside looking in. The next four months was the most hellish period of my life.

During that time, I wrote and rewrote my resume at least fifty times, applied for every job imaginable, and slipped into depression. I was out of control both personally and professionally. Fortunately for me, I had a great wife, career coach and doctor. One day, I was sitting at my desk at the outplacement office when my wife called. She said she had

made a doctor's appointment for me later that morning. I told her I wasn't going; everything was fine. Just then, my career coach walked in and together they strong-armed me to go to the doctor.

When Dr. Saltman walked into the examination room, I broke down. Even though he now had a hysterical, middle-aged man on his hands, he was caring and patient with me. He took the time to listen and developed a plan to help me get my act together. As we prepared to leave the exam room, Dr. Saltman asked if my children had acted any differently toward me. I responded that they still loved me as always. He said that was because they knew that the true value of a person comes from the person, not their job, title or money. His wisdom continues to influence me to this day.

With the assistance from my wife, Kathy, and Dr. Saltman, I finally got my act together. Kathy and I discussed what was important in our lives and the type of job I'd be looking for. We agreed that we didn't want to relocate, since our oldest daughter was entering high school and we didn't want to disrupt her life. I knew this decision would limit my opportunities and make my search more difficult, but I was willing to take that risk for my family.

My former career at a Fortune 50 company had been very successful, and I thought that would be a huge selling point on my resume. My resume did open many doors, but whenever I spoke with people from other large corporations, they were more curious about what had happened than seriously interested in hiring me. I began to feel that instead of giving me a great head start, *my resume was actually preventing me from returning to the workforce*. I had made an important realization: a resume can be your worst enemy in a job search, and in most cases it's best if you avoid sharing your resume with potential employers for as long as possible.

During my job search, I considered nearly every possible option. I deliberated going to law school but after talking with friends that were attorneys I realized it would never pay off at my age. I talked to a franchise broker, looking for that perfect match. Kathy really thought I had gone crazy when I considered buying a day-care business; then she knew I was crazy when I visited a manufacturer of frozen Italian foods. But no matter how wide-ranging these options may have

been, they proved valuable because they helped me eliminate the jobs I didn't want and clarified my vision of what I wanted to do.

Once I worked through these farfetched possibilities, I became focused and truly began my job search. During this time, I connected with hundreds of people who were willing to meet and assist me in furthering my job search. Most of those who helped were total strangers and benefited little, if at all, from assisting me. As I continued my job search, I decided that once I found a job, I would create a way to assist others in my situation, or as a good friend put it, "pay forward" the investment others had made in me.

My career coach kept telling me that I had to "network" if I wanted to find my next job. That advice was dead on, but not very helpful because I had no idea what networking meant. My previous work life consisted of waking up at 4:30 A.M., spending up to 70% of my time traveling, and arriving home LATE. When I wasn't traveling or working, all I wanted to do was spend time with my family. I didn't invest time in meeting people outside of work, so I didn't have a network of contacts. Each week when I met with my career coach, her advice was to network, network, network. I eventually figured out what she meant, but I could never get answers to the questions, "What is networking?" or "How do you network?"

I'm still amazed by the network that led me to my next job. During my daughter's soccer game I explained my situation to Andy, whose daughter was also on the team. Andy had been through a transition, so he could relate to my situation. He asked for my resume and offered to circulate it through his company. I eagerly agreed.

After I e-mailed Andy my resume, I kept calling and e-mailing to see if he had anyone willing to talk with me. Almost a month passed before Andy finally introduced me to Chip. I called Chip and he agreed to meet with me, but as we talked, I realized he was in the process of moving to St. Louis for the first time. As I hung up, I thought to myself, "What a waste of time! Chip is new to the company and city; he doesn't know anybody!" I nearly called back and cancelled.

I'm not sure why, but I kept the appointment. Chip was a great guy, but as I expected he didn't have any contacts in St. Louis yet. As we discussed the companies I was targeting, he said he knew someone who worked for BJC HealthCare. They had worked together in Washington, D. C. He said he would try to contact Leon and would get back to me if he had any luck. I left the meeting convinced that my instincts had been right; meeting with Chip was a waste of time.

