

"An intelligent plan is the first step to success. The man who plans knows where he is going, knows what progress he is making and has a pretty good idea when he will arrive."

- Basil S. Walsh

Planning is Key!

When you were in elementary school and were learning to compose an essay, it's likely that you were taught to draw up an outline to organize your main thoughts, supporting evidence, and conclusion. Your grammar and sentence structure were not as important in this step as was the way you organized your ideas, and for the most part, at least in these early stages, a few keywords were sufficient makeup for each bullet point. Having spent energy on this planning meant the writing of the essay went much easier. Your thoughts were well-organized, you had a good idea of where the paper was going, and all you then had to do was compose sentences to fulfill the teacher's writing requirement.

It's equally important to put forth this childhood lesson in our adult worklife. Starting a job search without a plan has the potential to produce heaps of frustration, in addition to the fact that it's likely to last many times longer than a well-planned approach would. This month we are focusing on the planning of your job search and how to approach it with as much organization and structure as you can possibly give it. Knowing what your goals are and a clearly defined path to travel to its achievement will not only give you a better chance of reaching your goal, but it will give you a peace of mind that will allow you to navigate any obstacles easier and with less stress. A well-executed plan has nowhere to go but up!

If you have feedback or a story idea you'd particularly like to see in future issues, please feel free to send an email to newsletter@flowork.com. We at Flowork wish you a happy February!



This month's FlowTIP:
Don't Give Up!
See page 3 for more information.

What's New?



The Strategic Networker: A Learner's Guide To Effective Networking

Do you already have your copy of the "The Strategic Networker: A Learner's Guide to Effective Networking?" If not, get yours today by visiting www.flowork.com or your local bookstore!

Purchase the book today to start being strategic about your networking activities.

Online Case Management System Coming Soon!

Flowork is proud to announce the impending launch of a unique online case management system that will allow practitio-



ners to monitor their client's job search via the Internet. If you would like more information on this online tool, please contact myjobsearchboard@flowork.com.

Flowork Certification Training Coming to Toronto

Flowork is pleased to announce that Dr. Hatala will be delivering the Social Capital Development and Strategic Job Search Management certification program in February 2010 (exact date to be determined). If you're interested, please email us at training@flowork.com and we'll add your name to the waiting list. Details will be provided shortly.



Creating Your Job Search Plan

A number of things must be considered when conducting a job search, but the most important element is the development of a plan. In most cases, only a single job search plan will ultimately be required to determine the direction you are heading, but it is important to come up with two such plans just in case the first one is deemed not viable.

Remember, the one thing that you cannot control in the job search process is the labor market conditions. For example, you may have all the necessary skills and experience to find a job as a computer programmer, but even the most extensive background in the field won't get you the job if no one requires that type of job at the time you're looking for work. The question then becomes, *what can I do in the meantime until the market conditions change and there is a demand for programmers again?*

This is where job search Plan B comes in to play. Job search Plan B involves an alternative plan that gets you to your goal in Plan A. Let's stay with the example of a computer programmer, and we'll keep it fairly generic even though there are a number of variations of programmer positions. If you're looking for work as a computer programmer but the labor market indicates that the demand is low, you have to decide on something that will ultimately lead you to getting the job you want sometime in the future. Looking for work is long-term process and will continue throughout your career, so if you're able to be successful with Plan B, you will continue to try and complete Plan A.

With regards to a computer programmer, it may be possible to get a position that may not necessarily deal specifically with computer programming but is somehow linked. For example, you may consider trying to get into an IT department to do something else (such as a technician). By taking a job that is not specific to plan A but is linked through Plan B, you give yourself a couple of options.

The first option would be to wait until something comes available in your specific field. This assumes that the organization with whom you've started to work will eventually have an opening that

fits your Plan A. Perhaps the department will eventually expand or some individuals are closing in on retirement. Be very aware of these opportunities as you conduct your job search.

The second option is to take a position outside your specialty but within your area of interest that would suffice as employment as you continue your job search. For instance, a position as a manager in a computer retail store would provide you with a paycheck as you continue seeking a company with an opening for a programmer. This way, a potential employer won't see any gaps in your resume, nor will they see that you have been outside your area of interest.

