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This excerpt contains:

- The Foreword by the Author
- The Table of Contents
- The beginning pages of Chapter 12, Career Networking

Thanks for your interest!

This book may be purchased at
www.fasttrackyourjobsearch.com.

If you have interest in learning more about being coached confidentially, one-on-one by the Author, please contact him at
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*How to get paid what you're worth by
avoiding common career roadblocks*

Richard C. Kirby

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Fast Track Your Job Search (and Career!)

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Special discounts for bulk quantities of this book are available to corporations, professional associations, and other organizations. For details, contact Richard Kirby at rkirby@executive-impact.com.

About this book . . .

WHO will benefit most from this book?

You will benefit if you are actively seeking or contemplating a rewarding career change, such as if you are:

- ❑ Unemployed and actively job searching
- ❑ Employed and considering a change
- ❑ Making a career transition into Corporate America after being self-employed or out of the workforce
- ❑ Making a career transition out of Corporate America into self-employment

WHAT do I mean by the term “career change?”

I mean a change involving:

- A new employer *or*
- A new industry *or*
- A new profession

WHEN would be a good time to apply these strategies?

You will benefit from these strategies whenever you want to shorten your job searches or improve your overall career satisfaction.

WHERE are these strategies applicable?

These strategies are applicable within your short-term job seeking activities as well as in your long-term career development.

WHY take the time to learn and apply these strategies?

Applying these strategies will allow you to succeed faster. This provides you the opportunity to shorten your job searches, increase your income, and enjoy what you do for a living.

HOW is this book arranged?

This book is organized around 18 popular career-limiting myths, each of which is followed by helpful information and specific exercises that will speed your success.

NOTE: I encourage you to take notes in this book and complete all exercises you feel are relevant to your current career situation. There is also space to start a **career quest journal** at the rear of this book. If you are averse to writing in books, all exercise forms can be found at www.fasttrackyourjobsearch.info.

Foreword by the author

Would you like to . . . shift your career into the fast lane? . . . land a great job faster? . . . take control of your future and create your own long term employment security? . . . get paid what you are truly worth? If so, this book is for you.

There have been staggering changes in the U.S. job market during the first decade of the 21st century. The new millennium has seen major upheavals in U.S. financial markets, affecting millions of corporations who employ tens of millions of American professionals and executives. Inevitably, these changes have spurred major shifts in employers' views regarding finding, hiring, training, promoting, and downsizing their employees.

This “how to” guide will provide you a clear, realistic understanding of the current career landscape as well as breakthrough strategies you can leverage to become more successful in navigating the new terrain. Fast tracking your career and job searches will gain you years of income and career happiness!

Get ready for reality

I have to warn you – this is not your ordinary mild-mannered career book. You will learn precisely how today's job market works and what you need to do to be successful. GenX and GenY readers are likely to find that my views on the employment world match well with theirs. For many Baby Boomers, however, my perspectives are likely to be a rude awakening. Here is my sales pitch for making reality a part of your career life from this point onward:

“Reality isn't the way you wish things to be, nor the way they appear to be, but the way they actually are. Either you acknowledge reality and use it to your benefit or it will automatically work against you.”

Robert Ringer's Theory of Reality in his bestseller
Looking Out for Number One (Ringer, 1977)

As you read through this book we will debunk many popular career myths that originated in the last century. These myths represent potential roadblocks or speed limiters that can retard your career

progress. It is likely that your acceptance of one or more of these myths is holding you back in your career and in your job searches. In the process of disproving popular career myths we will need to scrutinize several “sacred cows” that have remained unexamined too long.

The career book scene

On the surface, this book may appear similar to other career books on the shelf. Look closer and you will see that it is significantly different. Rather than offering you another general rehash of popular concepts of the past, this book contains detailed strategies that are known to be working in today’s job market. You will gain unique, highly relevant tips that will help you succeed now and in the foreseeable future – whether the economy is in a recession or an expansion.

Another difference you will notice in this book is that it provides you references to other excellent books. Most career books, including many of the most popular ones, make an attempt to address every subject in a self-contained manner. My approach, on the other hand, is to readily acknowledge those who have written great informational books in specific areas and point you in their direction. To include their level of detail in every specific career area would make this volume thicker than *War and Peace*.

