

HOW TO OPEN MORE DOORS WITH LOW-COST HIGH-IMPACT STRATEGIES

How to Differentiate Yourself with Strategic Connections

So now you've built a relationship with someone you met at an event and made a real connection using the techniques I explained in "How to Make a Connection in 5 Minutes".

(If you would like a copy of that report, just email me at Katherine@sbcompany.net. Put "Connect in 5 Minutes" in the subject line. I'll be happy to send it off to you right away.)

It appears the person is likely to be a great strategic connection for you. They may have access to resources you need. They may be a potential employer—or know a lot of people who could be good for you to meet. And they seem to be willing to give you some time and assistance.

People who fall into this category are fabulous resources you should take very good care of. You only need a few of these kinds of people to get to your next job. You will get more results networking with just a few of these kinds of people than if you have a database of hundred's who have no idea who you are or any real energy around helping you, because there is no real connection.

The **key to success at this point is follow up—strategic, unique and consistent**. You want to get and stay on their radar screen. That's the only way to capitalize on the relationship you've started.

Sadly, and surprisingly, this is where most people stop. They fail to follow up on their meetings and contacts, so their job search doesn't move ahead. They wasted their time, and worse, the opportunity to get in front of more decision makers.

You've undoubtedly heard the statement: "It isn't what you know; it's who you know."

But if you want to be VERY successful, you must realize that it's **who knows you** that makes the difference.

After the event (RIGHT after the event):

Review the business cards you collected. Make a note of the event and date at which you met them. Decide which you are going to call, which should get a note, etc.

The most important thing you can do at this point is to follow up. Usually the responsibility for follow up will be yours; the rewards will also be yours.

Did you make any plans for another meeting with anyone? Did you and the other person agree to talk in a few days to set up a meeting? Make a note of when you will contact him.

You will want to take the initiative to contact that person. Unless they specifically said they would call you, make the effort to reestablish the connection yourself.

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Remember that most people don't do follow up very well. If you do, you will immediately differentiate yourself and get on their radar screen. Other people will wonder how you are getting so many connections, meetings, interviews, etc. The only secret is follow-up.

Did someone make a promise to send you contact information for someone he thinks would be appropriate for you to meet? You may want to send a note or email telling him how much you enjoyed your conversation with him and thanking him in advance for the contacts.

Notes (email or hand written) are important and will set you apart from the crowd. You can mention something you discussed in your conversation as a way to reconnect. They will be grateful for the reminder. While we all would like to think we are truly memorable, let's err on the side of caution and help jog the other person's memory.

Long Term Visibility Strategy

Now it's time to implement your strategy. The three tactics in your visibility strategy are:

- Impact
- Frequency
- Method

Impact means all the ways you get their attention.

When you first met them, you used the techniques I explained in "How to Make a Connection in 5 Minutes" to make a connection with them. Without that connection, nothing you do next will have as much effect as it will if you've taken the time to start building a real relationship with them.

Now what are other ways you plan to make an impact? What methods best fit you and your style? When thinking about that, don't be afraid to step outside your comfort zone a little. JobSearch 2009 requires some new thinking, and luckily today's technology supports that new think.

At the same time, some of the tried and true techniques are fabulously effective.

When I was interviewing executives about their networking experiences, there was a very busy executive I really wanted to meet. I just knew her story would be terrific!

So I called her assistant and asked for her help. What did she think would be the best way for her boss to free up time for me? She told me that her boss really preferred to have this kind of meeting over lunch so it wouldn't impact her work day.

Then I asked her: What was her boss' favorite restaurant? What day looked best for us to have lunch? She was even willing to "pencil" me in for lunch with the executive.

Then I called the executive and asked if she would join me for lunch at her favorite restaurant. She accepted, explaining that my efforts to work out something that would be especially enjoyable for her made all the difference in her decision.

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It didn't take much time or effort on my part, but it made an impact. It even made an impact with her assistant, who was always willing to help me when I called again.

So before you do what everyone else does, think about what kind of impact you want to have. Think about that desired impact every time you follow up.

In recruiting, the people I want to contact to discuss new job opportunities are often busy executives closely guarded by their assistants. So I send a box of Godiva Chocolate Truffles. It shows up in a nice gold box with a note that I am sending them something to enjoy while they take a moment to chat with me. These people always take my calls after that!

At the same time, don't pursue someone who clearly has no ability/interest in networking with you. I have a friend who met a marketing executive at a networking event recently. She could tell he was eager to network with her to get access to people she knows. While she's a pretty willing networker and does help people, he just didn't make a connection with her. To her, it all seemed to be about him and his job search.

