

## DIRECT CONTACT

### Study Shows Job Searchers Get Meetings More Efficiently With Direct Contact

Networking is often cited as the number 1 way of generating new job opportunities. Ask people how to get an interview, and they'll say that networking is the way to go. But is it? Our survey of professionals, managers and executives clearly shows that job hunters get more meetings for the time spent through "direct contact" than through any other single technique.

The Wenroth Consulting Consortium advocates using all four ways of generating meetings: networking, direct contact (through targeted mail campaigns), headhunters, and ads. And we advise our clients to spend the most time using the technique that generates the best response – the greatest yield.

Our experience shows that networking simply takes too long. Clients are well advised to reach out and create their own contacts through direct contact techniques. Done correctly, direct contact is a more efficient way to generate meetings – more efficient than networking, headhunters, or ads.

"Networking," means using someone else's name to get a meeting. Direct contact means purposefully reaching out to people whom you may have known in the past or people you have never met. These might include association members, or people identified on the Internet, through newspaper or magazine articles, or from library research. Here are the results of the survey:

Direct contact is the most time efficient way to get meetings. Surveyed job hunters spent 45% of their time networking, yet networking accounted for only 35% of their meetings. On the other hand, surveyed job hunters spent 24% of their time on direct contact, which resulted in 27% of their meetings. As we said, networking is very time consuming. You have to find people who are willing to let you use their names. With direct contact, there is no middleman.

Even senior executives got almost 1/3 of their meetings through direct contact. There's a myth out there that executives rely on networking to get in to see people more senior than they are. Our surveyed senior executives did in fact get 62% of their meetings through networking, but almost 30% by contacting executives whom they had not been referred to. Executives should not overlook direct contact.

People making a career continuation relied on direct contact even more than networking. That is, people looking to stay in the same industry or field got about 1/3 of their meetings through direct contact and a little less than that by using someone else's name to get a meeting. The job searchers contacted strangers, and got meetings because of their accomplishments - and their discipline in working follow-up phone calls.

Even career changers (42% of those surveyed) got 20% of their meetings through direct contact. Career changers often feel they should network to meet people in new fields or industries. However, direct contact can also result in meetings.

In this market, search firms accounted for only 8% of meetings; Newspaper ads accounted for 7%; online job boards accounted for 13%. People usually concentrate heavily in the areas that seem most obvious, but have the least amount of yield. These are the same jobs that every other job seeker has access to. You want to find the jobs that are not yet in the public domain. They're definitely out there, but they are underground. Contact organizations that you are interested in, and help create your own position.

## WHAT IS DIRECT CONTACT

To start a direct contact action plan, you should make a list of companies where you would want to work, figure out who heads the division you want to target at each, and get in touch. We recommend you put an exhaustive 50 to 60 companies on your list, in three groups, A, B and C. The C list is made up of companies that you might not want to work for. The A list is where you most want to work. Start with the C list first, and then move to the B list. By the time you get to the A list you should have lots of practice with your interview skills as well as insight into the industry. You will sound like a knowledgeable insider when you speak with the A companies, be more confident, and the meetings will go better.

Target each letter to the specific company, and ideally to the person you're contacting. "You could say, 'I see that international sales have dropped in many companies in your industry. I've got 10 years of international marketing experience in your industry, and I've been able to increase sales in every organization I've worked for.'" That is your "grabber" opener. Then you should include bullet points outlining concrete achievements you've made. For instance, when you worked at the Gap, you increased sales in the U.K. by 35% over a period of two years, from 2002 to 2004.

Close your letters by saying, I'll call you in the next few days. Send duplicate letters via e-mail and snail mail. You can acknowledge in the e-mail that you're also sending a hard copy in an envelope.

Your goal in the direct contact method is to meet the person who would have the power to hire you and to convince that person that you would be an asset to his or her team

## THE DIRECT CONTACT TEMPLATE

### **Paragraph 1:**

The opening paragraph for a direct contact (targeted) mailing is your "grabber". It establishes the contact you have with the reader. Do your research and look for a connection that you might have to the person you are trying to reach. It may be the school s/he went to; it may be an article s/he wrote that you related to in some way; perhaps a webinar you heard. It's not enough to find out about the other person – you have to make a connection to what you discover, so that you have a reason to connect. Pretend you are sitting with that person right now. What would you say to him or her?

### **Paragraph 2:**

Give a summary about yourself.

### **Paragraph 3:**

Note a few key accomplishments that would be of interest to this target.

### **Paragraph 4: Your follow up**

Ask for half an hour of their time, and say you will call them in a few days. Then call them!

## DIRECT CONTACT LETTER EXAMPLES

### LETTER 1

Dear Mr. Stewart:

As a fellow executive in the medical device industry, I have watched and read about Intuitive Surgical's phenomenal growth. You have a strong reputation for quality, innovation and respect that positions you as a clear employer of choice in the industry. I believe that my background and work ethic are very aligned with your own philosophies and business objectives. I am writing in hopes of arranging a brief meeting to introduce myself.