I have read hundreds of career and career-related books (both popular and obscure) since 2001 and found that the ones referenced herein are definitely worth your attention. If you do not see a popular career book recommended for further reading, I have omitted it intentionally because it is outdated or of relatively little help. As examples, two of the most popular career books were written by (1) a recruiter and (2) a career book pioneer. These two books total over 1,000 pages and provide very little help in the area of networking—how 70-80% of jobs are found! Reading ineffective career books can actually be more harmful than helpful because their recommendations can delay your results.

Some career books have spawned companion workbooks. To provide you more value and insure you have the tools you need in one place, exercises are included within this book and reproducible versions are available on line. These exercises require extra effort and your thoughtful completion of them is likely to be of great benefit.

This book is organized into four sections. The first section helps you establish necessary career fundamentals that are important for your long term career as well as your job search success. The second section identifies outdated job search beliefs and explains what to do differently in today's job market. The third section provides you leading edge job search strategies that have been shown to accelerate job search results. Finally, the fourth section addresses challenging decisions that most top performers must consider for long-term career success.

There are additional web resources available to you as a purchaser of this book. As the companion web site is expanded you will find more informational resources at www.fasttrackyourjobsearch.info.

Career and other professional services

It is understandable that career books tend to reflect the experiences of their authors. I am an executive career consultant, but most people prefer the more familiar label of career coach. I joined this profession in 2002 because I believed in the value of coaching and consulting. My belief has not changed one iota. Due to my enthusiasm for sharing knowledge and brainstorming new solutions, there will be places in this book where I recommend you consider working with a career coach/consultant or other professional.

If you are a motivated career seeker, I believe you will be far more successful if you engage an *effective* professional to support you, rather than trying to tackle this complex subject area on your own or acting on the large amount of detrimental amateur advice that is readily available for free. Please do not be offended by my suggestions that you engage a professional for general mentoring or help in specific career areas. If you believe you do not need professional help, simply disregard my occasional suggestions.

Gear up to take control!

Unless you have been living under a very large rock you know that *establishing and maintaining rewarding employment is more challenging than ever*. Many corporate "rocks of Gibraltar" have crumbled under the weight of their myopic executive management

teams. The likelihood of having a stable career with one employer for a decade or more is small.

Many of the last century's rules to live by have become this century's myths. This is why you need a new perspective and plan of action in order to prosper. To build career security and succeed, you need to make radical changes in your career strategies. You need to exit the well worn highways of the mass of career seekers, eliminate the restrictions of conventional speed limits, and direct your career onto the "fast track" that has no limits to your speed of success. It is time to take control.

It is time to embark on a journey in which you take back control of your career and, if you are job seeking, take back control of your job search. You can prosper greatly from learning what is myth and what is reality in today's employment market. Every day by which you shorten your quest is one more day you can reap the rewards. There is no time to lose. Here are the keys. **On your mark . . . get set . . . let's GO!**

Contents

SECTION 1: Career Fundamentals

The Importance of Attitude

- Myth 1-----*Attitude is important, but you can “fake it until you make it.”* 3

Self-Limiting Beliefs

- Myth 2-----*Many wonderfully talented people struggle due to age, experience, sex, race, etc.* 13

Occupational Choices

- Myth 3-----*Finding out “what I want to be when I grow up” is a long and difficult process.* 21

Career Satisfaction

- Myth 4----- *Most people have to trade career happiness for increased income. Learn to live with it.* 39

Generational Wisdom

- Myth 5-----*GenX and GenY workers don’t have the correct work ethic to succeed.* 49

SECTION 2: Replacing Outdated Job Search Beliefs

Résumé Formats and Content

- Myth 6-----*A great résumé is critical to career success.* 57

Internet Job Searching

- Myth 7-----*Internet job postings have revolutionized the way most professionals and executives get hired.* 71

Working with Recruiters

- Myth 8-----*Recruiters and employment/staffing firms help people find jobs.* 81

Identifying Potential Employers

- Myth 9-----*Finding desirable employers is difficult.* 95

Choosing Employers

Myth 10----*Large employers offer security and more opportunity.* 101

Outplacement and Career Marketing Companies

Myth 11----*Most outplacement and career marketing companies are effective resources for career seekers.* 107

