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HIDDEN JOB MARKET SECRETS
Six Newer P's that Maximize Job Search Success
By Debra Feldman, the JobWhiz™

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Job hunting has striking similarities to a marketing project. The operative “P” words for a successful campaign are positioning, process, and persistence followed closely by performance, personality, and pricing. The product is the candidate. In order for a candidate to have the opportunity to sell their value to the targeted buyer/employer, the strategy driving the search has to be effective which means choosing the correct focus and developing the right approach. Your job search project may be one of the most demanding, *and rewarding*, campaigns you will ever manage. Let's look at ways you can improve odds in your favor through savvy job hunting and best practices job search implementation skills.

1. **Positioning:** The first step to launching a successful campaign and propelling it forward is to identify what makes you a unique candidate. With such stiff competition, it is imperative that candidates distinguish themselves. This means creating a message or an identity that is remarkable and memorable, one that will separate you from the pack of resumes hitting recruiters' desks. It is sometimes difficult to develop this for yourself especially if your career has depended on doing this for others. You may want to seek advice and counsel to establish your value objectively. What is it that you do better than others? What is it about you that enables you to succeed where others don't? Is there something in your background that others easily remember? This bit of specialized, personal data is your tagline. If you get the positioning targeted correctly, your campaign will be focused on the right employer market with a message that the buyer will value generating more employer interest. Once you have captured an employer's attention, then you have created a chance to demonstrate your abilities that eventually may produce a job offer, the goal of your job search campaign project.
2. **Process:** The swiftest route to a new opportunity is to identify your target employers and then address their needs in terms of how you can meet them better than anyone else. Don't wait around for a company to advertise for a job that is perfect for you. Rather, go out there and seek out a company where you are confident you can make a positive impact, especially one measurable in dollars saved or made. Double back to ensure that your positioning vis a vis your target employers is consistent with your most outstanding ability or characteristic that an employer will instantly value. In other words, the better the match, the greater the likelihood for capturing the employer's interest immediately to actually satisfy



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- their needs and exceed their expectations. If you understand the dynamic between meeting employers' needs first and then promoting your skills against these requirements, your chances of making a connection are much greater than if you concentrate only on your achievements and accomplishments without customizing them for an individual company in a way that unmistakably proves your value. Cite ways you can save money, save time, retain customers, reduce costs, increase sales or profits, etc.- this will offset their expenses of adding you to headcount.
3. Persistence and perseverance: The early bird, the first candidate to impress the decision maker, has a competitive advantage. So be the one to create a new job just for you by introducing yourself to employers you want to work for. This also means staying in contact with individuals with whom you “clicked” but didn’t reach an employment agreement for whatever reason. That positive interpersonal chemistry can make or break a situation in your favor so don’t let a good relationship slip away because the timing was off for hiring you. Sticking with your job search goals also means doing a whole lot more than simply submitting a resume or an online application—go and find out who is the hiring manager and speak with them directly. This will get you name recognition and hopefully allow you to pitch them on the phone or in person with your credentials; a much better method than a written marketing document/resume by itself. A word about focus and establishing priorities: concentrate your resources on activities with the largest potential return on your investment. While all search methods have their place, most executive jobs are filled through one avenue: personal referrals. Keep track of your contacts and refresh them periodically. Use different methods to stay in touch varying phone, email, snailmail, an article or clipping, invitations, face to face, etc. according to the recipient preferences. Remember that in networking, maintaining contact is key to results—out of touch can mean out of mind. Ask your contacts for advice, introductions and information—not directly for a job. Rely on your professional network and return favors generously. Persistence in personal interactions is guaranteed to be the very best way to identify a new opportunity. Recommendations carry tremendous weight over cold calls and unsolicited inquiries. If you can get a colleague to make a direct referral to a prospective employer, your chances of being given serious consideration are much higher. If one colleague asks another to meet with a third person, this usually happens and once you are face to face, this is the best possible circumstance to create good interpersonal chemistry and share ideas. Interactions like these often lead to creating a new opportunity specifically in response to a candidate being available; in other words an unadvertised position in the hidden job market is created just for a particular candidate. Let this be you!



