

HIDDEN JOB MARKET SECRETS

You're Hired! How to Be a Successful Passive Candidate

By Debra Feldman, the JobWhiz
Your Executive Ascent – Personally Delivered. Swift, Discreet, Guaranteed.

If you are like most individuals who have a job, you probably will only think about your contact network when it comes time to consider a change. Contrary to popular practice, the best time for leveraging your connections and taking advantage of new introductions is not just when you are about to enter the job market, but on a continuous basis. Networking is give and take. You should be regularly keeping in touch, reaching out, exchanging information, sharing ideas, and being generous by helping an increasingly larger circle of colleagues and associates. If you do this networking right, new opportunities will come find you whether or not you are ready for different responsibilities or a change of scene. You will never be stuck having to look for your next job so long as you are always passively "looking" and aware of potential challenges for yourself and others.

How can you become a power connector? Launch a campaign starting now to Network Purposefully™. By developing fresh targeted contacts and continuously renewing existing ones, you will revitalize your creative juices, not get lazy, stay in touch on the radar of critical contacts that may refer you or someone you know or may meet to a future career opportunity. Proactive activities to develop new relationships and stay connected establish a lifetime career foundation by putting you on the inside track for future opportunities that only those who are "connected" know. Offer networking assistance even before you are asked! Keep in touch even if you don't need anything at the moment!

Employee referrals have become one of the most useful and effective means for sourcing posted jobs and unofficial openings. Being well connected increases the likelihood that your name will be thrown in the ring for discussion when staffing is addressed. It's how to be at the right place at the right time. Unadvertised openings result from restructurings, new growth, transfers, unexpected resignations, retirements, pending project, etc. and may only come to your attention through inside contacts. The hidden job market, or unadvertised job market, continues to thrive in today's environment generating way more new hires than the Internet and other posted openings. You have to be an insider to become aware of leads and get this competitive edge.

It is not just what you know but, who you know and knows your potential contribution that matters most. Here are some ideas for jumpstarting new relationships and networking purposefully to create more and better connections.

1. **Reach out to those you don't already know.** If the individuals that you keep in touch with on a regular basis are not producing enough high quality referrals, do not wait for things to change. This is your signal that it is time to finding more individuals and get to know them.
2. **Choose your connections for their affiliations, reputations and position.** Prepare an introduction that can be passed along by your contacts

so they don't have to prepare your story. Detail how you can resolve challenges, what specific help you need and ask your contact to forward your request for an introduction. Describe yourself clearly as the go-to person so that you are top of mind when requests for your talent arise.

3. **Rely on third party referrals to bypass gatekeepers, increase your credibility and build trust.** Research who you want to know and ask your contacts about using their connections to introduce you. A personal recommendation is usually more warmly received than an unsolicited letter, email or call.
4. **Dialogue with decision makers, not HR, at target employers** to unearth unadvertised jobs and position yourself on the decision maker's radar. Making an outstanding first impression not only puts your name in play now, but hiring managers are also networked and can connect you to their colleagues elsewhere, further enlarging your reach into other organizations via a personal recommendation.
5. **Choose and nurture your target contacts** purposefully for their potential value to your job search and your career's future. While you may tend to focus on establishing those connections that will yield the new job you need now, any new, well-placed contact is likely to eventually deliver. Oftentimes after a dormant period, candidates will start being contacted out of the blue. Organizations and people are dynamic.
6. **Be very courteous without exceptions. Always stay in touch.** Even if someone is not helpful, send a gracious and prompt thank you; you never know how small the world is and you want to maintain an unblemished reputation for being polite and professional. When you have a positive rapport, continue to keep in touch. You made the effort to network purposefully, don't sacrifice your investment when you start working again.
7. **Increase your online visibility.** Show me don't tell me is the trend. Recruiters don't want to be sent a resume as much as they want to discover a gem through searching the web for candidate leads. It is easier than ever before to create a web presence, support your positioning and get in front of recruiters and hiring managers by publishing your bio on one of the online networks like Linked-In, Ziggs, Ecademy, Ryze or Zoominfo. Post your resume or profile on specialty and niche job sites and on professional associations' databases where you are more likely to be viewed by those in your target audience and more likely than general job boards to generate interest and new connections you can leverage in the future. Publish to establish yourself as an author with expertise. Invest in your own professionally designed website and let it boast about your strengths, abilities, talents, skills and accomplishments and demonstrate your credibility. Make sure you can be found by posting yourself on the corporate databases of your target employers.
8. **Promote yourself as an expert.** Participate in your professional associations, attend local chapter events and assume a leadership role. Volunteer to present at professional meetings or be part of a panel discussion or virtual workshop. Publish a white paper on your personal website or elsewhere. Submit an original manuscript to a reputable firm, online or traditional media. Post comments selectively and routinely follow online networking group e-lists, chats, etc to keep on top of industry happenings, demonstrate your knowledge and invite inquiries and recognition. Write letters to editors and send comments to authors.

9. **Keep in touch regularly and remember to give more help than you ask for!** Email your contacts to update them on industry news or a mutual colleague's achievement, send them your articles and announcements, share thoughts of common interest or a link, celebrate special occasions and honor their birthdays, the New Year, etc.

Today, communication is easier and cheaper than ever, any one can network purposefully to create and maintain their visibility which will attract more new connections. Being a sincere and champion networker is an essential component for career success opening doors to the hidden job market and its wealth of unadvertised new opportunities.

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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 her private practice, writing featured columns and conducting exclusive workshops, Debra is a recommended resource to alumni of top-tier business schools. Contact Debra @ www.JobWhiz.com to expedite your executive ascent.