SECTION 3: Becoming an Outstanding Job and Career Seeker

Career Networking

Myth 12----*Group networking is a great strategy for jump starting each new job search.* 119

Job Interviewing

Myth 13----*The best candidate gets the job.* 153

Career Coaching

Myth 14----*Any competent person can manage their own career. Getting help is for wimps.* 171

SECTION 4: Making Tough Career Decisions

Additional Education

Myth 15----*An MBA or other degree is likely to accelerate my career advancement and income.* 183

Loyalty and Job Hopping

Myth 16----*Employers reward loyalty and avoid job hoppers.* 193

Self-Employment, etc.

Myth 17----*Self employment, independent consulting, and other such options are too risky.* 201

EPILOGUE

Creating Career Security in a Less Secure World

Myth 18----*Get a good education, pick a stable employer, do good work, and you will be rewarded!* 219

Postscript	227
Glossary of Terms	231
Bibliography	237
Appendix 1 – Niche Job Boards	239
My Career Quest Journal	255

Myth # 12

Group networking is a great strategy for jump-starting each new job search.

In the 20th century, before speed dating and online matchmaking, the number of employed career seekers who actively networked in public for new positions was relatively small. People attended professional and industry meetings to learn and to develop long-term relationships. The few job seekers who attended such meetings were welcomed. Seekers found jobs through people they knew, but the term “networking” was not a discussion topic. Families were relatively stable and they tended to remain for long periods in the same metropolitan areas.

Then, the world changed. The percentage of people actively seeking positions outside their current employers on a relatively consistent basis went from 5-10% to 30-40%. Seekers who were proactive sought ways to increase their networking contacts. Job seeker groups proliferated at churches and other venues. Industry, professional, alumni, and other group meetings became more serious hunting grounds for active job seekers that became increasingly participative.

The rules have changed. Today, lack of a clear and effective personal networking strategy—or simply a failure to be an active networker—can be a roadblock to your progress. Since the majority of employed professionals and executives are “looking” for a better position, employed people attending group meetings have become less receptive to the frequent requests for help coming from the expanding quantities of job seekers in attendance. *Networking for a new job at industry and professional events has become less and less effective. The same is true for church and other job seeker networking groups.*

FAST TRACK strategy: Focus effort in the area of one-on-one networking. Jump start new job searches by spending the majority of your networking with your most supportive contacts and with those people to whom they refer you warmly. Avoid being introduced as a job seeker in industry and professional meetings to eliminate you being “labeled” on the front end of your conversations. Leverage and build meaningful, mutually supportive relationships rather than wasting your time soliciting strangers at group meetings.

Career Networking

You should note that this is the longest chapter in this book. The reasons I am devoting so much space to networking are (1) it is no longer an activity that can be ignored until career pressures or unemployment force you into job search mode and (2) when you seek new employment, networking is the most effective means for finding a great new job. Networking is a life skill and life strategy that is critical for your career success in the 21st century. *Please go back and read the last sentence three more times for emphasis.*

Perhaps you don't believe that networking is all it is advertised to be. Perhaps you don't feel comfortable with the concept of networking. Perhaps you believe you can "get by" without intentionally networking to improve your career situation. If so, I have good news. You *can* "get by" without networking. It is possible. But the odds are not in your favor and it is likely you will advance more slowly, earn less income, be less happy with your career choices, and be unemployed longer each time you must conduct a new job search. If those major potential career downsides don't motivate you to learn about career networking then skip to the next chapter.

