



CHAPTER

14

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES:

Techniques – Market Timing – Team Members

Who should I deal with in making employment contacts?

Where are the best job hunting grounds? Do you need a hunting guide? Your best guide is an understanding of how the job hunting systems work.

The career search is a *marketing concept*. You must design a strategy to find an immediate job opening and have a plan for constantly churning up new job possibilities.

Make the job search system work for you! The degree to which you will have success in finding the right job depends upon your strategy in making the “system” work for you.

The system involves the following activities:

1. Setting your goals
2. Understanding your needs
3. Developing your tools
4. Knowing the process steps
5. Attacking job leads
6. Influencing the hidden market
7. Designing the role of others
8. Executing a plan

Your approach involves both strategic considerations and tactical plans. The longer viewpoint sets the overall parameters and the shorter tactical plan addresses your more immediate actions.





Planning the Job Search Process

Assessing where you are, exploring the options, and setting a goal that is a reasonable compromise between reality and personal concerns is the essence of career planning.

Most resumes and cover letters state the title of the position you are currently seeking.

A job search strategy starts with an objective. No plan ever reaches fulfillment without goals.

Far too many job seekers plunge into job hunting without setting meaningful goals. Most simply want better jobs and more money. Life is too short to spend it wandering around from job to job trying to just earn a living. There is a better strategic plan.

Effective job hunting begins with career planning. Personal satisfaction comes when you find a position that closely matches your skills, values, interests, and personal qualities.

Establish a Job Goal

When you approach the job market, broad career goals must mesh with reality. The job market is composed of specifics. The specifics range from entry-level jobs to top-level executive assignments in hundreds of different types of organizations and functions. Where is your niche?

Jobs are filled by job title. Acceptance of a specific job today does not pigeon-hole you for a lifetime. A specific job should be selected because of the options it will open later. Planning ahead is important.

Obtaining multiple offers for a particular type of job is your short-run goal. A job search tactic is a short-term method that fits within an overall long-term career plan. A career implies many jobs with many different employers.

Function. Many immediate job objectives are very specific. Even the function and department is often specified. Accounting, finance, marketing, manufacturing, engineering, research, and administration are the basic functions of any type of organization.

Being specific narrows the choice. An employer's decision is greatly simplified and thus more likely to produce the results you desire.



You must interview at the specific hiring location because supervisors prefer to personally hire their own staff.

Industry. Many jobs exist in only certain industry groups. Most teachers are employed by local school boards, and most retail store buyers work in the retail industry. Many people develop expertise in their functional field and then further relate it to a given industry, which builds in job security expertise and career potential.

In many cases, it is unwise to leave an industry where an accumulation of knowledge benefits your career advancement. Employers within your area of expertise are willing to pay more and recognize your unique combination of abilities. You add great value if you have industry specific knowledge!

Location. Not only must you decide what you want to do, but you must also decide *where* you want to do it. Employment is usually localized. Even in an organization with international operations and scores of locations, hiring decisions invariably are made at the local level. Follow the chain of command in your field.

Supervisors want to “personally” hire the people who will work for them. If they do not specifically hire the new person, supervisors want to feel that they had some input into the decision. It is a rare situation where a manager in one location, even the home office, can hire for a manager in another location.

This grassroots hiring concept means that you have to make a decision about *where* you want to practice your particular expertise. Once you have decided on what you want to do and where you want to do it, the stage is set for implementing a basic job search strategy.

Job Hunting Process

Have you ever wondered how the phrase “job hunting” ever got started? Hunting implies that there is an adversarial role: a hunter and a prey. The job search process does involve two parties, but the goal is one of mutual satisfaction. Two parties are attempting to get together to help each other. It is not an adversary relationship!

Your Problem. Some of the hardest work you will ever do is the work you put into finding employment. The right employer often seems to elude you. The search process is not always an enjoyable activity. Rejection for a job is a major ego-deflating experience.

Your search strategy can take months and cost several thousand dollars if you include lost earnings during the search process. Job hunting is so discouraging and frustrating for some people that they choose to remain in less than ideal job situations rather than attempt to change.