With over 12 years in the industry, I have been with XXX since 2002. I am responsible for the Spine business, where I lead marketing and development teams that serve the global markets. My functional skills in marketing management and business development come from my operational experiences, which are coupled with my training in engineering. Some of my career highlights include:

- Established programs to increase new technology sales by 60% over traditional distribution models.
- Launched over 30 products globally to new and existing customers.
- Restructured senior leadership team to promote collaboration and diminish conflict across research, manufacturing, operations, and finance.
- Supervise 4 Directors and 25 Managers exceeding Gallup Q12 "Gold Standard" for top 25th percentile manager.

I know that Intuitive Surgical Inc. is a market leader. I would love to hear more about your plans to expand your business and explore areas where my skills may be aligned with your objectives. I will call your office early next week to see if I might be able to book a 20-30 minute meeting on your calendar.

Thank you in advance for your time and interest.

### LETTER 2

Dear Bill:

I wasn't able to attend the Specialty & Fine Chemical Conference last week, but I heard from my colleagues that your keynote was the highlight of the event. They told me that you focused on global manufacturing as one of the keys to our future – a topic very near and dear to me as an executive in the Refinery sector. I am speaking with companies that have a strong interest in international expansion, and after hearing your position on the topic, I wanted to write and introduce myself to you.

For the past 6 years, I have been with xxx Chemicals, where I currently lead an international sales, marketing and technology team that serves 6 markets. My functional skill is in sales and marketing management, my training is in chemical engineering, and – like you - I am also a licensed attorney. Some of the highlights of the last 2 years include:

- Doubling the European market share of XYZ's Flat Glass Coatings business from 50% to 100% by securing a key partner/customer to an exclusive supply relationship;
- Globally expanding the Flat Glass Coatings Business by securing a major Chinese manufacturer as the first international customer (Initial Top Line Impact: \$2MM);

I would love to understand more about your organization and explore areas where there may be mutual opportunity. I will call you early next week to see if I might be able to book a 20 - 30 minute meeting on your calendar.

Thank you in advance for your time and interest,

**LETTER 3:**

Dear Ms. Stunner:

Everyone in the Skincare industry is aware of the growth and success Beauty Best has experienced over the past few years. As an operational program manager in the consumer products industry — specifically personal care — I am at the top of that list.

I am currently a Program Director with Ageless Wonder, and worked for The Belford Nutraceutical Group for several years prior to this position. While I am engaged in my current role, I am also interested in getting to know a growing company like Beauty Best where science truly marries skincare and where innovation seems to be part of the corporate culture. I am writing to introduce myself, and hopefully schedule a time where we might meet. Please let me share a few highlights of my background that you might find particularly interesting.

- Lead cross-functional teams through 3 new product launches/quarter, with strict budgets and timelines.
- Led the West Coast commercialization of the Home Health Clean Line, representing 10 products and \$3.5mil in pre-sales of 10 household products
- Developed and implemented scalable processes for a 6 company consolidation, resulting in increased efficiencies by over 30%

Whether you have an opportunity today or in the future, I believe there would be value in our meeting. I have taken the liberty of attaching my resume for your review, and will contact your office in a few days to see if we can find a convenient day and time to meet/speak.

Thank you in advance,

**LETTER 4**

Dear Bob:

I completely agree with you and the opinion you shared in last week's issue of Healthy Living magazine - our industry needs to be more accountable for our environmental impact. As head of strategic planning for a cosmetics firm, I commend your position and the way in which it was communicated.

I am writing to introduce myself, as I am keen to meet with organizations that seem to align with my own values in the hope that one day we might have an opportunity to work together. Having worked for XYZ on the greening of their product line, I am particularly intrigued by what I know about your organization and the article moved me to reach out to you. Please let me share a few highlights of my background that you might find particularly interesting.

- Bullet
- Bullet
- Bullet

I hope you agree there would be value in our meeting. I have taken the liberty of attaching my resume for your review, and will contact your office in a few days to see if we can find a convenient day and time to meet/speak.

**AFTER THE LETTER**

If you are like most people using direct mail, you will experience a sense of accomplishment when you send your letters — whether by email, by snail mail, or both. Sometimes, the amazing happens and you will hear back from the person you contacted requesting a meeting. Lucky you!

For the most part, you will be the one to do the follow up as promised, and in a few days the time comes to pony up and actually make that call. To ease that process, I am taking the liberty of attaching the next article in the series: Phone Skills for Life.



For more information about any aspect of job search, including how to follow up after sending a target letter, **contact us at [wendy@wenroth.com](mailto:wendy@wenroth.com) or make an appointment for personal coaching**

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