

Looking to the Third Degree

We have a neighbor with a real old classic clunker of a car. The definition of a “gearhead,” this car consumes his free time and is his *baby*. He won’t let anyone within five feet of it if he’s not in the garage, he has pet names for it (referring to it regularly), and has used snapshots taken at different angles as the last ten profile photos on his Facebook page.

He interrupted me one weekend while I was mowing my lawn to tell me he was having trouble finding a particular original part, likely thinking he was doing nothing more than complaining to a friendly ear. Two days later, I met an old college friend who happened to be helping his father-in-law find the same convertible he drove when he was a teenager — and it happened to be the same brand of car as my neighbor’s. A request for the father-in-law’s email address and I suddenly had a valuable third degree contact to offer my neighbor!

Never discount the wealth of information you can access at the second and third degree of your chain of contact. So many of us stop seeking help once we’ve run the length of our first degree of network contacts, but thinking strategically about *their* contacts — and often the contacts of *those* contacts — is a much smarter way to apply our efforts. You may be surprised what you find!

Here’s hoping you and yours are looking forward to enjoying the change in season — and please remember to keep sending those ideas and suggestions to newsletter@flowork.com!



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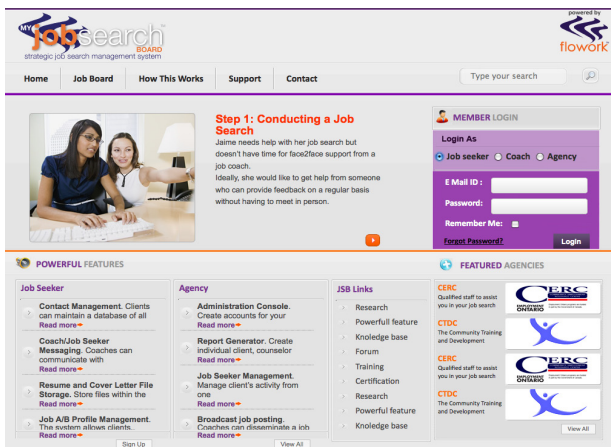
This month’s FlowTIP:
Connect with your
third degree contacts!

See page 3 for more information.

What’s New?

Online Case Management System Is Here!

Flowork is proud to announce the launch of a unique online job search case management system that will allow practitioners 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.



The screenshot shows the 'Job Search Board' interface. At the top, there are navigation tabs: Home, Job Board, How This Works, Support, and Contact. A search bar is located on the right. The main content area features a 'Step 1: Conducting a Job Search' article with a photo of two women. To the right is a 'MEMBER LOGIN' section with fields for 'E Mail ID', 'Password', and 'Remember Me'. Below the login section are 'POWERFUL FEATURES' for Job Seeker, Agency, and JSB Links, and 'FEATURED AGENCIES' including CERC and CTCDC.

Flowork Certifications Coming Online!

Flowork and Emantras Publications have teamed up to offer Flowork certification programs via the Internet. Two online modules will be launched in the next month or two that include social capital development and strategic job search management. If you or your organization is interested in finding out more about these modules, please contact us at info@flowork.com.



Now in FRENCH: *The Strategic Networker: A Learner's Guide To Effective Networking*

You can now get a copy of the *The Strategic Networker: A Learner's Guide to Effective Networking* in French: *Le Réseuteur Stratégique: Le Guide D'Apprentissage du Réseautage Efficace*. Visit the Flowork site at www.flowork.com to order your copy.

Increase Your Networking Success Rate *Getting People to Help!*

You've been sitting in your living room surfing the internet and your laptop just started flashing an error message. You have no clue how to fix it but are sure someone in your circle might. So you grab your cell phone and update your Facebook status: *Just got a virus on the laptop, anyone able to help out?*

Think how much more effective would that update be if you typed: *Just got a virus on the laptop, I'll buy dinner and a twelve pack for anyone who can get me out of this mess.*

The similar is true with networking, when it's pretty typical to think of no one but ourselves. We follow our own agenda and ask for help, regardless of who we're asking and what we're asking for.