The Employer’s Problem. The employer often reads through mountains of paperwork and conducts hundreds of interviews just to find one person for a given job. Once an employer generates a job opening for which you





are a match, that employer has no systematic way of identifying you from the masses of people (most of whom are unqualified for the position).

The employer can only publicize an opening and hope that a person like you will apply. That is an extremely passive role. In addition, publicizing the opportunity only adds to the problem because so many unqualified applicants respond hoping that the employer will compromise the publicized specifications. The www and e-mail has made the employer's task ever more onerous. It is easy for unqualified candidates to apply for everything.

The employer is locked into screening applicants—talking to whomever happens into the office and reading whatever resumes come across the desk or in the e-mail file. In an effort to find you, the employer sorts through hundreds of poorly qualified applicants. Because of a pressing need and a deadline, the two of you may never connect. Some employers compromise early.

Clearinghouse. There is no central clearinghouse. Even when computerized, the right matches seem to elude employers and applicants. The *subjective* factors needed in a job often play havoc with sophisticated computerized matching systems.

Although the Internet has greatly facilitated the search process, the volume of information to review is overwhelming.

The www is very important in your job search but it is not a perfect solution. You still must get your credentials to the right person. Who is the right person?

Finding the solution to this dilemma is your responsibility. You must throw your qualifications into the path of the employer's often "undirected" talent search.

By following some time-tested strategies and employing some effective techniques, you can bring the right parties together. There are many fewer employers than employees. Find the right employer. The www facilitates your locating the right decision-maker. Employers rarely find you!

Cost Considerations. A good job search plan takes time to develop and implement. It is also expensive. If you are unemployed, that cost can be an emotional barrier.

To avoid adding stress to an already difficult situation, you must make plans ahead of time to deal with the financial aspects of job searching.

The "Estimated Search Expenses" provides a list of the expenses normally incurred in a job search campaign. Look at the items that pertain to your situation. Rough-out a plan for eight to twelve weeks—the normal time frame for changing jobs.

The typical job search takes 90 to 120 days, or about three months for budgeting purposes. After looking at the bottom line, make a detailed source of funds statement for estimating your financial resources during your search period. Planning ahead will greatly relieve some major stress later. Always try to hold your current job while looking for a new job.

You should keep very accurate records of what you spend on your job search. All legitimate expenses are often tax deductible.

Your mission is to bring your desires to the attention of people who need the talents that you have to offer.



Estimated Search Expenses

Plan your budget before your search if possible.

Resume software/assistance	\$ _____
Resume printing	_____
Cover letter assistance	_____
Postage and supplies	_____
Telephone calls	_____
Travel	_____
Personal expenses	_____
Periodicals	_____
Publications	_____
Career seminars	_____
Agency fees	_____
Counseling fee	_____
Clothing	_____
Other	_____
Total	\$ _____

This does not include lost wages if unemployed.

Figure 14.1

Your resume and cover letter are the main features in your personal promotion materials.

Communication Tools

Your *resume* represents your skills, interests, and aptitudes. It helps you to be many places at once.

Your resume is disseminated to the right employer. Get the employer's attention for the few seconds it takes to realize that you are the perfect person and ideal match.

A *cover letter* should be the extra pizzazz that opens the employer's eyes. It brings your resume to life. A well-prepared cover letter motivates the employer to read your resume in depth.

In essence, these two short documents team up to serve as your personal advertisement. The package permits the employer to screen out unqualified applicants and screen you in for further consideration.

A well-designed resume and carefully worded cover letter are your most important means of communicating with potential employers. Your investment of time and money in this promotion package returns benefits for years if it is properly formulated.

Hiring Sequence

Your search process is simple in concept but cumbersome in practice. Two parties must recognize the contribution that each can offer to the other. Both parties want to get together.



Both parties mobilize their efforts to attract each other by extending “antennas” that reach into each other’s world. This continuous, directed, yet random reaching eventually results in contact. Once there is contact, communication begins.

It is inefficient. Critics for decades have decried the seeming chaos of the system but, in spite of the outcries, the archaic monster rides on. The critics have yet to offer any better solution despite the fact that their words often sound good.

