

WHAT TO DO WHEN NETWORKING EFFORTS ARE NOT WORKING

You continue to hear that networking is one of the best ways to find a new job, but what do you do if networking is not working in your search? You've told your friends, neighbors, family members and past co-worker you're looking for a job, but you're not getting any referrals. You're passing out CVs or Resumes at networking events and again – no interviews.

You can't keep doing things the same way and expect different results. You first have to analyze what you are currently doing to determine what is not working. You then need to identify which results you want to achieve by networking.

GAP ANALYSIS NETWORKING EFFORTS

A GAP Analysis is a strategic planning tool to help you understand where you are, where you want to be and how you are going to get there.

Answer these four questions:

1. Where are you now?
2. Where would you like to be?
3. What is your GAP?
4. How do you fill the GAP?

Networking is building alliances throughout your entire life. Another exercise that could help you improve your networking efforts is to determine your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

Let me give you some examples:

Strengths:	Relationships with past co-workers, communication skills
Weaknesses:	Shy, introverted, don't know a lot of people
Opportunities:	Job fairs, networking events, social events
Threats:	No one is hiring, other job seekers more qualified

SHOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR NETWORKING TARGETS?

Family

Stay in touch with your entire and extended family. Family members feel more obligated to do favors for you or help you than they might offer other people. You never know what contacts they may have.

Professional Associations

Professional Associations represent the leaders in any profession. It is their job to keep members informed and they are very well networked. Their websites and publications are filled with networking opportunities. You can often attend events as a “guest” which offers you a chance to connect with their members.

Non-Profit Groups

Many executives and hiring authorities are philanthropic and volunteer for various non-profit groups. These same people sit on the Boards of these groups. Volunteering your time lets you “pay it forward” by helping others while you could possibly connect with someone who could advance your job search.

Friends | Neighbors

Let your friends and neighbors know you are in a search. Occasionally send out an email updating them and thanking them for referrals (even if they have not sent any). Often your friends get consumed by their own lives and forget you are still looking for a job. You need to keep them informed.

Service or Civic Clubs

The members of Service Clubs like the Rotary, Exchange Club, Kiwanis and others are often business people who are well connected. If you know someone who is a member, you can attend meetings as a guest and make wonderful connections for your search.

Clubs

Think about your hobbies, interests or anything else that evokes your passion. You could meet a future employer at a bird watching club or train show. You can identify clubs based on specific interests at [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com).

Religious Organizations

Inform your religious leader that you are seeking employment. Your religious organization may have many groups or committees that need volunteers. Members of these committees are the type of people who are more than willing to help someone else.

Business Functions | Business after Hours

Attend conferences, meetings and any other type of business events in order to meet people who are connected. If you ask people at these events about themselves it is a great ice breaker and provides you with great information.

Force Yourself to be More Social

Accept invitations and learn to small talk with other people. Position yourself by the food, bathrooms or exit. This is where you have the best chance to meet the most people.

Be kind to everyone you meet throughout your day and start to talk to people you don't know. Remember, these contacts should last your lifetime.

Allow Enough Time for Networking

Connections are not established in a day. Rapport and trust develop over time. Start out discussing what is important to the other person. Advance to conversations about common interests or possibly invite them to have a cup of coffee. When you get to know people on a personal level you can elevate that relationship to a business contact.

Help Others Network

Whenever possible, introduce other people to someone who could possibly benefit from the introduction. This compliments both people involved and they will be more likely to return the favor to you. Once you establish a good relationship with a contact they will be happy to refer you to people they know. You must also become comfortable asking people in your network to introduce or connect you to people they know.

Online Resources

Imagine the impact if you write a blog on topics interesting to future hiring authorities. Many sites have message boards or discussion groups which can also elevate you to be perceived as an expert in your field of interest. These discussions can lead to introductions which can lead to job interviews.

Show Your Gratitude

Call or send a thank you note or card to anyone who helps you build your network. Email is easier, but is impersonal! When you show gratitude, you will receive more referrals.

Follow these tips and your networking efforts will begin to provide you with results and job interviews.