

# JobStart Part 3: Marketing Yourself<sup>1</sup>

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*JobStart* is a series of publications that contains information about the skills and attitudes needed to find and maintain employment.

This is the second publication in the eight-part series outlining the steps required to achieve these goals. The series includes the following:

- JobStart Part 1: Getting to Know Yourself (FY345)
- JobStart Part 2: The Right Job Just for You (FY346)
- JobStart Part 3: Marketing Yourself (FY347)
- JobStart Part 4: Preparing Your Résumé (FY348)
- JobStart Part 5: Writing the Cover Letter (FY349)
- JobStart Part 6: Planning the Interview (FY350)
- JobStart Part 7: Job-Seeking Strategies (FY351)
- JobStart Part 8: Staying on the Job Once You Are Hired (FY352)

## What Is Marketing and Why Is It Important for You?

In part of this publication series we used the example of a car salesman to explain the importance of conducting a personal inventory. Think back to that same car salesman one more time. Think of the methods that he might use to find a buyer for the cars on his lot. He probably will use the radio quite frequently to advertise when he is going to have a reduction in the prices of his vehicles. He might even use television, websites, or Craigslist advertising. The most likely method he will use is the newspaper--specifically, the classified section. Another highly effective method is word of mouth. If he treats a buyer well, then that buyer is

likely to tell his or her friends and relatives about the great deal he or she got on a car and how well they were treated by the sales staff. These methods, as well as many others not mentioned here, are all marketing methods. Marketing is the process by which a seller locates and makes contact with potential buyers.

Just like the car salesman, you have to locate and make contact with a “potential buyer” if you are going to get a job. What you want that buyer to purchase is your employment services in exchange for salary. The buyer in this case is the potential employer. So, how are you going to reach your potential employer? What method will be the most likely to bring you success?

There are many marketing methods that job seekers can use to locate potential employers. The one that first comes to mind is the Help Wanted section of the classified ads. While this method will certainly list a great many job vacancies in your area, it is one of the least effective because of the vast numbers of employers who don't use this method to list their job openings. Also, for every listing in the Help Wanted section there are hundreds of responses. This makes it hard for the employer to thoroughly review every application. They often eliminate those applications that don't include specific qualities that they may be looking for, even though the applicant may be more than qualified. In spite of the difficulties associated with using the classified ads, this method should not be discarded as a means of job seeking. However, it is important to use other methods as well.

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In order for you to be successful in your job search you will have to use every marketing method available to you. Some of those methods could be using the telephone to develop contacts, face-to-face meetings with employers, sales letters that serve to introduce you to employers, using state and private employment agencies, sending resumes, and your own personal network. Social media outlets are invaluable resources you should consider when building personal networks.

While using just one of these marketing methods alone could certainly lead you to a job, a wise job seeker would incorporate all of them into a job search. The more you use, the more likely you are to be successful in finding the job that is just right for you.

## Networking

Of the many forms of marketing a job seeker can use, networking is by far the most effective. Networking accounts for the majority of jobs filled in the United States every year. How many of you have won a job based on your association with someone who knew of the opening and told you? We all know of someone who has been hired into a job that they heard about from a friend or relative, or perhaps some acquaintance from an organization. This type of hiring goes on every day for positions that never appear in the Help Wanted section or as a listing with an employment agency. Networking is essential for the job seeker.

Ronald and Caryl Krannich (1996), authors of *Dynamite Networking for Dynamite Jobs*, identify four types of networks that are available for the job seeker. These are the Personal, Organizational, Community, and Electronic networks.

The Personal network is made up of the people that you know and with whom you interact. It is made up of family, friends, current or former co-workers, your doctor, your dentist, your insurance agent, your pastor, the catcher on your softball team, or the cashier at your grocery store. They are people with whom you have already had interaction, no matter how brief, and who have some knowledge of who you are.

The Organizational network is made up of organized groups that you either belong to or have some association with. The types of organizations that you might use could be professional organizations, trade unions, fraternities and sororities, clubs, or civic groups like Kiwanis. You may be affiliated with these groups in some way, but not know most of their members. However, they can be beneficial to you.

The Community network is made up of government agencies that provide information--like the local state employment service--and job listings, local businesses, your church, civic groups, and volunteer agencies.

The Electronic network is large and can be overwhelming. It includes websites that focus on career advice and résumé building as well as sites like Indeed.com, a job posting search engine, and LinkedIn, a professional networking site. If used correctly, the Internet can be one of your greatest tools when searching for a job. Today e-mail is a common form of communication. Maintain your electronic contact information to more effectively communicate with your growing networks.