Most critics admonish you to take charge of your life rather than let the “system” dictate your fate. Nonetheless, whatever advice unfolds, the bottom line is always bringing together the two parties. Advice only differs on how to improve the likelihood of the paths of the parties crossing. Make it efficient.

Once the awareness of a possible match occurs, a sequence of hiring steps occur. These steps are simple to influence.

Introductory Interview. Based upon the resume and cover letter (or a referral), the employer contacts you and invites you to interview for the position you are seeking. A time and place for the meeting is arranged.

In some instances, a third party is instrumental in making the physical arrangements. The employer may be represented by a personnel representative, the employee to whom the hired person will report, or another employee of the firm.

The purpose of introductory interviews is to initially screen candidates. They are normally less than an hour in length and sometimes they are conducted by telephone. Rarely do job offers for technical, professional, and managerial positions immediately follow introductory interviews.

An evaluation form is completed on the candidate. A recommendation is made to continue discussions or to conclude considerations.





Follow-up Interview. If the introductory interview is successful, you will be invited back for more extensive and intensive interviews. You are normally interviewed by several people, including your potential supervisor. Someone from the human resources department is typically a participant.

Some organizations pay for any expenses you may incur for travel, lodging, and food when discussions reach the follow-up interview stage. This is not a universal policy but it has wide acceptance. Do not assume. Ask!

Job Offer. The decision to extend a job offer is normally a *consensus decision*. In education, the decision is often recommended by a selection committee. In business and government, there is an evaluation by each person who interviewed you. Your acceptance of the job offer completes the hiring sequence. Upon your acceptance, it is considered unethical to continue your job search.

The Decision-Makers. The most important person you have to impress is the key job decision-maker, usually the person to whom you would eventually report. That is the person who has the most power to hire or fire you. The smaller the organization, the more likely it is that this is one person.

Organizations employing 50 or more people (or smaller government units) usually base an employment decision for managerial-level personnel on the consensus of two to five people.

Be careful in trying to identify who the chief decision-maker really is. Power in an organization rarely rests with only one person. Higher-ranking people are frequently strongly influenced by the well-reasoned opinions of subordinates. As an interviewee, you must please everyone because any one person could have enough influence to blackball you.

Web Job Contacts

Contacts are everything in your job search. Networking and targeted job search strategies only work well when the “customer” is preselected. The secret is boiling it down to the right contacts and wisely approaching the best assets.

The web is invaluable in finding the needle in the haystack. The needle locator is the search engine. The haystack is the mass of databases. The needle is the perfect job for you. Using the web for your contact research is essential.

Your task is to learn to use the web to locate the perfect set of contacts. It is not complicated but it does take time. Some job hunters and employers will always pay others to do this not so exciting work. Employment agencies and search firms will not disappear. They will do much of their research on the web also.

The web is making the job market much more efficient. It is another tool. It is not a panacea. Contacts are everything!

One person’s joy is another’s loathing so beware of the “site ratings.” It only takes a few seconds to check out each site.

Most sites stay alive on revenues from ads on-line. If the site stinks, the marketplace will force it to disappear. Many have disappeared!

The best sites bring job seekers and employers together. You must research sites carefully to locate those best suited to help you.





The cover letter and resume are not dead. The exchange media is simply changing. That clever cover letter and creative resume usefulness will probably never disappear. The delivery vehicle is just changing. The interview is hardly going to disappear either.

The number of search variables is massive. You name your search criteria and you can bet that some job search engine has it. Some of the most common search criteria are listed below.

There are basic components in most sites:

- job listing
- resume posting
- search advice
- virtual career fairs
- job fairs

It is captivating. You can easily get absorbed in information overload. Job hunters and employers used to pay dearly for this virtually unlimited information and databases. Rarely should you have to pay anything. Beware of sites asking for fees. There is a lot of good stuff for free.

A growing number of job listing and resume available sites provide overlapping links to each other. The on-line job seeker is often swamped with a vast array of job postings indexed by location, industry, job function, skills desired, experience factors, salary, etc.

On-line job hunting involves lots of keyword searching and page hopping. Flashy graphical images attract your interest. Job boards serve a purpose: to help identify the right job for you and other research on employers.