The third option is to focus on the organization and not the position. Once you have found a job (and the job doesn't really matter) with a company that provides potential for growth, you can work towards climbing that ladder. By working within an organization that has growth potential, you will have access to resources otherwise not available.

When you've resorted to your Plan B, your search for an organization should include these characteristics:

- What is the opportunity for advancement?
- How does the company view professional development?
- Are there multiple locations throughout the city, state, or country?
- Do they have an employee development plan?
- Do they have a leadership program?
- Is there formal succession planning?
- Is there a culture of promoting within the organization?
- Is the organization unionized? If so, how does that impact advancement?
- How often are performance reviews conducted? Are they linked to salary increases or promotions?
- What does the organizational chart look like? Is it fairly flat (few management positions) or diverse (many management positions)?

The next thing you want to do is set up some criteria for your Plan B job. Following the example of a computer programmer, what skills and experiences do you want to obtain in order to build up your value for the Plan A job? You may want to gain access to specific experiences or acquire new skills.

Whatever the reason, you need to link the Plan B job to the your Plan A job so that when you do get an interview for an A job you have created value to the employer through your B job experiences. Follow your plan, think strategically and you will be surprised how far you can go.



Flownotes is excited to introduce the first of many to come top 10 lists for effective social capital development and strategic job search management. To start things off we're providing a list of effective networking strategies.

Top 10 List

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

1. SET CLEAR CONCISE GOALS.

This will give you a purpose and thereby motivate you to connect with someone who may be able to help you accomplish your goal.

2. DETERMINE HOW COMFORTABLE YOU ARE WITH ACCESSING YOUR NETWORK.

If you don't feel comfortable with certain aspects of networking, make sure you ascertain why and obtain help, where necessary.

3. ANALYZE YOUR EXISTING NETWORK.

Create a network map with all the people you know on it. Start off by mapping those individuals who can help you with your goals, and then continue by mapping everyone else.

4. IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES IN YOUR NETWORK.

Take your goals and think about who in your network can help you accomplish them.

5. DEVELOP CONNECTION STRATEGIES.

Once you've identified a contact who you think can help, determine the best way to connect with that individual.

6. MONITOR YOUR NETWORK ACTIVITY.

Keep track of your goals and who you are connecting with to help you accomplish them.

7. FOCUS ON DEVELOPING LONG-LASTING, MUTUALLY BENEFICIAL (I.E. WIN-WIN) RELATIONSHIPS.

Give as much as you take from your network.

8. PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE.

Start to bring networking to the conscious level and connect with as many people as you can. After all, practice leads to improvement in execution.

9. VOLUNTEER OR JOIN AN ASSOCIATION.

Expand your access to contacts by volunteering with a charity or non-profit organization, or join an association.

10. BRING NETWORKING TO THE CONSCIOUS LEVEL.

When you've set a goal, first think about who in your network can help you accomplish it. When it comes to goal setting, train yourself to think about your network first.



This Month's flowTIP:

Don't give up. There is a time in everyone's life when they feel like giving up at something they're trying to accomplish. Most likely they have set a goal that is too big, too far off or simply unrealistic. The most likely reason for giving up is that it's too far off and the motivation to continue has been lost. Often you have to think that quitting is not an option, however, it's important to be realistic at the same time. Don't look back and think of all the times that you quit because that may hurt too much. Instead, look back and examine what objectives you set and how likely it was that you would be successful. You don't want to give up but instead focus on reconfiguring your goal in order to make it more realistic. Whether it's a new job or learning how to cook, there is always an opportunity for success. It just may require that you take another route.

Networking Clubs Pay Off in Referrals, Sales, Members Say

Referral quality, quantity cited as benefits of joining

By LaTina Emerson, Staff Writer for The Augusta Chronicle
published Saturday, Jan. 30, 2010

Through contacts he made in a local networking group, David Todd gained 27 business relationships and earned \$40,000 in sales in the past seven months.

The owner of FSI Office, a home-based office furniture and supplies business in North Augusta, networks Wednesday mornings at Garlic Clove Italian Eatery in Evans.

Todd has been a member of Business Network International for five years.

"As a salesperson, the difference that BNI makes is a warm referral," Todd said. "Ninety-nine percent of the time, if someone has referred someone to them, they're going to at least take the time to listen to what I have to say, as opposed to cold calls.