Think of your network as consisting of the community in which you live, the organizations you belong to, and the friends and professionals that you know and deal with on a daily basis. This is your network and it can be potentially powerful.

In her book, *People Power*, Donna Fisher (1995) identifies specific actions that can make networking an active and effective means of improving one's career. Fisher explains how the principles can help you in not only finding a job, but enriching your career and personal life.

### 1. The Power of Giving

Be aware that there is a mutual support between you and other people with whom you interact. Be mindful that there are many ways in which you can be supportive of others.

### 2. The Power of Interdependence

Work with and be involved with others for support and mutual gain. Develop the ideal that you can help and be helped by others; that a team approach is most often better than an attitude of "I can do it on my own." Further, what you do for, or give to, another person, may come back to you through some unanticipated source.

### 3. The Power of Quality Connections

Connect with people who are able to help you and are willing to do so. Strive to meet and cultivate new friends and acquaintances. Develop and strengthen your interpersonal skills.

### 4. The Power of Praise

Take time to say you appreciate the work and attitude of someone who makes a difference in your life. Praise is a powerful tool in a person's arsenal of network building skills.

## **5. The Power of Staying in Touch**

Keep your communication lines operating and open to people you have known or worked with in the past. Staying in touch can be through phone calls, short notes, or e-mail. Friends and former co-workers can be an important source of job seeking information.

## **6. The Power of Knowing Yourself**

Understanding your purpose will help you communicate this to others. This will give your search focus and clarity.

## **7. The Power of Small Talk**

Engaging in conversations with people about small and seemingly insignificant things paves the way for more meaningful interactions at other times.

## **8. The Power of Listening**

Communicating by paying attention to what another person is saying is a skill that pays dividends to persons at all levels, job seekers, and company presidents. To listen to someone is to pay them the highest compliment there is; you have given them your time and attention.

## **9. The Power of Speaking Up**

Knowing the right time to speak and how to make your presence known will help you find opportunities that may otherwise elude you.

## **10. The Power of Asking**

Knowing that you may be turned down is not sufficient reason not to ask for help; people are usually flattered by requests for help. Use this to your advantage in seeking a job. Remember to ask without being demanding or assuming.

## **11. The Power of Thinking Big**

Seeing the big picture with you in it is the first step to making it a reality. Networking can help you think big and then make it happen.

## **12. The Power of Commitment**

Knowing what you want and working to make it happen will help others see and understand the commitment you have to your goals.

Building a network is a lifetime piece of work. However, the way to begin building a network is to first identify your network members. You start with your inner circle, such as your spouse, family members, neighbors, close friends, or children. These are the people that you come into contact with on a regular, if not daily, basis. They know you and have an interest in you. From this inner circle you can then

go further and develop a list of contacts. You should try to come up with at least 100 names to start your list and then increase it as you build your network. Use of a categorized list will help you come up with many names. Here are some examples:

Friends, Family, Neighbors, Pastor, Church Members, Classmates, Dentist, Doctor, Optician, Insurance Agent, Former Co-workers, Club Members, Acquaintances. Use these examples of categories to help you come up with as many contacts as you can.

Once you have created your list, you are ready to start using your network to locate your next job. The way to get a network working for you is to make sure that everyone in your network knows that you are looking for a job, what type of job you are looking for, your job qualifications, and a little something about your personal history that might help them serve you. You need to make contact with your network on a regular basis, preferably once a week, to keep them up to date on your job search and to let them know that you are sincere. There are many ways to do this, but the most recommended ones are by telephone and by e-mail. You can accomplish many contacts by phone, and it is more personal than e-mail, but an e-mail message can still be of use to you.

Now that you have started your network and are keeping it going by making regular contacts with its members, you need to expand your network. Remember, the more members in your network, the more job leads you will receive. Once again, the telephone and the letter are the two best methods to do this. However, with expanding your network there is a question as to which method is more appropriate. Some experts recommend sending out letters to businesses or organizations and then following up with a telephone call, while others recommend calling first and then sending out the letter. It is a choice that you will have to make based on your particular job search. Calling a business and inquiring about job openings is considered unprofessional for some trades, while it is entirely appropriate for others. The thing to remember is that you are not asking for a job over the phone, you are trying to make contact with someone within the organization that is routinely aware of the job openings.

Though creating and maintaining a network may seem tedious and boring to most people, it will more than likely be the source of your next job. How far you take it is up to you.

## Telephone Contact

Years ago, Southern Bell, in their advertising campaign to promote the yellow pages, came up with the slogan “Let Your Fingers Do the Walking.” This catchy phrase remains true today. The telephone remains an effective communication tool.