The web resources are fantastic but most experts who research web statistics claim that less than 20 percent of jobs come from web resources. Don't spend more than 30 percent of your time with web job boards! The web is great for your research, which will aid in identifying job leads and preparing for interviews. But do not get absorbed with this tool!

Making Contact

You have identified those special organizations and people who can help in your job search. Now, how can you get the all-important address, phone, fax, e-mail, and other contacting data?





The www can help there also. Let your computer mouse do the walking. The many web sources will help you track down the perfect contact. You only need to visit the website of a major college career services office to help you identify the best links for specific contacts. Start with your college's website. Most of the big job boards like Monster, Hot Jobs, America's Job Bank, and Career Builder can help you with your research.

Influencing the Job Market

At any point in time, positions needing your qualifications exist somewhere. The job market is one vast pool of available job openings. The web and other publications list only about 20 percent of available jobs.

Not all job opening notices reach the mass publicity market. Many experts refer to this less visible pool of jobs as the "hidden job market." Other jobs may not ever be publicized because a unique job is created to fit a special person's credentials. Remember, 80 percent of all open jobs are never listed. Networking and the grapevine fills most openings. Nothing will ever replace "word of mouth."

Visible Openings

Most experts acknowledge that less than 20 percent of all job openings are ever listed. Therefore, it is not surprising that about 90 percent of all job seekers ask for consideration for only 20 percent of the jobs. Just because a job is not advertised does not mean you cannot be considered for that opportunity. Networking opens most doors.

The visible openings are the job openings that the average person sees advertised. You may see them advertised in various media, read of them on the www and in newspaper articles, or hear stories circulating about jobs in certain organizations or career fields. The visible openings are the jobs about which you are most likely to hear information.

The reason certain openings are so visible is that employers must use the mass media to attract qualified applicants to apply, especially for hard-to-fill jobs. In most occupations at the technical, professional, and managerial level, that approach is not always necessary.

Publicizing a job to a *specific* target audience may exist. You have access to information through avenues other than the mass media channels of communications. Don't wait for listed jobs and ignore the real bonanza of jobs. Use your hidden market access. Use it wisely!

Hidden Job Market

Only a very small percentage of jobs are ever widely publicized. Many jobs are publicized in less obvious ways.

Most estimates place the number of "hidden jobs" at about 80 percent of all available openings during any time period.

What are these "hidden jobs"? How do you locate them? Why publicize an opening if you already have a file of well-qualified applicants?

Most jobs are never advertised.

The hidden job market represents about 80 percent of all jobs open in a year.





Most Common Interview Generating Activity

Where are you going to find job leads?

Direct Mail Solicitations	5–10%
Responding to Ads	5–10%
Responding to Web Ads	5–10%
Job Fairs	5–10%
Third Party Reference	10–20%
Networking	70–80%

(percentage varies by size and type of employer/function)

Which method will best work for you?

Figure 14.2

Publicizing some types of jobs on an open basis invites hundreds of unqualified applicants to apply, especially if advertised on the www. For example, publicizing an opening for a “personnel assistant” would generate several hundred resumes. A more prudent publicity effort might be to identify five schools known for turning out top-notch human resource graduates. It might be wise to approach only two faculty members at each school for referrals. Another approach might be to limit recruiting to a national HR association meeting where many well-qualified people would be present.

The Internet certainly has opened access to formerly “hidden” jobs. Yet the number of employers not using the job media is still high. Employers just do not want to wade through hundreds of web-generated resumes. Even within the web community, you need to know how to source the specific job lead.

Specialized channels of information distribution characterize the hidden job market. It is not the “old boy” system of yesteryear that restricted entry to the better jobs to a special clique. Yet, it is true that only certain people know about job selected openings.

The informal grapevine information network is far more productive for employers than the sophisticated advertising techniques used in the popular media.

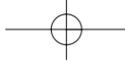
Another reason some positions are not publicized is because some employers have internal posting systems. Current employees, regardless of rank, get first shot at higher-level positions.