"Personal referrals are the way to go."

Similar to Todd's experience, members at several Augusta area networking organizations said the groups help them make needed business connections.

Sheri Osburn, the owner of a CertaPro Painters franchise in Martinez, joined the BNI Business and Breakfast chapter a year ago.

"I can attribute 10 percent of my sales last year to leads that came from this group," Osburn said. "This has been an excellent source of insider information about new businesses coming in. It really works. Knowing people that know people is the trick."

Because of her sales volume, she was recognized by her franchise as Franchise Rookie of the Year in the region.

Business Network International has seven chapters in the Augusta-Aiken area. Its philosophy is "Givers gain." By giving and helping others to grow their business, your business, in turn, will naturally grow, Todd said.

During meetings, members stand to give a 1-minute overview of their business and the type of referrals they are seeking.

Outside the meetings, they dance or meet at each others' businesses to get better acquainted.

Businesses with similar interests assist each other, and BNI has three tiers of referrals: direct business with each other, referring friends and introducing possible future leads.

Dennis Lam, an insurance agent at Donald Bailie Agency Inc. in Augusta, has been a member of the BNI Leads at Lunch chapter for eight years.

"I have not done any cold calling since then," Lam said. "I'd say 100 percent of my business is referrals. I consider this my sales force. I'm so busy right now that I don't call anyone; they call me

"Fifty to 60 percent of my business comes from BNI. I'm so busy that I

had to hire an assistant."

Before joining the networking club, Lam said, he spent \$20,000 to get qualified referrals, which he no longer has to do. The membership costs for BNI are worth the money, he said.

A one-year membership runs \$330, and a two-year membership is \$510, plus breakfast or lunch dues.

Because of growing demand, BNI has opened three chapters locally in the past year, Lam said.

Only one person per profession can join each chapter to prevent competition, so new chapters opened because more people wanted to participate, he said.

Networking is cost-effective, he said, and members are essentially training others to go out to find them referrals.

"It helps to recession-proof our people. You build referrals, and when the economy gets bad you have people having to save money for certain things and they try find somebody by word of mouth," Lam said.

The BNI Business and Breakfast chapter has grown by 25 percent in the past year, said chapter President John Raborn.

"The economy has definitely played a part for individuals wanting to get into a networking environment," Raborn said. Many business owners have been working harder to find business, and the group offers support, Raborn said.

Richard Banks founded The Best Referrals Network a month ago, tailoring it to benefit new business owners.

"The key thing is they get a referral every day," Banks said. "It's a guaranteed referral, which is nine times the value of a traditional referral because these are targeted referrals for people who have just moved here in the last 30 days.

"If you can catch them before anybody else does, you've got a good chance to lock up their business before anybody knows they're here."

Most networking groups meet for a meal, and with all the fees, they have paid about \$13 to \$16 per referral, which isn't economically feasible, he said.

His members can stop by to see him Tuesday and Wednesday mornings at Sunrise Grill, but they correspond mostly by telephone.

Members can gain rebates on their membership costs by bringing new people into the group, Banks said.

He qualifies the members of the group in advance to ensure they have a good reputation, and he aims to send them 10 referrals each week.

"If they use this and they're not successful, something's wrong," Banks said.

Flowork offers the benefits of social capital to anyone of any age. The Education Flowork Program offers educational institutions (Kindergarten through higher education) to ensure their students, faculty and staff become aware of the power of information by networking. Corporate Flowork and the Flowork Workforce Development Program introduces corporations, non-profit organizations, government, and workforce development groups to ways they might increase the flow of information between individuals, departments, divisions and units. Floworks founder Dr. John-Paul Hatola is available for speaking engagements nationwide. If you are interested in booking him for an on-site speaking engagement, please call us at 1-877-flowork or visit www.flowork.com and click "contact us" to discuss your needs.



Flownotes is a monthly newsletter distributed by PDF and available in HTML on www.flowork.com.

To contact flowork, call 1-877-FLOWORK or visit www.flowork.com and click on "contact us." Create your own social network map today on the Web site. It's free & easy!

© 2010 Flowork International, LLC. All rights reserved.