You as a job seeker can use the telephone to increase your contacting capacity as well. With just a few hours every day you can sit at your kitchen table and reach out to dozens of prospective employers or contacts. You can flip through the yellow pages and locate hundreds of businesses in your area, or you can dial up the many organizations in your community. Either way the telephone can be one of the greatest tools in your job search. This is not to say that you can't conduct a search for work without a telephone, but the time and energy saved by having access to a phone will greatly increase your chances of finding employment.

There are a few things to remember when you begin utilizing the telephone in your job search. The first thing is to prepare for rejection. The vast majority of the times that you call employers, you will be faced with a “No” or an “I'm sorry.” This is to be expected. For every 20 to 30 calls that you make you should only expect one “Yes” or “I'd like to hear more about you.” While this can be discouraging for those that are less self confident, you have to stick with it and keep in mind that it is not a personal rejection of you when an employer says “No.”

One of the best ways to use the telephone is to have a script ready that communicates all the information that you want the employer or contact to know. It should state who you are, the purpose of the call, and a brief outline of the points you want to make during the call. This will help you keep your information organized and make sure that you don't forget to mention something that might be important to the success of the call.

You should also develop a telephone contact form to record the outcome of each of the calls that you make. It should include, at a minimum the following:

- the company you are calling
- their address and phone number
- the date
- the person to whom you spoke
- the purpose of the call
- the outcome of the call

This will also help you organize your telephone activities. Some points you will want to remember when you make your phone contacts are as follows:

1. Remember you are asking for an interview, not a job.
2. Be sure you are talking to the person who can give you an interview.
3. Practice and rehearse your phone message. Make sure you cover the right points by referring to a check list.
4. Be prepared for all the possible questions you will be asked. Again, anticipate these questions and prepare and rehearse your answers.
5. Be prepared for a brief and concise description of your strong points. Remember, you are selling yourself over the phone.
6. Do not assume that this person will remember you from the phone conversation if you do get an interview.
7. Get to the point quickly and do not waste the person's time.
8. Speak with a strong and positive voice. Avoid the use of slang.
9. Call from a place that will allow you to give your full attention to the call.

## The Personal Sales Letter

The personal sales letter is another method of self-marketing. It is not the same as a cover letter, which is used to accompany a resumé and entice the reader to examine the resumé more closely. A personal sales letter, on the other hand, is meant to act in the place of a resumé but to be a bit more specific about what your intentions are with the company or contact to whom you have sent the letter. Usually a personal sales letter is sent to a business that has not listed any openings. In it you are trying to get the reader interested in you so that when a future opening becomes available, your letter will cause them to think about you.

There are several principles you must use if you are going to use a personal sales letter. For one, you should always send your letter to a specific individual who is in the position to make new hires: someone like a supervisor or a manager. Never send it to the Human Resources Department, as they will probably just file it away never to be seen again. Call up the business and find out who is the manager of the specific department where you wish to work and send your letter to that person.

Always use standard stationery, and mark the envelope in which you mail your letter “Confidential” on the outside. This will keep secretaries from opening your letter and forwarding it to the Human Resources Department.

The content of the personal sales letter should be close to the following format. It by no means is the only formula that is used in writing sales letters but is definitely a simple yet effective one.

1. The first paragraph in your letter should serve to tell the reader the purpose of your letter. It should be specific and state exactly what type of position you are interested in.

2. The second paragraph should say something about you. Include your skills, experience, education, and your accomplishments. If you have been successful in similar positions, you should describe those successes without getting too wordy.

9205 Heritage Dr.  
Miami, FL 33090  
April 01, 2001  
Ms. Susan Bishop, Area Manager  
Appliance Alley  
1221 Wonder Road  
West Palm, FL 33800

Dear Ms. Bishop:

This letter is to inquire about the possibility of employment with your company in the sales department.

I have a great deal of experience in both retail sales and retail management. I am a highly motivated self-starter and have been noted for my ability to meet and exceed sales quotas. I also have been recognized for my ability to manage others and lead a highly efficient sales department.

I would very much like to meet with you in person and discuss how I might benefit your business. I will contact you by phone on Monday of next week to answer any questions that you might have about me and to arrange a face-to-face meeting if you feel so inclined.

Thank you for your time and consideration, and I look forward to meeting you.

Sincerely,

Buddy Bratcher

3. The third paragraph should describe how you intend to contact the reader if you plan to follow-up on the letter. You should give a date and the method you will use to make the contact. A good idea is to tell the reader what you hope to discuss during the next contact.

4. The fourth paragraph should thank the reader and explain your anticipation of your next contact.

An example of a personal sales letter following this format is given below. Note the underlined sections, which match the criteria given for an effective personal sales letter.

## References

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