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## **The Networking Revival**

Introducing the "100/40 Strategy" in Helping You Find Your Next Job.  
*By Bob Beaudine*

Most people think "networking" is calling all of their friends and family members, church and association acquaintances and business associates saying, "Hey, I need your help. I'm looking for a job opportunity in a new field - what do you think?" Often times, the response from these people is, "Let me think about it and I'll call you back."

Do they call back? Unfortunately, most of the time, they do not. It's not that they don't care, but the reason they don't call back is because they may not even have a full understanding of what you do in your current position or what you truly want to do. Plus, they are busy in their own lives, and you really never asked them for specific help or professional contact names, which could potentially set you on the right track in your new job search.

In order to help redirect your networking thought process and get you the job that you need, I have outlined a proven approach that our executive search firm has affectionately named the "100/40 Strategy." Before we begin, let's review four important ground rules to consider:

### **HAVE A PLAN FOR YOUR LIFE**

I don't want someone else's plan for my life, or for my next job - do you? Please don't start calling friends, relatives or recruiters until you have clear thoughts about your next career direction. Start now and write down your plan!

### **GOOD QUESTIONS COUNT**

Successful people ask good questions, so take ample time to ask yourself some tough questions before you embark on your career search. Explore the desires of your heart. What kind of job would you be passionate about? Where will your talents best be used? What did you always want to be when you grew up (and is that realistic)? Do you need different training or should you go back to school? Would you consider relocating? Where do you want to live? It's key to ask yourself these important questions before getting started.

### **SOUL-SEARCHING SPEAKS VOLUMES**

There are no secrets about the fact that dissatisfaction and frustration in the workplace are widespread today. IndustryWeek magazine recently reported that 69% of the country believes that a "bad day at the beach is better than a good day at work!" A recent Gallup poll also stated that 80% of people working in corporations "aren't currently using their talents." So if you have an opportunity to take a time out and go on a soul-searching retreat, I urge you to do this prior to moving forward in looking for that "next job." You will be amazed at the mileage you will gain simply by looking inward to reassess your job/life strategies, and defining exactly what talents you bring to the table for your future employer. Don't wait.

### **ETIQUETTE MATTERS**

I highly advise against sending out ANY letter addressed "Dear Sir" or "To Whom It May Concern," at any time in your career. These signal junk mail faster than you can blink an eye. It is critical to have the precise names and titles of those people you want to contact (and spelled correctly). Of course, this is proper etiquette you will want to follow when addressing both the envelope and the personalized letter inside. Now that the groundwork has been laid, let's further breakdown the "100/40 Strategy" and illustrate how these steps will work for you:

### **GETTING STARTED**

Write down a list of the 100 key people you know (your networking list) that you can call and ask for help. Who gets on this list? Friends, family and contacts through church, clubs, associations, business, etc. Your list should also include the five industry groups of executives that actually know of most jobs that are open in a city. Who are these people? Lawyers, CPAs, executives of metropolitan banks and venture capital firms, as well as consultants and recruiters. Once you've written this down, put the list aside. Don't call them just yet.

### **RESEARCH**

Do your due diligence on the 40 specific companies in each city you would like to consider joining, along with the 40 specific executives in each organization you would report to. (I know this is work, but you might find it all on the Internet.) Do the research. Most large cities have an annual "Book of Lists" you might want to consider as a point of reference. For example, the Dallas Business Journal publishes "Books" on a variety of industries, identifying the top 100 public and private companies and top 25 companies in every field. Most of the contact information you would be looking for can be found in this manual.

Additional research can be done at your local library or bookstore, and the Chamber of Commerce produces a national listing which might be helpful, as well. A wealth of information on area companies also can be found through regional newspapers and magazines, the Wall Street Journal and USA Today and other national publications. Use these outlets as a starting place, then follow up with the specific companies - or refer to their corporate Web site - to correctly identify the executive you would report to in each of the 40 companies. The key to remember here is that you want to be as specific as possible in your job hunt. Companies prefer to talk with job candidates who they know have done their research.