

Be Your Own Headhunter

By Julie Desmond

Your next job is going to fall into your lap. Someone you spoke with who knows someone who needs someone with your unique skillset is going to hear that you are looking and that is exactly where your next job will come from. In a word, this is networking. Recruiters call it, “All in a day’s work.”

Working with recruiters is a good way to improve your odds. Playing recruiter yourself will improve those odds exponentially. But how do recruiters find open positions that aren’t even posted yet? Is it luck? Or is it something more systematic? Copy a few best practices from the pros, and you might find yourself working rather than looking.

Recruiters look at job boards. Not for a single position, but for patterns. For example, if company A is adding 300 people to its production team, they will probably need to add some muscle to their payroll, payables and receivables teams, as well. What you can do: search for positions that are impacted by yours. Find out who the department managers are, and let them know via email or LinkedIn that you are available for work, just in case they’re adding staff.

Recruiters notice the news. They watch for fast-growing companies. They notice who is promoting, hiring and firing. They look for articles that tell who is adding square footage, or outsourcing to other lands. What you can do: choose a few target companies and follow them online or in the newspaper. Learn about new initiatives and big changes. Note the names of the people you see in the news and reach out to them for informational interviews even if they are not currently hiring.

Recruiters take notes. Recruiters have an ongoing need for notebooks: the college-ruled, spiral bound, less than a dollar type of notebook. What you can do: get yourself a notebook. Track your job search conversations, interviews, phone calls, applications and job leads. Tip: the better the recruiter, the cheaper the notebook.

Recruiters talk to everyone, because we are all connected by six degrees of separation, right? What you can do: tell people, in a single sentence, what you want. Your hairstylist, gym acquaintances, aunts, uncles and friends already know you; they are likely to help you long term, so keep them informed of your successes.

Start thinking like a recruiter, and that one placement you make will be your own.

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