The promote-from-within policy is popular. Over time, this policy will cause most openings for technical, professional, and managerial positions to be at the entry level in mature organizations. The new, smaller, rapidly growing organizations offer opportunities to higher-level job seekers. They tend to recruit employees from the more established firms.

It is useless to publicize some openings. Some jobs are not desirable, and the talent for others is so sparse that no applications would be generated via the listing anyway.

Most job openings are filled through the human grapevine.





Some jobs do not receive publicity because the employer elects to assign the selection chore on an exclusive basis to a search firm. Job search firms have well-oiled machines that spread the word. There is no need to advertise openings by either the employer or the search firm.

Hidden Market Entré: Word of Mouth

Regardless of the reason, most jobs are not listed. Consequently, you will have to find a way around that roadblock.

The main way to get into this market is to market yourself. Some would call this networking tactic “schmoozing.” You can gain entry by publicizing yourself to people who are in the channels of information dissemination used by employers. The secret is to get your credentials to the right people. This involves a continuous and systematic approach of reaching out to others.

The most used publicity technique of employers is simple: *It is word of mouth.* Word of mouth publicity is thus the most important technique you can use. It is the most important technique for employers, so you must enter that scene too. Manage to get your story told in the right circles.

The Internet facilitates the networking but it cannot replace word of mouth. You must learn to use the www as only one of your job search tools. The Internet will never replace the power of word of mouth referrals! The following information will facilitate and teach you how to effectively network your talents for career success.

Your access to the hidden job market is through other people. Word of mouth fills most jobs.

Job Creation

Not only are most jobs seemingly hidden, but some do not exist at the time you apply. Your skills and background may have great value, yet there may not be a traditional job for which employers have recognized sufficient economic return to justify hiring your kind of talent.

Occasionally, an enterprising employer may see a lucrative monetary return from your unique talent. When this happens, the employer may make a spot for you by creating a position that fits your credentials.

Would you hire yourself and work on commission? Do you have confidence in the contribution you can offer? If you have a unique skill, would you like to work for yourself? You might make more money than if you work for someone else.

An employer must make a profit to remain solvent. The profit motive is what causes an employer to create a new position.

There are many reasons why you might prefer to work for an employer rather than attempt to go into business on your own. The unique service you offer may not be easily marketable to the public. What is your value proposition?

If the service is marketable, working for others relieves you of the accounting, marketing, and other functions that may not be your strong suits. It is often worth it to work for someone else rather than do all the other things that you are not capable of (or do not enjoy) doing.

Jobs are not created easily. An employer analyzes the situation a long time before adding a new expenditure. After all, the organization is probably

Employers rarely create a job just to fit your credentials but it does occasionally happen if you have a significant contribution to make.





running well without your skills. How much more can it accomplish by adding you? If the answer is “a lot,” you have a new position.

New positions represent a very small fraction of the hidden job market. For established organizations, creating a new job is not a simple task. Here is how the job creation process works in most organizations.

1. **A Need Develops.** A new product or service brings about the realization that new problems face the organization. A need may result from growth and expansion or when a key employee retires or leaves.
2. **Reallocation.** One solution is to internally shift resources and people from one function to another. Sometimes this “internal reorganization” eliminates the need.
3. **Realization Strikes.** Management recognizes that a new position is needed and puts together a new job description.
4. **Employee Referrals.** Management asks current employees for referrals or internal upgrades. Management usually interviews internal candidates who believe they may be qualified.
5. **External Publicity.** The availability of the opening is publicized. The publicity may initially be via a very narrow channel and then be gradually expanded as the need for more or better qualified applicants increases. The publicity may eventually hit the newspapers or employment agencies if word of mouth fails.

Your understanding of how the labor market really functions helps you focus on specific execution activities that work best.

This position creation process can take one week to six months. The larger the organization is, the greater the red tape, internal procedure, legal considerations, budgetary concerns, etc. Small organizations face many constraints as well. If you show up with perfect credentials for a new position that the organization desperately needs, it still may take considerable time for you to be hired. Whether it is a “Mom and Pop” consultant or of Fortune 500 firm, job creation is no simple matter.

