

# Ask the Career Coach: Network Your Way to a Job

Networking is key to finding your next position if you are unemployed.

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

I am unemployed—will I be ruled out of interviewing or getting contacted for jobs that I am qualified for, and if yes, what can I do to get the interview?

KC  
Short Hills

While Chris Isidore of the CNN Money article, [Looking for work? Unemployed need not apply](#), rightfully points out, things are tough right now for job seekers—especially those who are currently unemployed—all hope is not lost. As I said to Chris during my interview, while many executive recruiters prefer to work with individuals who are presently working, there are still some who do work with those who are out of work.

According to Maxine Lang, president of Bernax Corp., "The key is to look at the recruiter the same way you would look at them if you were the hiring manager on a particular job. Is that recruiter going to represent you the way you want to be represented in the marketplace? Do they have the skills and personality to get the job done?"

A good directory to find an executive recruiter is the Directory of Executive Recruiters, known as the Red Book, published by Kennedy Publications. The directory lists search firms, what they specialize in, where they are located and how long they have been in business. Many recruiters have their own websites where you can determine the area in which they specialize.

To find recruiters online, search by category such as "legal or law headhunter." Use LinkedIn.com to identify recruiters and learn how long they have been recruiting, what they specialize in and read recommendations from their clients and job seekers. Select recruiters who understand your specialty and chosen industry. When speaking with recruiters, be sure to spend time vetting them as well. Ask about their relationships in your particular field and the names of clients they have worked with in the past.

Don't spend a disproportionate amount of time with recruiters as approximately only 20 percent of the job leads are being landed via this route. Select a few and spend the rest of your time networking. Using LinkedIn is one critical tool for finding referral connections for a targeted company.

Networking includes informational meetings, attending seminars, going to a book club, hiking with friends and new acquaintances, joining a walk for a cause you believe in and the list goes on and on. Networking is not about collecting business cards but rather building relationships over time. Good networking takes time—so you should be networking all the time.

It may take longer to find a job in this economy, but many employers and recruiters will work with and hire good people regardless of their employment status. Networking is the key to successfully engaging your next opportunity. Many people look to hire professionals they know and trust. Keeping connected and being a resource for your past and present contacts is important.

*"Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to [CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com](mailto:CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com).*

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