



STRATEGIES

## Journey to Careersville Requires Follow-up and Follow-through



### YOUR NEXT STEP

JACK WARKENTHIEN

I was inspired recently, which is only interesting because I was booked as a speaker at a Between Jobs Ministry meeting in Houston, to inspire a room full of former C-level executives who found themselves un-, under- or unhappily employed.

It occurred to me that we have some brilliant people who are between jobs in our community, and they are yours for the hiring. Now, if you're reading this column and you count yourself among those who are looking for a new career challenge, I'd like to share a path for you — a Map To Careersville — if you will. It's a simple 10-step journey, but it's not easy.

Are you ready to strap on your hiking shoes? Here's a sample few steps:

**1 Find where you are.**

When I visit a shopping mall, I immediately locate a directory to find the spot, 'You are here.' It gives me a starting point for my shopping adventure. In a job search, try to define where you are — mentally — in the process, using Elizabeth Kubler Ross' "5-Steps To Grieving" made famous in her 1969 tome, "On Death and Dying."

Since they apply to any trauma — or change — we have in our life, they are as follows: denial, anger, bargaining, depression and acceptance. Your approach to finding "Careersville" depends on your mindset at the outset.

**2 Know what you're selling.**

Before you shop your services, you need to identify your unique value proposition, or what you can deliver to a prospective buyer. Perform a S.W.O.T. — Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats — analysis on yourself to really understand your internal strengths and weaknesses and the external opportunities and threats.

For those of you who are familiar with sales and marketing, you're the product and you must execute the proper marketing strategy.

**5 Determine where to find your buyers.**

Flesh out the associations, organizations or events that will have an abundance of the employers or buyers that may be interested in buying your dog food. When the notorious bank robber Willie Sutton was asked why he robbed banks, he replied, "That's where the money is." You must put yourself squarely in the deal flow and hang where the money is.



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**Journey to Careersville Requires Follow-up and Follow-through - continued****5 Show up.**

Welcome to The Networking Game. This is THE most important activity in which to invest your time.

If you're like me, you don't spend time, you invest it — and knowing that more than 60 percent of the jobs are in the hidden job market, you need to be out in public, not hunkering down in your home office, surfing the job placement services online.

Remember: It's not what you know. It's not who you know. It's who knows you. Networking will build your resource bank — one that pays interest and dividends and compounds forever.

**10 Follow up and follow through.**

When you meet someone who introduces you to a person whom you need to know, or opens a door for you, make sure you do what you say you're gonna do. This is the No. 1 rule in being referable.

Recently, I found out that a gentleman I gave a job referral to never followed up with the person who was hiring. Imagine how I felt when I spoke to the employer and he said, "Sorry, Jack. I never heard anything from your friend." That's the last time I open a door for that person. Follow up promptly and profusely thank the person who assisted you.

If you are looking for your next job or career, try these steps on for size. Your journey will be sure to be a much more profitable one, and you may just find your way to "Careersville" — where you may live for the rest of your days. Good luck on your journey. ■

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