How Job Seekers Find Their Jobs

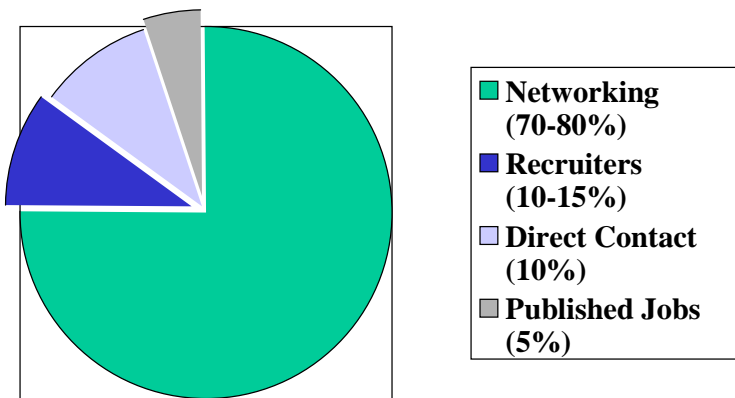


Figure 12-1

Effective networkers tend to find the better "hidden" positions and find them faster, which can translate into more income and increased job

satisfaction. Networking can also be helpful in building your career as a corporate employee or an independent contractor/consultant. If you have tried networking to get contract work or find a new job and were not successful, the following strategies will be of great help to you.

First and foremost, I want to assure you that through experience I have confirmed the classic statistic that 70-80% of jobs are found through networking. This was true in studies conducted in the 1970's and it is even truer in the 21st century.

Many career books emphasize group networking and then provides tips for group networking, working a room of strangers, etc. I recommend a completely different approach that deemphasizes this type of group activities and emphasizes informal one on one meetings over breakfast, coffee, or lunch. Such meetings are less intimidating for most and they provide the opportunity to connect on a more personal level. I have found that this approach to networking is more rewarding and, once you get the hang of it, a lot more enjoyable.

There are dozens of books on the subject of career networking and job search networking. I have read many of them. The one I always recommend for job seekers is *SuperNetworking* (Salmon, 2004) by Michael Salmon. It offers great tactical and practical information for job seekers. On page 16 Mr. Salmon notes:

“Have you ever heard the expression, “It’s not what you know, but who you know””? It’s true. A ‘cold call’ hardly ever gets heard or returned. According to Sales Management magazine ‘warm calls’ have a 90% response rate, and ‘cold calls’ have a less than 10% response rate. Referrals will help you open doors you could not open on your own.”

And on page 56 he notes: *“When you begin working this program, you are going to find yourself extremely busy calling people, sending résumés, scheduling meetings, going on interviews, and constantly adding to your network of contacts. You need to keep everything together in one place so you can be more efficient and effective with your time.”*

The objective of networking when in a job search is to gain warm referrals into companies of interest. As Mr. Salmon notes, if you do this properly you will become very busy with useful activities.

Contrast this with applying for jobs on the Internet. Online job search can keep you very busy with activities that are virtually useless.

Mr. Salmon emphasizes keeping your networking information organized and I agree this is very important to your success. Early in your networking you need to establish a Sage ACT!® contact manager database or a manual tracking diagram. Another alternative is to use a Microsoft® Excel worksheet with columns that show the left to right referral connections, similar to the following:

1st Level	2nd Level	3rd Level	4th Level	Notes / actions
Steve Job	Billy Gates			Billy will not return my calls, ask Steve for help!
	John Jones	Will Smyth		Call Will 5/19
Bob Cane	Klark Kent	Lois Loehn		Lunch with Lois 5/22
	Bruce Wain	Dick Gray	Alfred Neuman	Coffee with Alfred 5/23

Figure 12-2

Learning through trial and error can be time consuming and delay your results. Here are some frequent networking mistakes I have observed that you will want to avoid:

- ❑ Discuss “networking” frequently without spending the time to specifically define what you mean by the term.
- ❑ Have negative perceptions of networking, seeing it as begging or demeaning.
- ❑ Lack training and direction, relying on incorrect advice from fellow job seekers.
- ❑ Do not keep good records and follow up in a timely manner.
- ❑ Have no objective measurement system to evaluate your performance.
- ❑ Fail to develop an effective strategic plan for conducting a proactive networking campaign.

Let's look at a proactive approach to job networking that I have found works well for most job seekers . . . the PNJSC (great acronym, huh?).

Your proactive personal networking job search campaign (PPNJSC)

First, let's define our terms...

Proactive means you take action as needed to make things happen.

Personal means your actions are matched with your unique personal goals and the relationship resources you have available.

Networking for the purposes of this chapter means one-on-one, mutually beneficial communications selected based upon your goals. (I am omitting group networking here because it is far less effective and is the subject of numerous networking books.)

