

“Get A Job”

By Jennifer Schaus, June 2011 ©



Let's make this clear: I am not a recruiter, I do not want to be one - and I am not hiring. Sometimes hourly, sometimes daily but more-so weekly, I receive inquiries from friends, friends of friends, friends of colleagues, former co-workers, friends of former co-workers and attendees of my [Monthly Networking Event](#) in Washington, DC asking me to help them or their friends for suggestions on how they can get a job. I'm exhausted from these exercises and again, I repeat - I am not a recruiter.

Listed below are “101 Job Seeking Basics” that surprisingly most professionals do not take advantage of.

1. Business Card

Ensure you have a simple business card with only the essentials: your name, one contact phone number, email address, and website if you have one. Use a large easy to read font. Consider adding a job title or your expertise to the back of the card. (ie. Public Relations Professional, Bookkeeping Services, Italian-English Translator, etc.). This helps people remember what you do. Carry these with you EVERYWHERE. Always have more than enough.

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW: Go to [FedEx/Kinkos](#) or use [VistaPrint](#) on-line services to create a simple yet professional card. Consider occasionally handing out 2 cards - one for the person you met and one for them to pass along. Beyond two, you appear desperate.

2. Website

These days it is very simple and inexpensive to set up a website. Companies like GoDaddy and many others have user-friendly pre-established templates for you to complete. Keep it simple - one page - with a capabilities statement or bullet points. Be sure to add your contact information.

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW: Log onto [GoDaddy](#) or any other web hosting site to build a simple professional site. You can also pay a small fee to have them complete it for you.

3. Networking & Communication

Networking events are always a great way to meet new people and expand your professional group. If you are a marketing professional or an IT professional, take yourself out of your comfort zone. Know your industry players, but perhaps try a networking event for [Government Contractors](#) or Small Businesses or even International Trade professionals. Mix it up. You will stand out, people will remember you. These industries also need marketing and IT personnel.

Go with an objective and understand that the attendees are most likely not your customers. (*BNI does a great job of conveying this concept.*) Their neighbor, spouse or brother may be your client - so it is important to communicate clearly what you bring to the table (skill-set) and what you are seeking.

Provide real examples of your work. People tend to talk in their own language and in generalities. *"I work in IT" - or - "I have provided program management services"*. This is an obscure statement that gets you nowhere. Explaining how your firm worked with the US Army to establish a recruitment website, provided outreach and marketing services for their ROTC program to increase applicants by 15%, is a better example. Use examples when you communicate.

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW: Search the internet (including LinkedIn) for networking events in your area. Set a goal of attending 3-4 events monthly with at least one being outside of your industry. Take a friend. Always bring your new business cards (see #1).

4. Social Media

The power of social media is beyond anyone's imagination. My favorite by far, which is not industry specific, but allows you to be - is [LinkedIn](#). This is where I personally go to check a potential partner or employee qualifications. Having a solid profile on LinkedIn is not everything, but as LI becomes more or less, the North American standard, it cannot hurt to leverage its power. If you do not have any LI recommendations, start making recommendations. Give a compliment - Receive a compliment. It's that simple. I use the free services of LI and have obtained multiple paying clients from it all over the world.

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW: Update your profile and recommendations. Join as many groups as possible on LinkedIn related to your industry. Read the posts and make educated comments. Share articles you have read that may be helpful to the group. Pose questions to the group that may get a strong reaction. Post events that you are attending that may be useful to the others. All of these actions will bring people to you and show you as a credible source of information. Meet

with the local professionals in your area with whom you have connected. LI is not the silver bullet; it is a way to assist with relationship building.

5. Creatively Create

Many people are sending out CV's hoping for a full-time job. Hire Me! Hire Me! This mentality will certainly not get you hired. This is not 2nd grade and the teacher is not going to "pick you". This is the real world and it is competitive. You have to set yourself apart from the other adults.

Some individuals may get as far as an interview, yet turned down from the job because funding was cut for the position or other reasons. The job seeker typically walks away. Assuming you have invested your time, completed research on the firm, met with several members of the company - go back!! Reach back to the firm with whom you now have a relationship with and propose working in that position in a part-time capacity or as a consultant. (Some have proposed working for free in an intern role which eventually led to employment. Save this as a last resort.) This is a very attractive approach to the hiring firm as it mitigates risk for them. They will not have the overhead expense of benefits, and other FTE costs. This allows them to "test drive" your skills - and for you to do the same with them. Suddenly, as a consultant you have created value for the firm and a role for yourself. Once you are in, meet as many people as possible to build relationships at all levels.

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW:

Reach back to the firms you interviewed with over the past year. Set a meeting and make your proposition as a part-time or consultant. If you are able to obtain 2-4 clients working 2-3 days per week for them (advocate for on-site!!!) then you are most likely bringing home the bacon and meeting that monthly number you once had.

If you need a jump-start, you can also leverage firms like Jennifer Folsom's at www.Mom-entum.com and the team at www.FlexforceProfessionals.com that specialize in PT or consulting positions.

6. Relationships

Of course, the old adage goes, "It is not what you know, it is who you know". These days you absolutely need both - knowledge and relationships. Build relationships with everyone you meet. This includes the person next to you on the metro, the plane, at church, in the elevator, your other soccer mom friends and poker club pals - people with whom you volunteer. You will be surprised at who knows someone that may need you or your services.

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW:

Contact every person you know (friends, family, colleagues) and direct them to your new website (see # 2) letting them know you are providing these services as a consultant – yet are also open to part-time or full-time employment.

7. Partner

Find a friend or colleague who is also job seeking regardless of industry or experience or location. Set goals of accomplishing some of the suggestions on this list. Set time-frames for accomplishing the goals. Attend networking events together. Set a day to talk or meet weekly and evaluate each others progress. (*ie. Your goal was to attend 4 networking events in June. Today is June 7th. What events have you signed up for and what events have you attended?*) Sometimes all it takes is having someone to keep us accountable in order to accomplish our tasks. Keep track of your progress. Reward yourself along the way.

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW:

Find a partner or start a group. Do your job by holding the others accountable and make them do the same for you. Stop making excuses. Just do it.

8. Value Proposition

The Reality: The job market is competitive and candidates need to understand that regardless of their industry, they are in sales and need to bring something of value to the hiring firm. This can be a unique skill-set, or better yet a potential client for the company. If you are seeking a marketing position, consider going to the interview/meeting bringing 3 or 4 creative ideas on how the company can improve expand their marketing. (*ie. "I noticed your website does not have links to any social media such as LinkedIn, Twitter or Facebook. This is one of my expertise areas and in my past position; I used of these tools grew business by x% over 6 months."*)

There are many ways to sell yourself to win business or get a job (virtually the same thing!).

ACTION YOU CAN TAKE NOW:

Know your value, communicate it, sell it to the employer so that you are not asking what they can do for you, but rather you are telling them what you can do for them. Sound familiar?

Tweak this to be unique for each firm you meet with.

Please Note:
Local Recruiters are also standing by to assist you.

Jennifer Schaus runs a boutique government consulting firm in Washington, DC focused on GSA Schedules and business development for B2G contractors – and hosts a B2G monthly networking event at The Kennedy Center. For more information please visit www.JenniferSchaus.com.