

JOB SEARCH ‘INTELLIGENCE GATHERING’ Networking / Informational Interviewing

When you are in job search mode, you need to realize that getting a job is, in effect, a sales job. The *product* you are selling is your value (skills, experience, and personality) to prospective employers. Far too many job seekers just send résumés, doing nothing more than passively waiting for the phone to ring. Mass mail advertising (i.e. sending résumés) has a low “hit” rate, with the exception of responding to a posted job vacancy or classified ad. Even so, it’s **reactive**, instead of being **proactive**. These candidates should really be using the telephone to *make things happen*.

Why won’t job-seeking candidates use the phone as their own personal telemarketing tool? The answer is simple: **TELEPHONE PHOBIA!** They are fearful of making a cold call. They are afraid that their target won’t be interested in what they have to say. Here are some tips to help you overcome telephone phobia that will accelerate your job search into one that is highly proactive, and therefore significantly more successful.

1. **Figure out what you want to talk about.** Ask yourself “*What would get me interested in listening to what a stranger has to say?*” Never lead your conversation with questions about employment opportunities. If you do, it’s almost certain that your conversation will be a short one ending with a ‘no’, or a transfer to human resources. Lead the dialog with what’s going on in the industry. Ask what their firm is doing about the hot topic and you’ve established peer-to-peer credibility. Remember: You are *not* looking for a job. You are *never* looking for a job. You are looking for information and possibly advise with which to plan a future career transition. {Check out our article on NETWORKING which contains some sample scripts to help you out.}
2. **There’s no such thing as a cold call.** Sales professionals make informed calls. They do research on their customers. You need to do the same. Do your homework on your topic. The library has a wealth of information on companies and industries. So does the Internet. Don’t just photocopy or download the information and read it. Pare it down by putting it on note cards for easy reference. Catalog and cross-reference your information by company and industry. You’ll be using it as the basis for contacting numerous people. The more information you have, the more confident you’ll be when it’s time to make your calls. When you have selected your targeted audience, review your catalog and retrieve the information you believe will grab your target’s attention
3. **Rehearse.** Did you ever get calls from telemarketers? Did their sales presentations seem helter-skelter? Hardly. Like actors, they follow a well-rehearsed script. While you won’t have a canned script, you have to be comfortable with your topic and how you’re going to present it. That means going over what you want to say and how you plan to introduce it. Role-playing the conversation with a friend who’s knowledgeable about your topic will help you anticipate your target’s responses and build your comfort level.

4. **Don't assume how your target will react.** It's easy to dream up reasons why someone may not be interested in what you want to talk about. The more reasons you dream up, the less likely you are to call. Let the target determine whether s/he's interested. If not, ask two questions: "*Who would be the person to talk to about _____?*" and "*May I tell them that you referred me?*"
5. **Get out of your own way!!!** *Stop being the largest obstacle in your career path and sabotaging your job search.* PICK UP THE PHONE! The more calls you make, the more comfortable you will be with the process. You'll find out that many people *are* very interested in what you have to say.
6. **Ask for an appointment.** The objective of your initial call is to establish a professional common ground. Once established, it's time for a face-to-face meeting. A good wind-up to your conversation is something like this: "*I know I've caught you in the middle of a busy day and I really appreciate the time you've taken to discuss such-and-such. Could you possibly clear 20 minutes on your calendar to meet so we can continue our conversation?*"
7. **ANALYZE and EVALUATE each call.** Write down what went well and what didn't. Review your most recent ten calls to determine whether you might need to modify your approach.

Mark Berkowitz is the owner and President of CAREER DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES, LLC. *Changing lives and revolutionizing careers since 1985*, Mark provides one-on-one career consulting services, résumé building assistance and strategic guidance, to help each client achieve not only job advancement, but lasting and meaningful success in their career path as well. A distinguished figure in his field, Berkowitz is one of the top career builders in the country and has been quoted in dozens of books and publications on the topic of career advancement.

Passionate about empowering others to realize their dreams, Mark served as an executive board member of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches. He has been helping clients successfully advance in and/or change their careers for over 36 years. With a Master's Degree in Career Development and four specialized certifications (**National Certified Career Counselor, Certified Professional Résumé Writer, Int'l Certified Job & Career Transition Coach, and Certified Employment Interview Professional**), he is uniquely qualified to help you improve your career situation. A recognized expert in the field, he had not only taught Job Search and Career Counseling courses in Graduate Schools and led workshops and seminars, but also trained other counselors. Mark served as chairman of the Certification Board for the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches and was a founding member of the Career Management Alliance (fkn Career Masters Institute). Additionally, he has shared his expertise in effectively utilizing career assessment tools with graduate counseling students from nearby Fordham University, helping to prepare them for their future counseling careers.

Mark connects with clients locally as well as international clients via the internet. He also provides outreach to high school and college students, presenting career planning and job search strategy workshops.

- Highly regarded with résumés, cover letters, and interview strategies showcased in nearly two dozen books.
- Enjoys an INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION as a "Résumé Guru" by members of the Professional Assn. of Résumé Writers and Career Coaches.

You can contact him at 1+ (910) 833-5013 or cardevres1@gmail.com to find out how he can assist you in launching your career into a higher orbit.

See how you can benefit from professional expertise instead of suffering from your career mistakes.