My friend mentioned that she is getting so tired of this executive continually sending books, articles, notes, etc., asking her to let him know if she hears about anything he might be interested in.

When you're networking with people as a part of job search, all the "extras" won't make up for the fact you didn't create any kind of connection to them. And while it's a topic for an upcoming report, it's rarely effective to tell people to "let you know if they hear about any opportunities for you." That statement puts you back in the basket with everyone else.

Frequency: how many times until they "get it"?

Frequency of your contact and communication is what makes the difference in how quickly they will think of you when an opportunity--either to refer you to a potential employer or someone who could be a great connection for you.

Most of us have heard that people need to hear a message a lot before it gets through all the other messages we're bombarded with daily. Some people say it can be as much as 27 times before they really get it.

You have a big advantage with people you've met versus sending information to people who haven't seen you. But don't think that means they remember everything you want them to.

Make sure to connect with key strategic connections frequently so you stay "top of mind."

Of course, you can do that in a variety of ways. Things that can be effective could include a quick update email to let them know what happened when you met someone they referred you to, or to let them know what you're doing that's new, or to send them your latest article or web blog link.

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Method is how you can connect most effectively.

Lastly, what **method** are you using to get your message out? It's always amazing to me how few people ask what method the other person would prefer.

You may like email because it's fast and takes less effort than a letter or phone call. But what if your contact gets more emails every day than they can handle? What if their style is to put the emails they need to think about at the bottom of the pile? (As I do.) You might not hear from them for a long time—if at all.

I've been an executive recruiter for a long time and my preferred style is to get going right now. My first instinct is to pick up the phone and call.

But now that I ask people what method they prefer, I know which people like that approach and which do not. For some people, it is exactly the wrong thing to do. But you don't know if you don't ask.

It's going to be easier to have an impact when you get their attention. It's going to be easier to get their attention when you've used their preferred method of communication.

So really differentiate yourself. Ask them which method of communication they prefer.
What is the best way for me to communicate with you?

I can guarantee that almost no one else has ever asked them that question. It has an impact because it shows that you care about what is best for them—you care about them.

When you have a database of contacts with whom you want to communicate, you have fabulous alternatives available, including but certainly not limited to:

Email, written and audio

Postcards, letters and other written communications

Tele-conference

Written and audio messages on your web site

Getting On Their Radar Screen—How to Find and Connect for JobSearch 2009

Do you know **who you want to meet**? Once you've identified who you want to meet, it's easier to get help meeting them.

Do they know **who you are**? Create a strategy to get to know them – in ways that fit their needs.

Do they know **what you do**? Tell them—lots of times in lots of different way. Create a brief powerful statement that you can include each time to tie everything together.

Do they know **why you do it**? You do what you do to benefit people; make sure they know how you bring benefit to whomever you work for.

Do they know **who would make a good connection for you**? Describe that ideal connection to them.

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Do they know **what you are looking for**? Tell them so they can identify it when they see it and tell you about it.

Do they know **how you could help them**? Showing them is much more effective than just telling them. And always remember to ask them "How can I assist you?"

Do they know **how they could serve you**? Ask them; you'll be pleasantly surprised to see how many people are delighted to help.

As you create ways to accomplish the above, you'll be developing a wonderful visibility strategy for you in your job search. It's highly effective marketing at a very low cost.

How People Decide Whether They Will Continue to Make Time for You

You have a powerful ally when they know they can count on you to:

- Stay in touch with people. You contact them to stay in touch, not just when you need something. You contact them in the method they prefer!
- Remember things that are important to them that they reveal in conversations (a contact manager is important because you probably can't remember everything!)
- Do favors for other people
- Avoid name-dropping
- Always come across as genuine
- Make time to meet them face to face (or make time to talk on the phone if they are a long way from you)
- Be up front about what you want from them. If you want them to help you open doors in a new industry you're considering, you don't tell them you want to meet to talk about volunteering at a charity event.

5 Surefire Ways to Ruin Your Relationship with a Good Contact

Fail to follow up

Fail to communicate in their preferred method

Fail to do what you said you would do

Fail to say thank you

Fail to ask how you can be of assistance to them

In conclusion

I hope these simple tactics will be useful as you create your Job Search 2009 strategy to be visible. When you are visible, you are remembered. When people remember you, they share contacts with you, refer others to you, and refer you to great resources.

Low cost, easy, and effective. Put this into action and enjoy the results!

All my best wishes for your success,