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4. **Performance and Presentation:** Make sure your resume speaks to your strengths, talents and skills, but nothing beats actual performance to prove to an employer that you can deliver for them. If you can provide proof of your competency through a customized presentation developed especially for a prospect, (Think : Impact) you have demonstrated initiative and creativity as well as your wealth of knowledge. Doesn't this speak volumes to your willingness to work hard, your desire to make a contribution, to want to go all out to make a difference, to be a team player, to be a leader and to go beyond expectations? Rather than use your words, show the prospective employer what you are made of!! Do a report just for the informational interview occasion demonstrating your grasp of the concepts and your ability to use the material effectively. Does this effort rate the preparation time? Yes, because it is more likely to gain attention and lead to further discussions of your mutual interests and ways you might fit into the organization than mailing out a thousand resumes that are headed for the wastebasket or automated applicant tracking database. This definitely gives you a huge advantage over others who simply submit a resume and wait passively for a reply. You are already past the gatekeeper wowing the decision makers. Don't waste a chance to show hiring managers your capabilities. Put yourself out and you'll reap a competitive advantage, getting on the inside track to joining the company you want to work for!
5. **Personality:** The greatest credentials in the world are not enough. Interpersonal chemistry, that essential feeling of trust plays a critical role in hiring decisions. If you are fortunate enough to make direct contact with a prospective employer, concentrate on letting them get to know you and begin to cultivate their trust. Listen rather than talk so you can hear what is important to them and then can address their needs and calm their concerns. This is critical to encouraging the employer to be comfortable in choosing you to join their business. Gaining credibility might be even more important to your selection than whether your skills and background are desirable. Focus on generating a dialogue, getting to know each other, sharing experiences and thoughts. If there is good chemistry, the rest will follow. If this encounter doesn't lead to an offer, it will likely produce additional leads, interviews and referrals that in turn generate more leads to opportunities. Your personality will facilitate networking and this is how you are going to eventually find your next challenge. Just passing your paperwork around is less likely to motivate people to recommend you than if well-connected colleagues care about your future and want to help you find a job.
6. **Pricing:** Compensation provides a guideline to where you fit into an organization's hierarchy, how much responsibility/authority you merit and an



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indicator of the additional value you represent to the employer. Until a prospective employer is sufficiently intrigued to bring up money, don't raise this issue. Assure them that if you both agree that this is a good fit, you are confident that the financial details can be worked out agreeably. All the more time to invest developing interest in you that the employer would not want to abandon. When you do start talking dollars, be sure to frame this in terms of a range, not a single figure. Skirt this issue assuring the employer that you are certain that this is a negotiable item that won't be a problem. Rather than get into the language of closing a deal, let me suggest that you be prepared to show the employer that you can recoup the expense of bringing you on board through creating new income, saving this amount, retaining business, capturing new clients, increasing client loyalty, etc.

The goal of a job search campaign is to find a great new career opportunity- great from both the employer's perspective and the candidate's viewpoint. To attract a targeted, prospective employer's attention requires implementing correct marketing strategy. To accomplish this, as a candidate you must develop the right positioning and put together a unique value proposition that distinguishes you from your competition. Equally important is selecting prospective employers who will appreciate what you bring to their organization and that you initiated discussions. If these tasks are successful, you will generate exploratory interviews leading to exciting new challenges. You'll have to expect to put substantial effort into all phases of your campaign from research to execution and then persist with your dedication over time. Guaranteed the network of personal contacts you develop using the Six Newer P principles will generate job leads better and faster than other job search methods.

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Debra Feldman is the JobWhiz™, a nationally-recognized expert who designs and personally implements swift, strategic, and customized senior level executive job search campaigns, banishing barriers that prevent immediate success. Her gift for cold calling - executed with high energy and savvy panache - connects candidates directly to decision makers, not HR. Network Purposefully™ with the JobWhiz, and compress your job search into mere weeks, using groundbreaking techniques profiled in Forbes magazine.

In addition to writing columns and conducting workshops for the AICPA, IEEE, Financial Executives International (FEI), Marketing Executives Networking Group (MENG), Financial Executives Networking Group (FENG), Technology Executives Networking Group (TENG), and Harvard Business School alumni, Debra is endorsed by NetShare, BlueSteps and ConstructionExecutive. The career officers at several top tier colleges and universities also recommend her. Contact Debra now at www.JobWhiz.com to expedite your executive ascent!