

5 Ways to Communicate More Effectively When Job Searching & Networking

While technology is great and facilitates many amazing discussions, connections and content sharing, it also leaves many people lost when it comes to the basics of general communication. Perhaps it is because we live in an age where everything is so rapid and where we can communicate anonymously should we wish. However, if you want to build and maintain a positive personal brand, be sure to stick to the basics – a polite introduction of your name and purpose of the communication when reaching out to others is imperative.



I cannot tell you how many people when applying for jobs leave a message on the voicemail without leaving a contact number, full name and putting some context around the call. This does not leave a professional impression and would not result in the application progressing to the next stage. The same applies if it was a networking reach out – it would not lead to a meeting.

If you are preparing for a job search related ‘meeting’ of any description (be it face to face, email or over the phone) go through the following checklist before reaching out;

1. **Clarity around the purpose of the communication** (your objectives & potentially theirs). Keep it concise. What are you looking to achieve from the meeting or reach out? Is it to speak with them to then potentially gain a

meeting? Is it to gather specific information?

2. **Understand who the audience is** and the best way to communicate with them (phone, email, twitter, face to face, text etc.)
3. **A clear timeframe for yourself and for the audience.** if you want to meet, ideally looking to arrange a coffee within the next two weeks etc.
4. **Being clear about the outcome** you are working towards (they don't necessarily need to know this however you do – tying back to the purpose). Why are you reaching out – to ultimately secure a job with company x, to learn specific information about why? Etc.
5. **Leave a 'calling card'** that is aligned with your personal brand. This includes contact information in addition to the impression you leave behind from any form of contact you have with others. What do you want this to be?

Whenever you apply for a job or conduct networking activities, please be sure to revisit these five steps. Remember to introduce yourself and consider your audience rather than just launching into what you want or need. While it all sounds simple and logical, in the haste and potential pressure attached with job seeking, we can sometimes lose sight of the obvious.

As they say "You only get one chance to make a first impression". What do you want that lasting impression to be?

[Tips to Write & Sell Work](#)

Achievements in Your CV

Achievements are a critical part of your resume, perhaps more important than responsibilities, and therefore should be given prime resume real estate. Ensure that any achievements that are already listed on your resume are engaging to the reader and actually quantify or qualify what you have achieved. If they are fairly un-inspiring due to how you have presented them, either edit or remove them and update with more exciting and relevant examples. When describing your achievements, remember to think about how your reader is interpreting what you are saying. A couple of well written, relevant examples paint a more positive and engaging picture and far outshine a long list of basic and poorly written achievements.

Consider reading the following statements whilst reflecting on your more recent jobs. Take down notes of situations that come to mind.

Have you designed or introduced a new process that may have increased efficiency or sales?

- Have you solved a difficult problem?
- Have you received any awards?
- What has been your experience with managing or training difficult people?
- Have you mentored or coached colleagues or those external to your business?
- Have you developed a new system, a product, etc?
- Have you designed something?
- Can you think of something you have done for the first time?
- Have you prepared any reports, papers, articles etc that others could not?
- Have you saved your company or department money?

It is worth compiling this information as it happens, get into the habit of documenting your achievements either as they occur or regularly with enough detail that you can recall what you did when it comes to updating your resume. With these examples at hand, it will help enhance your resume and create more compelling stories for the interview. When documenting your achievements, it is important that they are detailed, relevant and engaging to the reader. Below is a weak and strong example of the same achievement.

Weak Example: *The introduction of new rebate initiatives, that was successful in saving the company a substantial amount of money.*

Strong Example: *I successfully negotiated revised annual trading terms by offering lower rebate terms to the company's key accounts through incentive targets and the introduction of promotional rebates. This initiative generated a cost saving of \$700,000 within six months of the change.*

If you are unsure if your achievements are coming across strongly, ask a colleague or friend to review.

[Book Review 'How to master networking' by Robyn Henderson](#)

"Trust is built by repetition – the more they see you and  get to know you better, the more trust is built."

My husband attended a presentation by [Robyn Henderson](#) via one

of the events held by an industry association he is a part of. He came back from the event with the book 'How to master networking' and speaking very positively about Robyn and her networking advice.

I could not help myself from reading the book as I had to find out what great information Robyn had to share on the topic that had got my husband so inspired.

Pleasantly I found that the book was short and easy to read with lots of easy activities to follow. The advice imparted is just as relevant for those who are self employed as for those who are job seeking or looking to progress their careers.

The book offers a lot of practical advice in addition to the support tools to assist you with implementation, management and measurement of your networking. It covers everything from time management, to tips for shy or nervous networkers, conducting yourself at networking functions and generating referrals. My only observation with the book is that it includes very little about online networking. The book's focus is very much about offline networking, which is equally as important as online.

While reading the book, it became clear that while I do some networking, I certainly don't do enough of it, nor am I a member of enough groups or associations. Robyn states that we need to make networking the #1 priority every day. Something I will certainly be working on for 2012 with the advice from her book.

If you feel that your networking skills need to be improved, I would recommend this book.

If you have read the book, I would welcome your comments or if you have any great networking tips for us all.