Job Search means that the following comments are confined to the narrow application of networking as a job seeking methodology.

Campaign means that your job search networking must be like a military or political campaign, having a definite goal, a coordinated strategy, and a commitment to see it through until completion.

Fast track tip: The following lengthy discussion is framed in the context of you as an active job seeker. If you are currently employed you can modify the following strategies to conduct a confidential search, whether you are seriously interested in making a job change or simply want to expand your network of desirable professional/industry contacts. All you have to do is select an appropriate goal and conduct your communications in a manner appropriate to your specific situation.

To effectively conduct a proactive personal networking job search campaign (PPNJSC) you must first establish a goal. As Stephen Covey so elegantly offered as his second habit in *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (Covey, 1990), you must begin with the end in mind:

“To begin with the end in mind means to start with a clear understanding of your destination. It means to know where

you're going so that you better understand where you are now and so that the steps you take are always in the right direction.

“It’s incredibly easy to get caught up in an activity trap, in the busy-ness of life, to work harder and harder at climbing the ladder of success only to discover it’s leaning against the wrong wall. It is possible to be busy – very busy – without being very effective” (P. 98).

Here is an example format for a job search goal that I use frequently. I recommend you copy this goal (or another of your liking which is equally specific) into your Career Quest Journal at the rear of this book. If you are a more creative type you may want to add quality of life or other details which have been omitted from this no frills version:

By _____ (date) my goal is to have a position similar to _____ (job title) or _____ (job title) or _____ (job title) earning between \$_____ and \$_____ annually. If circumstances do not allow me to achieve this, then my backup plan or goal is _____.

Once you have a goal then you can become *proactive* with your networking and focus your *personal one-on-one networking* meetings toward achieving your goal. It is nice when job seeking to have lunch with former clients, co-workers, bosses, and vendors. These can be quite enjoyable. But, you need to turn these encounters into strategically useful networking meetings or they can be big time wasters.

Let’s look at some important points that will help you become a more strategic networker. I refer to them in terms of a job search, but they are equally valid when you are employed and seeking to expand you network for the future.

The first important point relative to your PPNJSC is that you need to emphasize one on one networking rather than group networking. Weekly, I meet job seekers who have been seeking employment for many months who never got the word that group networking events, including job seeker “networking” meetings, can be a big time wasters.

It is a basic tenet of marketing that one-on-one communications with your potential buyers is tremendously more effective than mass marketing to unqualified audiences. *One-on-one networking with employed decision makers* is where job seekers need to spend most of their job search networking hours. It is expensive because only one person at a time hears your message, but it is far more effective than group networking because you can provide sufficient information and solicit their help in a private setting. In networking you need quantity and quality, but quantity without quality is almost useless.

CASE STUDY: Pete's Job Search for Int'l. Trading

Pete was an outstanding sales person who had run a business in Africa that purchased specialty parts from around the world. He had great business management skills. When I first met Pete he had recently moved to a new city and had taken the first sales job offered to him selling pies and pastries with a small baking company. Needless to say he was grossly underutilized and underpaid.

Pete had a few challenges he was seeking to overcome. First, being in a new city meant he had few contacts. Second, working in a full-time job left him little time to look for a new job. And third, he was not clear on what type of sales job he wanted. All of these issues caused him to ask for my help.

Our discussions and assessments surfaced a rather unusual job category that interested him – international trading. This role would allow him to use his foreign language/culture skills, his international purchasing experience, and his sales aptitude.

But how would Pete find this type of unusual position? I suggested I would introduce him to a friend who owned a small company that was in this type of business. They had lunch and the friend offered to introduce him to the VP of sales at the largest company of this type in town. Pete obtained a meeting with the VP based upon the referral and impressed him with his abilities and charm.

The result? Within 10 days Pete had accepted a position with the company and was very happy. Five years later, Pete is now living in Europe and managing the company's activities

for a major portion of the world. The keys that unlocked Pete's future were his knowledge of what he wanted and gaining (through one-on-one networking) the warm introduction to a VP in a specific company of interest.

The second important point for conducting a PPNJSC is that you must springboard off your best networking contacts rather than run around attempting to meet a lot of new strangers.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE SEE
www.fasttrackyourjobsearch.com.