Networking is essentially about connecting with another individual in the hopes of an opportunity to help each other out. The key to making your networking efforts successful is to build mutually beneficial relationships — the more you give the more you will likely get back.

Another important factor in this successful networking is to consider the strength of our relationship with the individual from whom we are seeking help.

If you're a personal friend of the contact with whom you're networking, by all means, make a high-risk request. But if you're connecting with a second or third degree contact, the type of request we make should be one that is low-risk unless we have a strong referral source — otherwise, what incentive does this individual have in helping us? Or for that matter, why would they help someone they barely know, especially if your request requires a great deal of trust?

For example, asking for a job from someone we barely know can be construed as high-risk — especially in light of the fact that they are unfamiliar with our background, work ethic and overall character. The chance of getting information from the contact is dramatically reduced.

However, if we make a low-risk request for help from this contact, the chances of 1) receiving help, and 2) developing a relationship are more likely to occur. A low-risk request could be as simple as asking a contact about the hiring trends in a particular industry, the typical hiring cycle for an organization, organizational culture of a company you want to work for, suggested resume formats, key people in an organization, etc. Starting small allows you to develop a relationship that, over time, will become much more comfortable with the higher-risk request.

The key to asking for help in the networking process is to gauge the level of request based on the strength of the relationship you have with the contact. The stronger the relationship the more we can ask of the contact — but even then we need to be careful.

The next time you go and connect with someone to seek their help, determine what kind of help you need — low or high risk — and the strength of your relationship. If you barely know the person and your referral source is weak, consider asking for something less risky, less time consuming and something that can easily be accomplished quickly — and offer an incentive or a promise for assistance in return. Building a relationship slowly on trust is much more likely to be fruitful for both parties involved.



Networking Strategically

Connecting with Influential People

Influential individuals are typically connected to a number of people from various walks of life — and these connections provide a wealth of social resources that can potentially help us accomplish many of our objectives. This method of accessing social capital is often referred to as “bridging social capital” because it bridges the way to contacts who could provide us with valuable support we may desperately need.

Influential people are not just politicians, actors or sports figures. They are those individuals who are central to their network — they are the ones who are often sought for information, advice, knowledge or contacts from people within their network. They are usually the ones that get the most up-to-date and relevant information. These people tend to be very popular individuals who are not connected simply because of their knowledge. They are well-liked and respected within their communities.

From a technical perspective, influential people are typically connected to a number of contacts from a very diverse background. The greater the influence, the more likely they are to have a higher level of social capital.

The unfortunate reality, however, is that not all of us are directly connected to influential people. But a second-degree connection to influential people is

just as effective and valuable!

Research reveals that the information we seek does not come from the person with whom we initially connect. The information tends to come from someone they are connected to — a second or even third degree connection on their end. Working on this premise requires that we think more deeply about who we know — and who they know. Thinking strategically about our contacts can lead us to those influential people who are connected to the social resources we require to accomplish our goals.

The bottom line: the more influential people we know, the greater the access to resources that can help us accomplish our objectives. We don't have to be directly tied to these individual — we just have to think strategically about how we can gain access to them. This usually occurs through one of our contacts, so a connection strategy needs to be put in place to increase the likelihood of gaining access to the individual.

We all have an opportunity to gain access to influential people, who in turn may provide contacts who can help us. As long as we think strategically about who we know and are prepared to make the encounters mutually beneficial, anything is possible!



This Month's flowTIP:

Connect with your third degree contacts! When thinking about our network, we typically focus on our first degree contacts... and sometimes venture out to our second degree. What's amazing is that many social resources exist well beyond our first degree contacts, where most of us tend to stop! Think about the last time you got a friend of a friend of a friend to help you out. How we access these individuals can happen in a number of different ways, but the most important step is to ensure that we're at least thinking about these potential resources outside our close ties. Once you start to think more consciously about the opportunities that exist within your network, ask first degree contacts who are not linked to one of your goals if they know anyone that could potentially help. Their second degree contacts — our third degree contacts — are considered weaker contacts, but it's important to think about every opportunity. Accessing social resources shouldn't stop at the front door, we need to go out and connect with as many people possible. Always remember, a distant referral is better than no referral at all.