Job creation does occur. It is an option, but not an entirely prudent one for you to rely upon. Your job objective should be geared to what is currently available in the real marketplace. Do not put all of your efforts into

“maybe’s.” Keep your eyes open. Jobs do get created. Working as a “consultant” on a temporary basis is the vehicle used by employers when they see talent like you that they need immediately. Are you willing to be an independent consultant?



Market Awareness

The labor market pool is big and open, even in time of severely restricted economic growth. Sometimes the right job is a compromise that is made because the market is soft at the time.

A labor market pool is a fluid movement of people. People change jobs. The economy fluctuates. People take certain jobs for expediency. If the job you must accept is not the job that leads to where you think you want to go, perhaps you can make it lead you to future networking contacts.





Job hunting is an on-going business activity because one thing leads to another. An awareness of visible, hidden, and nonexistent position possibilities is an important step to getting where you want to go. Sometimes, one step backward allows you to move two steps forward later. Compromising can be a good job search strategy.

Hunting Advice

Never hunt for a job. Make the job come to you. Get hunted!

Know how to get hunted. Be the prey. Let the hunter find you. That technique does not mean to do nothing but hope. For most people's personalities, adopting the role of the prey, in practice, is actually somewhat difficult.

By posting your credentials on the www, you create a larger bullseye. But you still must be in the sight for the hunter to notice you.

The most successful job search technique you can employ is putting yourself in the right place at the right time. This does not come about by accident, nor by luck! Being in the right place at the right time takes planning and hard work. Networking is the best career strategy. It puts you at the right place at the right time.

The Job Search Team

Who is on your job search team? Every job campaign plays to a supporting cast. The supporting cast of participants creates the excitement, reality, and final success.

Your network of acquaintances is your most important team. Your network partners open the right doors for you. Just where do you start recruiting your team members?

Yourself as Coach

Neither you nor the employer could survive without a cast of lesser players. Individually, you and the employer swim in a giant sea. Neither knows the other exists. Neither can see the other initially. Something (or somebody) often serves as a catalyst to bring the two of you together.

Starting a job campaign without recognizing your backup players is like trying to swim with both legs tied. You can stay afloat, but it zaps a lot of your energy.

Doing everything on your own is possible, but foolish. Proving that you are "independent" pleases no one but you. That attitude scores few points.

Regardless of your age, you have a lot of future left, and you probably want a career, not just a job. You need others in your search strategy.

People who you know (and learn to know) form the most solid foundation upon which you can build a total career plan. Managing a life plan involves many other people. You must lead and coach this team.

Employers Need Talent—You!

The employer is in the same boat. Without people to help find the talent it needs, no organization can succeed. Many organizations have collapsed even though their financial resources and capital goods were more than adequate.

You are the most important person in your search team but not the only team player.





The employer also needs to find you.

Organization life depends on people. Without good people, few organizations survive. Employers must develop a strong cadre of people both within the organization and on the outside. Employers need a way of drawing outstanding talent, like you, to work for them.

Most employers rely on an information network that continually feeds them information about talented potential employees. These “people networks” largely explain why some organizations tend to consistently be top performers in their fields.

An organization’s success depends upon people. The best organizations develop the people they have and aggressively recruit additional strong talent. The recruiting is not a “hit or miss” approach. It is a consistent effort that draws on input from people internally and externally.

Human Resource Departments (HRD)

The best employment contact for you is the person for whom you would work if you got the job. Unfortunately, you cannot always determine who that person is.

You may need the HRD to direct you to the right path. Many employers have strong corporate policies against the hiring of technical, professional, and managerial employees without first going through HRD.

