

# STEP III: The Search

By ROBERT B. NELSON

The third step, the job search, is the most important in the job hunt. Mistakes made during this step are responsible for more failures than any other mistake made in job hunting. The key to success is how you start.

The typical approach is to follow one or two job leads obtained from a secondary source such as a friend or a newspaper ad. These leads perhaps turn into an interview or two, but, more likely, they lead to rejections.

A rejection after you have raised your hopes and expectations can easily be taken too personally. After two or three rejections the job hunter typically becomes depressed, and after five or six doesn't even want to think ab-

out looking for a job, let alone actually continue to search. Suddenly, the existing job seems much more attractive than previously thought and the job hunter clings to it.

The alternative approach takes more initial effort, but is the key to getting the job you want. It involves pursuing not one or two leads, but 20 to 50 leads ... simultaneously. With this approach you develop your own network of job contacts from first-hand, primary sources.

Although most individuals you know will not be able to hire you, they will probably each know of two or three people who might have a position for you.

This process has several distinct advantages over the typical

approach. You will not only get a job, but you will probably get to choose between job offers. You will also keep busy while waiting to hear from different companies, and you will come to accept rejection as the employer's loss, not yours ("I didn't have time to interview with that company anyway.")

Networking also helps you learn more about your chosen profession because you talk to people already in it. It's an ideal chance to learn about problems, benefits and the future of the profession without yet risking a position in it. It's an excellent chance to answer questions you developed in Step I, in which you decided what you wanted to do.

After speaking with enough people you will become familiar

with the profession and its jargon and start to sound like you are a part of it. As if by magic, you suddenly become one of them — a professional in your chosen profession.

If you have been in the profession for a while and are looking for new opportunities at a higher level, contact senior professionals in your field; they may be people you briefly met at a conference or

through a professional association.

Ask them if they would be willing to meet to discuss your career. Most people would be flattered to be asked advice about your future and would be likely to remember you the next time an opening occurs. Ask these people for additional names to contact about your professional interests. Building your network is the name of the game!

## Job questions to be considered

**What is the purpose of a job search?** Surprisingly enough, not to get a job. A better initial objective is to learn as much as possible about your field of interest, the options available to you and to obtain as many interviews as possible.

**Who will hire me?** An employer will hire you if you can convince him or her that you can contribute toward achieving the employer's goals. Try to lower the employer's risk in taking a chance on you. In other words: what you can do and how good you are at proving it determines who will offer you a job.

**What do I say to people I don't know when I call them for the first time?** Try a variation on one of the following: "Hi, Mr. Smith. My name is ... I'm graduating from Podunk University in May of 198-, with a degree in philosophy. I wanted to find out about the services and products your business provides. Do you have a few minutes to talk?" Most people are willing to talk at least a few minutes about themselves and what they do.

**What if a secretary answers?** If you wish to speak to a specific person, ask for him or her by name. If the person is not there, ask when might be a good time to call again. Try not to leave a message when the person you are calling does not know who you are. If you do not have their name, ask: "Who is the appropriate person to speak to about the products and services of ... (company name)?" "Products and service" should be replaced with as specific an area of your interest as possible.

**Then what do I do?** Learn from them. Ask about their products and services. Ask their advice. Ask to send a resume. Seek additional names and resources. Thank them for assisting.

**What else do I need to know?** Take good notes and develop a good system of recording information. Indicate the times and dates of calls you made and responses you received.

**Is attitude important?** It is essential, especially when your abilities are unknown and your experience is light. Attitudes represented by initiative, enthusiasm, motivation, confidence and energy go a long way.

**Sounds like a full-time effort?** If you want to do it right, it is. A small sacrifice if a professional job is important to you. At the very least be ready to apply full effort when you will have the time — during vacation breaks, for instance. Have a resume drafted, start a list of leads, and be ready to go.

**Sounds like a game?** Right again. Make it fun. Also recognize that there are formal and informal games.

**Should I avoid personnel departments?** No. Just don't limit yourself to using them as your only method of searching.

**What is the informal game?** The one that really determines who is selected for jobs. Besides specific qualifications, it involves the right people liking you, lucky timing, setting your own rules, persistence and creativity.

**Why even bother with the formal game?** Because although it may not get you a job, it can prevent you from getting one. It is necessary to play both games.

**How do I get people to like me?** You can answer that easily with what works for you. Show interest in others and in their activities, be considerate and polite, flexible and grateful.

**What if I become discouraged?** Join the crowd. It's bound to happen. Just make sure that you are not doing the wrong things. Keep plugging, but be sure you are doing the right things. Make it fun; this is one of the few times in your life that you will be able to call people at random and talk about those things that most interest you.

**A final note...** Be careful not to exclude options or leads too soon. Even if you don't think you would like a particular job you've heard about, you can always refuse it after you have obtained an offer. The practice you'll receive in going through the entire process will be invaluable in fine-tuning your job-hunting skills for that one opportunity that you really want.

### SAMPLE RESUME

NAME  
ADDRESS  
PHONE NUMBER

<b>Professional Objectives:</b>	Corporate Management — Finance or financial management in a medium to large corporation that places special emphasis on personal development and individual performance.
<b>Education:</b>	BA, 1978, College, Major/Minor: Economics/Philosophy — Concentration on quantitative analysis, econometrics, and monetary policy. Moderate computer experience.
<b>Employment History:</b>	Wine Consultant, Surdyk's Wine and Spirits, Minneapolis, MN. Promoted almost immediately from mass merchandise to sales/customer relations in fine wine and cognac. Interface with all management.
<b>Present</b>	
<b>1977/78</b>	Student Housing Administrator, Office of Residential Life, College. As one of nine senior assistants to the Dean, I was solely responsible for managing two student residence facilities. Promotion from 1976/77 Resident Assistant position.
<b>1977 (Summer)</b>	Financial Analyst Intern, Dayton Hudson Corporation, Minneapolis, MN. The position included project responsibilities in both the Planning & Analysis and technical assignments involving financial analysis or competitive data manipulation.
<b>1977</b>	Intern, Community Development, City of St. Paul. Conducted a pre-audit review of the locally administered \$18 million Community Development Block Grant Program.
<b>1976/77</b>	Resident Assistant, College Worked directly under the dorm director as an associate staff member. Responsibilities included: ordering maintenance work, programming, and supervision of one floor of a dorm.
<b>Extracurricular Activities:</b>	1977/78 — Member, Omicron Delta Epsilon (National Economics Honor Society), Member, Board of Trustees Finance Committee, Member, Campus Media Board. 1978 — (Interim term) Computer Simulations of Econometric Models. 1977 — (Interim term) Management Seminar Group Leader. 1976 — (Interim term) Winter Camping and Environmental Education Group Leader. 1975 — Member, Selection Committee for a new Economics professor. 1974 — (Interim term) Student teaching — remedial reading.
<b>References:</b>	Recommendations and personal references are available from the College Department of Economics