

Bring the "Hidden Job Market" to You

Become visible to potential employers so that they come to you. These tactics are now often called building your "Personal Brand." This is a good description of something that is becoming more important and relevant as we become more dependent on the Internet to assist us with our job search.

1. Create A Networking Profile On One Of The Social Networking Sites

This is becoming more and more important and useful for job seekers. Sites like LinkedIn, Ziggs, ZoomInfo, Facebook, etc. offer people the opportunity to create public profiles that are becoming increasingly important as sources for recruiters.

Be careful of what you post on these sites - the media have been full of stories about people ruining their job search by posting pictures of the bachelor party or some other indiscretion online. Once something is online, it's very hard to erase.

2. Create A Personal Resume Web Page Or Blog

Keep it up to date and available on the Web all the time. It will need to be "hosted" by a Web server computer so that it can be visible to search engines and recruiters.

You don't need a razzle dazzle display of your technical expertise. In fact, it might be more effective if it is simple so that the search engines can "Digest" it. You do need to pay attention to keywords and other search engine "Optimization Techniques".

In this tough job market, recruiters are inundated with resumes for every job opening that is posted. Often a majority, of those resumes are from "unqualified" applicants (i.e. their experience and education don't meet the minimum job requirements).

This makes the recruiters' jobs more difficult since they must find the "Qualified" applicants in the blizzard of unqualified ones. Consequently, many recruiters are posting fewer jobs. They are spending their time, more effectively, by searching the Web for the resumes of people who are qualified for the job openings they do have.

Your personal resume Web page could be there, waiting for a searching recruiter to find it. Ideally, put the blog and the personal resume Web page on a domain name that is your real name. (e.g. MarySmith.com or MarySmithCPA.com, or MaryJSmith.com)

Blogs are hard work since you need to create good, relevant postings at least once a week or twice a month, at a minimum. Don't give in to the temptation to "borrow" someone else's content. Google will show them that you have done it, and, meanwhile, duplicating someone else's content will not help you with the search engines, which recognize duplicated content and discount it.

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So, that's really a major waste of time and energy. Create your own content, and develop your own "Voice" and you'll be much more successful.

Tips:

- You must protect your privacy! Keep detailed contact information (your name, home address, and phone number) off your personal resume Web page. If you have a job, your employer will not be pleased that you are job hunting and may fire you if they find your resume online. So, make your resume Web page a "cyber safe" one!
- Be careful about what you disclose on your blog or personal website. Keep in mind that it may appear in the search results if a potential employer "Googles" your name, and be sure that what you publish about yourself is appropriate. Many job seekers have sabotaged their job search with the photos or other information that they have posted on the Web themselves.

3) Post Public Comments On Blogs And News Sites

- Demonstrate your knowledge and intelligence by posting relevant (and perhaps a teensy controversial, sometimes) comments in public places. Build your credibility and your personal brand.
- Set up Google Alerts on the topics of greatest interest to you, and Google will contact you when something in the top 20 to 50 search results changes. That will give you notice of something that might be worth one of your incisive comments.

4) Do Amazon.Com Reviews, Lists, And Guides

Post public reviews of books and other items on Amazon.com. Be sure you have read the book, watched the movie and listened to the CD before you write the review so you can do it intelligently. Use your "Real Name" (Amazon will show you how) to build your brand recognition, and, again, doing this carefully will build your credibility.

5) Teach a Class

- If there is community based adult education provided somewhere in your area, see if you can teach something for them. Get a copy of their course catalog, and see what they are offering. Is there a subject you could teach that they don't offer but might want to offer? You may be able to offer a one or two session "Workshop" or "Seminar" if you have a topic that is interesting. Just be sure that it is a topic you know very well and one that demonstrates your knowledge and professionalism.

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- A local college or university may need an "Adjunct Professor" as an instructor for specific subjects and may be open to someone "outside" the faculty providing the instruction. Don't expect to support yourself and your family on the money made from teaching these classes, but do expect to be paid something for your time and effort.
- Focus on teaching a subject that demonstrates your professional knowledge and skill, and presents you in the best light as a valuable addition to a potential employer's staff.

Tips:

- Get and keep copies of the course catalog with your course and, hopefully, your name in it.
- Let class members know that you are "between assignments" and interested in finding a new job
- Collect feedback from class members so that you can improve your material and presentation, and get some contact names (use with permission only!)
Add the class to the accomplishments on your resume.

6. Give A Speech

- Associations and societies have meetings, and meetings usually need speakers. If you can talk knowledgeably about a topic of interest to the group, they may be interested in having you speak. You may only need a 30 or 45 minute talk, probably with a few minutes to answer audience questions. Just be sure that it is a subject you know very well. Groups like Toastmasters and National Speakers Association can provide you with information, guidance, and practice giving your speech.
- Focus on speaking about a subject that demonstrates your professional knowledge and skill, and presents you in the best light as a valuable addition to a potential employer's staff.

Tips:

- Pick an organization with an effective publicity committee, one that has their meetings listed in the local news media, has detailed meeting announcements on the group's Web site, etc. (Note, if a relevant group has meetings that are not well-publicized, it could be a group that needs a good volunteer for the publicity committee or the Web team. Seize the opportunity, if you have the time!)

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- Let audience members know that you are "Available" for a new job opportunity
- Get and keep copies of the meeting's program, if there are any
- Don't forget to add the speech to the list of accomplishments on your resume. If the organization has a Web site that keeps past meetings viewable, put the appropriate URL on your resume (and keep checking to make sure that it's still "live").

7) Write An Article (Or Two Or Ten)

- Not comfortable talking in front of a group? You can also establish your command of a topic by writing an article that appears in a publication read by your target employer (or employer group).
- Most professional and industry associations have newsletters and/or Web sites that need content. Contact the editor or Webmaster to find out what they need.
- An article doesn't need to be long. Just be sure that it is accurate, spelled correctly, and uses good grammar before you submit it. Have someone with good writing and spelling skills look at your article to be sure it makes sense before you submit it.
- Focus on writing about a subject that demonstrates your professional knowledge and skill, and presents you in the best light as a valuable addition to a potential employer's staff.

Tips:

- Writing an article provides you with a terrific excuse to call people for interviews ("Hi, my name is Bill Smith, and I'm writing an article on the current housing market, may I speak with your president?")
- Be sure that you retain the copyright to your article and get a "byline" (as in "by You")
- Get a few copies of the article or the right to make copies (some publications will give or sell you reprints of your article as it appeared in their publication, but not give you the right to make copies) to attach to your resume when you send a paper version to an employer.
- Add the article's title (with the publication's name and date of publication) to the list of accomplishments on your resume. If the article is published on a Web site, include the URL on your resume. Be sure to check the link frequently to make sure that it is still a "live" one.

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8. Write A Book!

- Writing a book takes much more time than writing an article, obviously, but the payoff can be bigger as well. Then, you can attach your resume to a copy of your book, and get much more attention!
- If you want to write a book but don't have a publisher or agent beating down your door, consider self-publishing. It's a quicker way to get your book in print, too.
- Many famous and rich authors started as self-published. The "Guru" of self-publishing is Dan Poynter of ParaPublishing.com. Check out his Web site, a gold mine of free and for fee information for new authors.

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