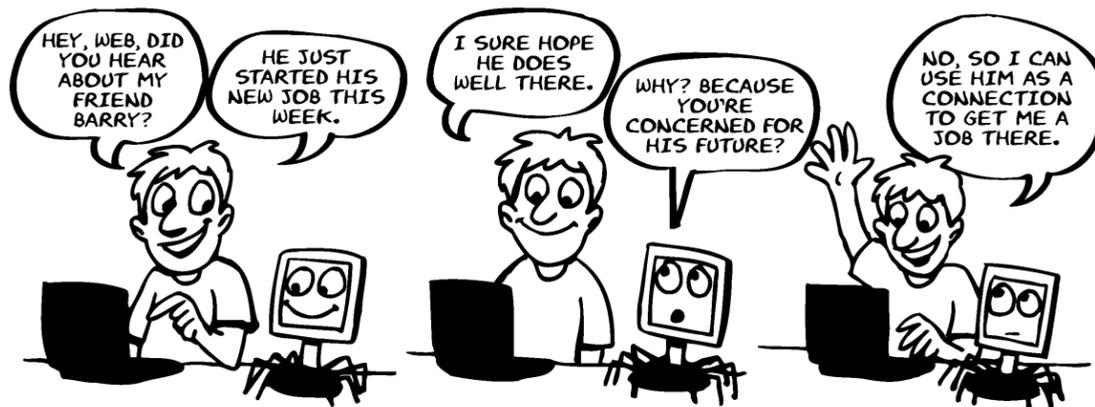
Because of government compliance regulations, the trend is clearly in the direction of requiring all applicants to see HRD first. Most decision-makers do not want responsibility for the paperwork the government often requires prior to initial interviews.

In today’s parlance, the old “Personnel Department” is often called the “Human Resources Department” or HR for short. The key HR manager in a medium-size organization is the “salaried employment manager.” It is this person who signs off on or approves 90 percent of all offer commitments made to professional and managerial-level employees. The job titles actually used vary widely.

The term *salaried* employee is being replaced by the term *exempt* employee. That simply means that your employment is not legally covered under the Fair Labor and Standards Act (FLSA) as amended repeatedly. FLSA primarily covers employees paid on an hourly basis (nonexempt employees).

Human Resource representatives are your roadmap within the organization.





*Personnel staff
can open internal
doors for you.*

Role. The HR department's role is to protect the manager's time. To accomplish this they can carry out the initial screening and handle all of the necessary paperwork. If necessary, they can do both internal and external searches for the manager and at the same time stay within affirmative action guidelines.

Knocking on the doors of HR offices can be nerve-wracking. HR people can make "no" decisions but have little power to make "yes" decisions. Nonetheless, in most cases it is unwise to try to bypass the HRD. HRD wields a lot of power in most organizations.

In most medium and large organizations, the HR departments carry a significant amount of weight in the hiring decisions for all salaried employees. Technical, professional, and managerial openings at the entry level for college graduates are almost always dealt with first by HR. HRD's influence in top-level jobs is not as extensive in some organizations.

Smaller employers put much less weight on HR functions. The operating managers make most hire-and-fire decisions involving salaried employees in smaller organizations.

Tactics that circumvent the HRD often alienate its staff. In addition to the short-term resentment, there are some long-term negatives.

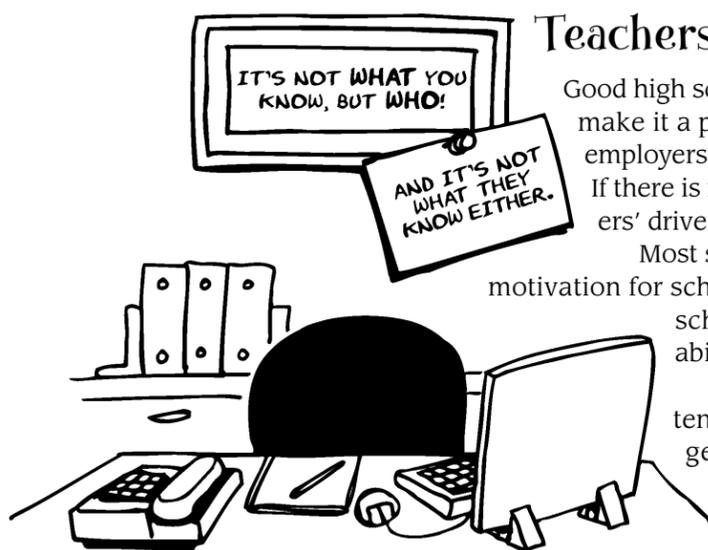
Even if you obtain the position, you will still need the support of the HRD as you advance. Although HR is not the most powerful function in most organizations, HR staff do carry considerable influence in things that may matter to you later.