Be Careful Not To Tweet Away That Job Found Via Social Media

by Cathering Ngai - published October 20, 2010 - Wall Street Journal

Mitchell Strobl is your average college junior at DePauw University in Greencastle, Ind., but the way he landed his new job is distinctly 21st century.

"I came across this website [through] a link that was posted [on my Facebook wall]," said Strobl, 20. The site lined up with his interests perfectly, and after contacting the president of HuntingLife.com, he was soon hired to become a writer and then a product reviewer for the hunting and conservation news site.

Stories like Strobl's are rare, especially in a job market as tough as this one. The U.S. economy lost 95,000 jobs in September, and the unemployment rate is 9.6%, according to the U.S. Labor Department. As a result, new graduates and young professionals are trying new tools to improve their chances of finding work.

"Social media is a great way to learn about different employers as well as build professional networks that will help create opportunities and open doors," said Holly Paul, PwC's U.S. recruiting leader. "I do think now that social media is so prolific and being used by students that... it's an additive to what they're doing to connect with other individuals that can help them in their job search."

A month ago, the buzz about finding work via social-media sites hit a new high. After creating YouTube Instant, a replica of real-time search engine Google Instant for searching videos on YouTube, a 19-year-old Stanford student received a job offer via Twitter--even less than the 140-character limit--from Chad Hurley, co-founder and chief executive of YouTube.

While the success stories generate a lot of excitement, and may prompt some job seekers to rely solely on social media, career experts say that's not a smart move.

"You really have to be careful with Twitter or Facebook, because it can seduce you into an informality that can really backfire," said Lonnie Dunlap, director of career services at Northwestern University. "I do think that the traditional methods have to be there. And they have to be very well done. You can get someone's attention through LinkedIn, but your goal is to get an interview."

And keep in mind that the hard-copy resume and cover letter are far from obsolete. Mary Spencer, director of career placement at the Milwaukee School of Engineering, said she's seen an increase in employers asking for paper rather than electronic portfolios at job fairs.

Also, a problem with social media such as Facebook and Twitter is that they may reveal too much personal information to potential employers.

Paul, of PwC, oversees new hires and she said social media can cause an unnecessary mix-up of work and personal life. Her suggestion is to keep certain types of social networks completely personal--she says that's how she uses Facebook--and other types completely professional, such as LinkedIn.

She said job candidates who don't use social media aren't likely to be penalized for that by prospective employers. "I personally don't think that we're there yet. The employer isn't there yet," she said. "The issue with students not using those [methods] means that they are not using a channel and an avenue right there in front of them for free."

Tips To Improve Your Chances

The degree to which your job hunt on social-media sites is successful may depend on the type of position being sought. For instance, most public-relations firms already connect to people through Twitter and have designated Facebook pages. Same goes for corporate communications positions. However, Kevin Nicols, the chief executive of a small publishing company, said that a search for any job--entry level and professional--can be enhanced through social media.

Three years ago, Nicols started two LinkedIn groups in the San Francisco Bay Area; they now have about 1,500 members. He said social networking is a tried and true method that has worked for him, as well as many of the people in his group. With social media, applicants are able to connect with people within certain companies who can act as an advocate for them within the company.

Nicols offered the following tips for using social media to enhance your job search:

- Become an active participant on a social network.
- Find people within your desired industry and let them know you're searching.
- Once you become introduced to someone online, even though that might "soften the blow of cold calling," don't forget that meeting people face-to-face is still the ultimate goal.
- Practice what Nicols calls "good job karma"--rather than just asking for help from others, do your part to give back and help others out.

Finally, don't forget that it's not always as easy as some make it seem. Brittany Sykes, a recent graduate of Penn State University, has been on the lookout for a public-relations job in the entertainment industry since May. Sykes, 22, said she hasn't had too much luck, although she follows many PR firms on Twitter and has seen a fair amount of job postings.

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.



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