



Networking Is All About Farming, Not Hunting.

Anyone in job search mode needs to plant a lot of seeds.

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When it comes to a person's job search, networking is more about farming than it is about hunting. That's because networking typically results in the person planting the seed for building a relationship that will lead to a recommendation, which will eventually lead to that next job possibly directly, but most likely indirectly.

The farming metaphor works because anyone in job search mode will need to plant a lot of seeds, or make those initial connections, which will need to be nurtured through time as part of the networking strategy. The idea is that all of the seeds will germinate and spread their roots into a vast network. The key to this strategy is that during the various networking meetings or calls it is advice that candidates are asking for; not a job. All it takes is one of those many root systems you have planted to land that job

Consider the following scenario: Widget Co. publishes a job description and its human resources director receives hundreds of resumes and applications. The benefit of having a strong network means you could very well have a connection who has a direct line of communication with the HR director or other “inside” executives and hands him or her your resume. Suddenly, your candidacy has been prescreened and you are now one of 15 rather than one of 150. None of this would have happened if you had not networked and made the effort to get to know that connection in the first place.

“In order to network, you just need someone – anyone – in the company to pass on your resume to HR or the hiring manager...it doesn’t need to be an employee in the same department you want to work in, and it doesn’t need to be a senior executive,” writes [AdAge](#). “Be flexible on time, go to their office or volunteer to chat over the phone if that works better for them...the key is to just make the connection.”

Continuing along the farming metaphor, when you plant those crops, they are done so in a methodical, organized and purposeful line where one seed leads to the next seed. The same for networking. While you certainly want to leave yourself open to expanding your network, you should do so strategically. Although networking may start with just about anyone, eventually the idea is to target your industry and then figure out who you may already know in that vertical or at least who you may know who can pass you along to someone else. Think about the five-to-eight people you should meet because they are well connected. Also consider other groups of people in your network who you can inform through a short email with a personal update and mentioning you are in a search campaign.

“The craft of building a network of clients and colleagues isn’t about casting a wide net,” [writes](#) former private investigator Hal Humphreys. “It is about seeding real relationships [and] it requires time and calculation.”

As a final point, there is one more key understanding about networking for anyone looking for a new job. This is a long-term endeavor; not a quick-fix to your next gig. Be sure to keep fertile all of those seeds you took care to plant because you may need them again, or they may need you, and rather than starting the process all over again, you can hit the ground running with your network already in place.

As any farmer will tell you, growing crops requires strategy, execution and most importantly, patience. You probably met the person who will lead you to the right opportunity months ago when you were planting those early seeds.

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