Alienating the HR staff is a serious action. Study the ramifications before you undertake actions that will upset this group of people. Just like your next boss, they can be important career makers or breakers.

Writing Executives. Some experts suggest writing the top executive for all positions paying over \$100,000. If you cannot locate the appropriate decision-maker, you can usually insure that your inquiry will get funneled to the proper person by directing it to the top executive officer.

Most letters and e-mails, though, even when noted as personal and confidential, never get to the chief executive. In most cases, an administrative aide sorts the mail and routes it to the proper person or department.

There is subtle pressure on a subordinate when he or she gets such a letter from "upstairs." The attitude can be resentment just as much as a desire to satisfy the boss, however.



Teachers/Professors

Good high school and college professors and counselors make it a point in their work to get to know potential employers. Professors train talent that employers need. If there is no market for that talent, some of the teachers' drive and interest dies.

Most studies of students' goals show that a major motivation for schooling is upward mobility. Students attend school to obtain skills that will improve their ability to accomplish their goals in life.

People who go into the teaching profession tend to be helping, caring persons. They try to get to know their students well. Employers needing the type of talent that certain teachers produce want to get to know those teachers too.

Many teachers are in unique positions with much potential for playing broad roles if they elect to exercise their influence. They can be major participants in the flow of the labor market talent because they help both students and employers. You should get to know your teachers and mentors well. Professors play a strong role in your quest for networking partners.

Teachers make more job recommendations than any other occupational group, so try to get to know several very well.

Work Associates

The people you meet in your current full-time (or part-time) work setting are the next most influential participants in your search process. These associates may be colleagues or customers. Colleagues occasionally leave for greener pastures and they may come back for you. Customers can occasionally see your potential better than your present employer.

All of your work associates have lives that extend beyond the current work environment. They can be influential participants in your job search process. Get to know them well. Employers use them very effectively and you should, too.

One of your most important sources for network partners is your supervisors, peers, and subordinates. The colleagues who work with you daily observe your values, interests, personality, and skills. Very few potential partners know you better than work colleagues. It is common for your colleagues to be your best next work partners. As you move up the ladder, keep your colleagues happy. They may be your strongest group of network partners—even your former subordinates.

Friends

Friends are the small group of people with whom you have become close through sharing your life with them. They should be among the first people you go to for advice.





Friends play an important role in your job search process. They can offer advice and suggest job leads. They also may be in positions to share your resume with their other friends at clubs, civic groups, church, etc. Cultivate these network partners as you move forward in your career.

Your personal contacts are your very own unique sales force. Help them help you.

Acquaintances

Acquaintances are people who you know and who know you, but your relationships with them are not of a close personal nature. Acquaintances can nonetheless influence the thinking of others about you.

If you advise acquaintances of your desires, they can help. Their role can be very important in your search process. Taking advantage of the influences of acquaintances is an important strategy in a job search plan. It is extremely important in the construction of the elaborate network of people who are capable, in small and large ways, of influencing others to offer you job interviews.

Some of your strongest job leads often come from “friends of friends.” Putting and keeping yourself in the loop is a positive networking strategy.

Summary

Job search strategies play an important role in your future. You have many people willing to help you move through the job search process. Unfortunately, too many job hunters approach the process without an overall awareness of how the many people involved in the process can work for them.

The Internet introduction into the search function has been a great asset in managing and improving the efficiency of the marketplace. It will not however replace “networking” and “word of mouth” communication. Recognize it as an important tool for you to use but do not rely on it to solve your contact communication concerns.

You should set your goals, develop your job search tools, and approach the proper acquaintances (especially colleagues) to get yourself into the mainstream of the hidden job market. You have hundreds of contacts who are willing to help you with your plans. Your challenge is to identify the list of potential partners and to create a plan that regularly cultivates regular relations and helps with these potential networking partners.

The job search strategy that is likely to be most productive for you throughout your working life is “relationship development.” You do not wait until you need your network partners to create it. Fostering relationships with others is your most important job search strategy. More will be covered on this topic in subsequent chapters.