Two days later, Chip forwarded an e-mail from Leon; she said she would be happy to assist me, and suggested I give her a call. When I called the next day, Leon referred me to a co-worker, Nancy, and suggested that the two of us meet. I called Nancy and set up a meeting with her, which went exceedingly well, and she graciously provided a number of referrals, including a co-worker who happened to be on my target list.

At Nancy's suggestion, I e-mailed her co-worker, Bob. We set up a time to talk on the phone, and after a brief discussion Bob asked me to join him and one of his direct reports, Jim, for lunch. We discussed my experiences as well as the challenges that they were currently facing as they built a new department. After 20 minutes, they told me about a new position they had in the works. We agreed that I was a good match for the position, and they suggested that I meet with Jim the next week to talk in more detail. It was at this meeting that I learned that the job description hadn't been written. I volunteered to draft the job description, which I hoped would accelerate the hiring process. After we revised the job description several times, Jim asked me to come in for a formal interview. The two of us talked for over an hour, and then I had a group interview with the rest of his department heads.

Two weeks later, Jim called to offer me the position. I had successfully networked my way to a new position! It was amazing that I had been able to find a position that had not previously existed or ever been advertised. Through my networking, I was crossing both industries (from consumer products to healthcare) and job functions (operations to construction management). Thus, I had finally learned the power of networking.

After I started the job, I began coaching individuals through their own job searches. I had a steady stream of people calling me and asking for advice. I've now worked one-on-one with over 100 individuals, and I'm proud that every pupil has worked hard and landed successfully.

Since I could only work one-on-one with a limited number of job seekers, I offered to join forces with a volunteer organization and conduct a networking workshop, thus expanding the number of people that we could assist. Since we started the workshop, I've trained over 1,000 people on the job search system that worked for me. The more people I worked with, the more I realized that this was what I wanted to do everyday as a profession. With the support of Brian Merchant-Calsyn, a highly successful entrepreneur, we founded Career Networking Pro. Now I spend my days assisting others as they transition from one employer to another; coaching people between jobs on how to accelerate their job search and find the job they want; advising currently employed people on ways to improve their performance; and advising businesses on how to gain new clients through the power of networking and referrals.

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Step 3: Constructing Your Networking Plan

Your Networking Plan will provide focus on your search, educate the people you meet about the networking process and enable your contacts to understand how to best assist you. Use **Job Search Tool 14: Networking Plan Checklist** (p152) to track your completion of the items in this section. As in the last two chapters, you need to continue tracking the time you're investing in your job search using **Job Search Tool 2: Productivity Tracking Form** (p138).

A Networking Plan is NOT a resume. A resume asks:
Do you know of a job that I may be qualified for?

This approach puts the person you're meeting with on the spot; turns the meeting into an interview; and if the answer is no, the meeting and conversation will come to a quick end. The contact won't be comfortable providing referrals, as they don't want their colleagues to experience the same discomfort.

A Networking Plan supplements your resume, as it asks different questions:

Is there anyone on my Target List that you can introduce me to?

Do you know anyone that works for any of the companies on my Target List?

Every person we meet knows people we do not. The question is whether they're willing to identify someone they think you should meet and provide that introduction. Since they've already invested time in meeting with you in person, you have a much higher chance that the answer will be yes. By presenting them with a Target List, you make the process *easier for them*.

Are there other people not on my list that I should meet?

Are there other companies not on my list that I should learn about?

This is a great opportunity to learn about new people and companies that you're currently unaware of. This expands your networking options beyond the Target List you created.

By concentrating your actions and words on networking rather than open positions, you clearly communicate that the meeting isn't an interview. This will put your contact at ease and build confidence that you'll approach and treat their referrals in the same professional manner.

Your Networking Plan:

- ✓ Drives the networking process to generate ongoing referrals.
- ✓ Educates others about the networking process and how they can best assist you.
- ✓ Provides focus on the people and companies that are important to you, while opening the door for new ideas.
- ✓ Demonstrates your investment in the process and shows that you're organized and serious about the effort.
- ✓ Respects your contact's time by providing organization for the meeting.
- ✓ Provides enough background information to understand your skills and accomplishments as well as establish your legitimacy as a professional.
- ✓ Makes it easier for the person you're meeting with.

This is a living document; you should continue to evolve the Target List of people and companies over time. The goal of your Networking Plan is to develop a broad number of contacts within each of your target companies so when that perfect job opens up, the hiring manager will know and contact you before the opening becomes public.