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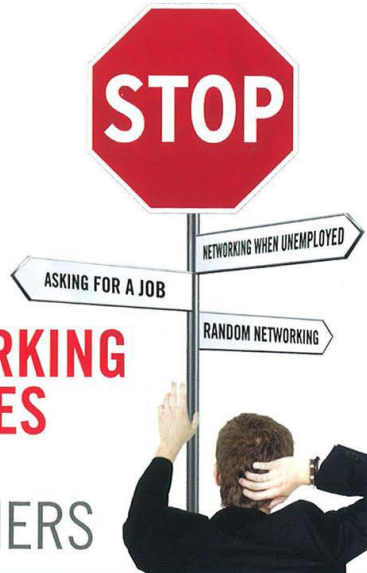
SHOOT TO SCORE
SPORTS MARKETING IN A RECESSION



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TOP 3 NETWORKING MISTAKES OF JOB SEARCHERS



by SHIRLEY HAN

When you're unemployed, almost nothing seems to matter more to you than getting that next job. That's your ultimate outcome and all you can focus on. You can't blame yourself though. How can you think about the beautiful business relationships you can

develop when you may not be able to pay the mortgage next month?

Be careful! The more you need the job, the more you may unwittingly sabotage your chances. Read on and see how you can avoid these mistakes and make every networking opportunity an enjoyable experience.

#1 NETWORKING WHEN UNEMPLOYED

When entrepreneurs and professionals network, not only are they able to operate on a longer time frame, they're also open to multiple outcomes from the relationship. If the person they're talking to isn't a candidate to become a client, perhaps she can become a joint venture partner, or a vendor, or a referral source.

This is the importance of digging your well before you are thirsty! Make networking a priority when you HAVE a job. People can detect your scent of desperation and selfishness. Keep in touch with your contacts when you don't need anything and they'll be more likely to be there when you do.

#2 ASKING FOR A JOB

Are you afraid of being approached by job-seekers and service providers?

In general, people hate to be in a position where they have to tell you "no" – no, we're not hiring, no, I don't know anyone at my company who is, no, we don't need that service, no, I'm not in a

position to introduce you to someone who does – and so on. It makes them uneasy to admit that they aren't quite comfortable with you yet to refer you on, or that they may not have the connections inside their company to get you to the right place.

Even when they can say "yes", the person you've just met for five minutes at a networking event is never likely to refer you to her best client – even if you were the BEST person for the job.

So keep that in mind when you're networking with corporate folks. Don't just jump into sales mode and focus on what they can do for you, before you even know what they do. Approach them like you would a fellow entrepreneur, with the intent of building a relationship first, learning about them, and uncovering ways to exchange value FIRST. You can't credibly offer your service as the answer to their problems, when you haven't spent enough time understanding their situation.

On the flip side, you have the opportunity at every meeting to be valuable to the other person. Just simply ask the question, "What can I do to help you?" Even if you don't have the capacity to provide the specific help they are seeking, the fact that you asked and that you listened, will go a long way. If you can't help, you may have someone in your network who can.

#3 RANDOM NETWORKING

Too busy to be out there? And when you do, do you move in fits and starts, or call on your contacts once a decade? You'd realise that this is rather inefficient and ineffective.

Have a plan and a structure, for example, be an active member in one professional organisation, meet five new people each month, or call two existing contacts each week. You'll be amazed with your continual and steady progress.

So remember - the moral is to keep yourself in circulation. If you put your mind to it, you can get something out of almost any meeting. Feedback on an idea, a recommendation for something you're looking for, meeting someone new - there's never an excuse to walk away thinking that you wasted your time. Rather than just show up and go through the motions, turn the meeting into something that will be valuable, significant and meaningful.

Before you know it, you may have more career opportunities than you realise!

Shirley Han is a Senior Consultant in Personal Empowerment at Stafford & Chan Pte Ltd. She is also a trainer in Singapore Airlines for their Cabin Crew and Ground Personnel in Etiquette & Deportment, Effective Communication and Professional Imaging.

Shirley will be conducting the following learning and development programmes at the Marketing Institute of Singapore:

- * Effective Presentation Skills – 15 & 16 April 2009
- * Business Networking Mastery – 24 April 2009
- * Personal Branding for Business & Career Success – 4 & 5 June 2009

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