

Networking For Everyone

I hated networking. And I was a high tech recruiter.

To me it meant glad handing, selling, asking for a job (or a favor), bothering people, talking to total strangers, manipulating people, keeping score and it took a lot of nerve. For others I knew, it was looking needy or being ashamed that they are out of work.

Then I realized that the world turned on relationships. Just like the long-term relationships I built in my personal life, I could use the same techniques to build long-term professional ones. Now I give workshops in the Art of Networking.

We all know by now networking is important. Companies are reluctant to hire “strangers”. Up to 80% of all work is obtained through networking.

Did you know that the average person knows 250 people? I have many client stories that illustrate that the job they ultimately obtained started very innocuously. I had a 55-year-old VP Software Development client, out of work for two years, who had “exhausted” his network. I asked him whom he knew other than his professional associates. He developed another list. He made several calls including one to his realtor. His realtor had just sold a home to a VP of Marketing for “some software company”. My client followed up. Two months later, he became the VP of Software Development with an exciting new startup.

So what is networking? In Webster’s Dictionary, “it is defined as the act or process of informally sharing information and support.” There is nothing in that definition about selling or bothering people—certainly not anything about asking for a job.

Today, companies are hiring solutions—not people. There is some good news here about the kinds of solutions they seek. Unlike choosing a coffee at a Starbucks®, it’s like the grocery store choice; it’s paper or plastic. The paper is “How can you increase our revenue?” the plastic is “How can you increase our productivity”? Among other things, we have globalization to thank for this simplification.

My experience of most people is that they want to help. In order to help, they need to have a solution to offer. It is essential to develop a comprehensible value proposition regarding increasing revenue and/or productivity. Once the solution has been developed, even the shy introvert can confidentially share their information.

Applying Webster's definition of networking, we see companies sharing information of what they need and you sharing your value proposition. You can either help them or you can't.

"Build the relationships first and the jobs will follow" is my clients' mantra.

Randy brings expertise in executive search as a certified career coach. He has guided all levels of professionals in the areas of career transition: changing careers, choosing a career direction, evaluating/negotiating offers, executive career marketing, finding jobs, getting organized, as well as finding opportunities for self-employment, freelancing and consulting. He holds an **IJCTC** certificate from the Career Planning and Adult Development, a **CCMC** (Certified Career Management Coach) from Career Coach Academy, a **PCRC** (Professional Certified Retirement Coach) from the Retirement Coach Institute and certified coach for **Now What? Life Blueprint™ Training**.

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