

## **How to Professionally Market Yourself**

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Career advancement is within the reach of most people when they discover these key principles to market themselves effectively and learn how to utilize advance search methods. The following are a few ideas that one should employ to fully capitalize on the skills they have acquired. Remember, you are a product competing in a virtual sea of products. **You must differentiate yourself through your marketing of your abilities to “the consumer” who is the prospective employer.**

### **Professionally communicate what you have to offer...**

Now is the best time to raise your standards and increase your vision as high as your talents allow. Highly marketable people always benefit when they develop a clear communication strategy. Know exactly what you want to communicate, and equally important, know precisely what you do not wish to communicate.

In today's market place, whether you are employed or unemployed, you will need to pursue both larger numbers as well as carefully selected targets simultaneously. At the end of the day, you are playing a numbers game. Gaining a high degree of market exposure will build your confidence and self-esteem. One always feels better about their career search when the telephone is ringing.

**1. The most effective campaign strategies always begin with superior marketing material.** A well thought out, personal image projection begins with marketing material that is both makes sense for your goals and showcases your talents and abilities in a creative way. This means going beyond a superior resume. It also means having a powerful cover letter and a number of supplemental pieces that will add to your overall marketability. These can include items like testimonial letters from past employers, projects lists that summarize your past contributions, as well as specialized templates that demonstrate your abilities versus a job's requirements. When you walk into an interview, you never want to walk in with just a resume. You want to walk in with a portfolio!

**2. Networking is the second stage of an effective career search.** View the creation of a networking plan as you would any executive plan. Know your goals and the outcome you desire before you start and stay focused. Decide what you will do and when you will do it. Then execute your plan systematically. Determine to do at least one thing every day to touch your network. Always remember to stay logically consistent to your resume. Ask yourself: “How do I want people in my network to perceive me? What message is consistent with my strengths and my unique contributions? What information will be important to share?” A career coach, by the way, can help you articulate your powerful unique value proposition. Focus on connecting with individuals that are not only working for, but are vendors of, clients of, or distribution partners of your target company, or who are in some other way connected. Remember, people in your network do not have to work there to be a key connection for you.

**3. You must master the interviewing process.** One big issue is how can you move away from interview clichés and move towards compelling, un-assailable content that best advances your cause while also answering the interviewer's questions in depth? My experience as a career coach tells me that the answer is to communicate through story telling. Every story should contain the “SARB” format: (Situation, Action, Result, and Benefits). Your personal stories should illustrate the impact you have had upon previous companies. Use stories to answer open-ended questions like, “what motivates you?” or “what types of employees do you find difficult to work with,” or “what is your greatest strength?” Try to always speak with a positive spin versus a negative spin. You are there to impress them with your talents and skills. Why volunteer negative information? Positive stories separate you from the pack because no one has had your particular set of experiences. Your argument, in fact, is that your unique set of experiences *uniquely* qualifies you for the position in question. Above all, make sure your verbal message is in perfect alignment with your written message to avoid confusion.