**Job Transition Top 11**

[A senior colleague of mind put this together over time, and he circulates to anyone who is searching for a job. He has done several searches recently, so this information is current as of March 2015. Edited and reproduced by permission. – Anne Krook]

1. **Don’t be shy**: Transition is not a stealth project. You want everyone in your world to know what you’re looking for so that you can enlist their eyes and ears to your advantage. I learned this lesson slowly, but the last time I did it I sent a letter to my entire LinkedIn network and had multiple fresh leads within half a day. This works! As an added bonus, my transition letter was picked up by Matt Youngquist who included it in his newsletter, saying it was the best example he’d ever seen. You can find it here: <http://careerhorizons.wordpress.com/2011/07/29/broadcast-networking-e-mail-great-example/>
2. **Find a buddy**: A support group or a job search buddy is the single most important tool you can have in a search. This is often overlooked because you have friends and family to rely on, but the fact is that those folks, especially spouses, are actually on the journey with you, except that they aren’t driving. It’s really hard to tell your spouse that you could have done better in an interview or that you really aren’t sure if your LinkedIn profile is “done.” Job search is an activity where you can have a great day and a terrible day all before lunch. If you wake up to an email response to a meeting with a key person you’ve been hoping to connect with you’ll be on cloud nine—until you get that thanks-but-we’ll-keep-your-resume-on-file note later in the morning. It’s an emotional roller-coaster, and it helps immensely to have someone to share with who doesn’t get motion sickness.
3. **You don’t have to make a decision until you’re offered a job**: It’s easy to filter your opportunities before they even know that you exist. You may be reluctant to apply for a job at a company that you don’t think you want to work for. The fact is that many companies and jobs that you hear about are not what they seem. I once applied for a director job at a cool company even though I was trying hard not to accept a job lower than VP. As it worked out, I’m now the CEO of that company.
4. **Don’t stop looking just because you have a good interview:** Getting hired takes a long time, even when it goes well. If you start counting on getting that offer too soon, your search loses momentum and the trail goes cold. Keep going right up until you start at your new job.
5. **Follow up:** Your time scale in search is vastly different from that of your potential employers or your network contacts. In my experience, busy people actually appreciate you taking ownership of following up on the email, voice mail, or past-due promise. You will think you’re being a pest, but it’s almost never true. Don’t let more than two weeks pass without trying again.
6. **Network, network, network:** Think of it this way—the person that will hire you next is out there somewhere. Your mission is to encounter that person in a way that reflects well on you—ideally a warm introduction from someone who has met you in person and not as a résumé in a stack. This means that it’s a numbers game and the more people you can meet and the more effective you can be at meeting people likely to be connected and influential, the better your odds and the shorter your search. I highly recommend the book “Never Eat Alone” as a great practical guide to networking.
7. **You usually won’t get a job only by applying, but apply anyway:** The odds are very long but sometimes you get lucky. I’ve only gotten one job by applying to a blind ad, but it was a President / COO job that I found on Craigslist. Go figure.
8. **Give to get:** The best way to make yourself valuable as you network is to help other people network. I always ask people I meet how I can help them, and sometimes I really can. It builds your karma bank account and makes folks much more likely to extend themselves in helping you. These favors may be repaid long in the future, but this is a lifetime thing. I’m still making introductions on behalf of people I met once in a coffee shop years ago.
9. **Make yourself findable and worth finding:** Look at the best LinkedIn profiles and steal shamelessly. I found a former colleague who was having a lot of success and modeled my profile on his and added lots of keywords. I very quickly saw my search results get much better, and I’m now in the top 1% of linked in search results.
10. **Don’t be needy:** This is one of the two top diseases of the job searcher to avoid. Needy people are off-putting and paradoxically almost never get what they are asking for. Instead, project confidence, energy, and a positive outlook. Always behave as if you are doing great and are more interested in helping than being helped. That will be much more appealing and you will get help. Corollary: ask for introductions or references, never ask for jobs. Asking directly for a job puts people on the spot and will trigger a negative reaction.
11. **Don’t be generic:** This is the second top disease of the job searcher, the idea that you are willing to do “anything.” The generic job searcher is not very interesting and is very difficult to assist. Think of it this way—you go into Nordstrom and say that you’re looking for a pair of shoes. The sales person asks you what kind of shoes and you answer, “Oh, I can use any pair of shoes you may have.” Ridiculous? Yes, but that is exactly what happens when you meet a very well-connected person and tell them that you have lots of skills and can do lots of things. How can this person help you? What if, instead, you say that you have specific customer-facing project management experience in engineering product development involving wearable microelectronics with low power RF connectivity? Will that limit your ability to get a project-management job with Boeing? Yes, but you weren’t going to get that job anyway, and if part of your detailed self-description makes a cognitive connection with your referrer, then you’ve got a connection of real value. Rule of thumb: be as deep and narrow as possible and avoid at all costs stressing only your generic qualifications. You will have fewer opportunities but a vastly better shot at winning the interview and the job.