

HOW DO YOU LOOK FOR A JOB WHEN YOU HAVE ONE?

You've probably already discovered the two major problems with job-hunting while you are working: the need for confidentiality, and the lack of time.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The ideal situation is for you to be able to tell your employer that you would like to seek other employment and work with your employer for a smooth transition for you and for the organization. Unfortunately, this situation is rare. If your employer finds out that you are seeking a new position, he/she may react negatively and dismiss you immediately.

You have to be very careful about whom you tell and what you say about your job search. Use discretion, and never assume that the people you tell understand the importance of confidentiality. Ask them specifically to be discreet about your inquiry. If your search has to be kept confidential, then it's best to tell no one you work with. If you do, you can put co-workers in a potentially awkward position, and they might accidentally tell the wrong person.

Telling your employer's customers or vendors can have the same risks. This is a shame, because your best referrals will be the people who know you best—other employees, customers, and vendors.

Your safest alternative is to network carefully for personal referrals. Don't send resumes to people you don't know. Other things to watch out for include:

- ❖ Internet: Be careful about posting your resume on the internet; more than a few people have had their resumes found by their employers.
- ❖ Email: Most companies monitor their employees' email. Conclusion? Use your personal email address rather than your workplace email.
- ❖ Cell phone: Rarely will someone hear your conversation and create a problem, but it's possible. A cell phone is not a private line.

LACK OF TIME

If you are working 40 or more hours a week, especially during "regular" weekday working hours, finding the time to make phone calls and go for interviews is a problem. The times you have available to search—before and after work, during lunch, and weekends—are when most people are not accessible.

Make the most of the opportunities you *do* have. Call people early or late in the day. In fact, these times often are the best times to catch the people you want to talk to. Make good use of voicemail and email. Finally, let the other person know you're working and the times you are available to talk. Most people are very understanding (probably because they have been in similar situations).

Recruiters can be very helpful if you are still working. While you are at your job, they can be working to find your next one. You might want to review the information about recruiters earlier in this step.

WHEN YOU GET INTERVIEWS

Even when you begin to get interviews, keep searching for more opportunities. People often stop looking for opportunities when they start focusing on a good one. This is a mistake. Always keep the pipeline full. An executive recently reflected on having eight opportunities as he came into the office early one Monday morning. Four of them looked really good. Incredibly, by 10:30 a.m. all of them were gone.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Use all of these resources to identify opportunities and network with personal referrals to the organizations and the jobs you seek. Keep your contact list with you all the time, and *always* be prepared. As one professional career management person said, “You never know whom you are talking to.”

Finally, always be alert to unfolding circumstances, contacts, and counsel so you may be ready to hear and follow God’s calling.

. . . ask where the good way is, and walk in it . . . ”
Jeremiah 6:16