



## An Example of Successful Job Search Networking: Rita

12-29-2010 blog entry by Joanne Meehl, MS, IJCDC

A client is having wonderful success networking, and you should know about it because you can have such success, too. It will take the mystery out of this thing we call networking. And it shows why, when done right, we career coaches want our clients to do it, regardless of age, career goal, or the economy.

Rita is in her early 30s with about 10 years' experience in marketing. She is determined to apply her marketing successes within a non-profit, not an easy thing to do when non-profits are having a tough time raising scarce funds.

Here's where I need to say that I do not endorse the usual "informational interview", where candidates *pretend* to not really be looking for a job while the contact *pretends* that the candidate is not really looking for a job and just wants "information". And the candidate sometime during the meeting pushes a resume on the contact. The usual response is a polite "I'll keep you in mind if I hear of anything". After all, who doesn't want to help? But like everyone else, they're overbusy, and often forget. And the candidate burns through his/her network, and wonders what's all this fuss about networking.

Rita is following the Referral Networking method in which I coach my clients. It involves establishing credibility and rapport, and asking about who you can help. No resume, no "job" talk, until a later time. I coached Rita in the best ways she could use this method for her unique situation. Each person's search is different.

So in October, Rita first began by contacting people she knew who'd readily see her — her references, her LinkedIn recommenders, friends, family, neighbors. She felt a bit awkward trying out some new approaches with people she knows well, but it helped her work out the kinks.

Then Rita was reaching her next level of contacts — others in job search, people she vaguely knew from former jobs, other women in her businesswomen's networking group, LinkedIn contacts, other networking contacts. Rita had to push herself — she's a "quiet extrovert", so this activity was not easy for her. She questioned where she was going with it, so we talked about her keeping at it, and on faith she did although she was still somewhat skeptical.

All along, Rita has been answering the occasional job posting, and attending job search networking groups.

Then she was starting to get occasional calls from some of the people she'd been networking with, calls that started with "I remembered you when I ran into this friend of mine who works at this non-profit...you should call her. Here's her number..." Rita was happily surprised.

Other calls like this came in (and emails) and she began to feel a little overwhelmed, and asked me how she should keep track of all these new contacts. There are many ways of doing this (your computer's daily task lists, an Excel spreadsheet, etc.), but she devised her own good system. And she keeps everyone on this list posted on her progress; they appreciate knowing what's happening with this person they helped, and she's not letting them forget her.

Her circles of contacts continued to grow. After just a few weeks, her network of people who know in some depth what she can do for an employer was rapidly approaching 50 or so. This networking is her primary activity; all other search activity comes second, as it should. I coach all my Project clients in this approach, and they use it to one degree or another, but Rita is doing it *consistently* and *relentlessly*, the only way to do it.

To those who say, "But this takes such time!", I respond: Job searches today are taking longer anyway, so why not do what gets results? You can still apply for postings online *like everyone else*. But what Rita is doing is *not* something everyone else is doing. My Truism About Networking: **The more you do of effective networking EARLY in your search, the shorter your search.** It's what I've seen for more than 20 years and it's vitally true for today's volatile market.

During Thanksgiving week, Rita met or ran into about 30 people, at various meetings and events. She knew how to talk with each of them so that they'd remember her. The calls were increasing. It was/is as if she had/has 50+ sales people out there working for her. She was giddy, and brimming with confidence. "I never thought I'd have so much FUN in my job search...I'm meeting such great people...this is really something." And, "Once I land a job, I'm not going to stop this...this

is vital *to my career.*" She is so right! And along the way, she was giving ideas and similar help to those now helping her.

I met with Rita just before Christmas for an update. She's been using this two-step approach steadily for about two months now. The result: Her job search network now has a life of its own, with Rita getting calls on a regular basis, getting her more and more connections and meetings with people, further connecting her with others at non-profits.

Two new openings at her top choice non-profit were a great fit so she applied and let one of her new contacts at the organization know so that the insider could help. Another one of her new contacts alerted her that one of her other target non-profits was about to hire as well. "I just KNOW something for me is going to come out of this networking, I know it!" Rita no longer says "IF I land a job...", it's now "WHEN I land a job..." Her confidence is contagious and visible. Exuding confidence is what many job hunters need to do more of, so Rita is ahead of her competition there as well.

Add to this that on January 3rd, Rita will start as a member of my Productivity Team, the weekly meeting for top Project clients whose searches are in full swing. Here, clients set goals and it's all about numbers.

I don't expect Rita to be a member for long.

Stay tuned.

#### 1-10-11 Update

Rita received two job offers today! She decided on the one from her #1 non-profit.

#### 2-24-11

I saw Rita today and she reported that she loves her job. What made the difference for her in her search? "That networking handbill... it made it so easy to get people to remember me and what I can do. I'm still hearing back from people who I gave it to ages ago."

#### 6-24-11

Ran into Rita today at Trader Joe's, and she gave me this update: She's now well-entrenched in her organization and is letting it be known she's ready for new challenges and more work. I fully expect she'll continue to grow in her career.

#### **One more note about networking:**

Since the end of 2009, when hiring ever-so-slowly began to pick up, fully 95% of those who have landed great new jobs are doing it through networking. I draw this statistic from my own clients, from my [Face2Face networking group](#), and from what I see off job search networking chat/email lists. Whether a friend helped by promoting them in the organization, or whether they saw an ad, answered it, then networked their way

in, having someone inside has been critical to their efforts and to their success.

Need to know how to do this for yourself? [Contact Joanne.](#)