

# Conscious Careering

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**Wouldn't it be nice if job leads started finding you, for a change? Take a few steps to increase your career visibility**

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If you've been paying attention, you've probably noticed by now that the majority of job opportunities in today's marketplace (and arguably the best positions) never see the light of day in published form. Instead, the top-quality leads are almost always filled via the "hidden" job market, completely off the radar screen, through the magic of networking referrals.

Tapping into this unpublished job market is not always easy, however, especially for people in a position of unemployment. Not only does the hidden job market tend to favor what are known as "passive" candidates—individuals who are currently working and not actively looking for new opportunities—but the process of networking, in general, takes time and isn't always immediately productive for folks who need to line up a paycheck within an accelerated time frame. These realities aside, both active and passive job hunters alike are well-advised to learn some of the emerging techniques available that can help a person increase their *visibility* in today's employment market. By making yourself more "findable" out there, you'll not only help inoculate yourself against the threat of potential job loss, but will greatly increase your odds of hearing about exciting opportunities that you wouldn't uncover anywhere else.

Along these lines, here are a few suggestions we'd encourage you to consider:

● **Get your profile out there on business networking websites.** The first step for anyone seeking to gain increased career visibility is to grasp at the low-hanging fruit: the growing array of business networking websites. Many recruiters now frequent these sites in order to scout for fresh candidates with the credentials needed to fit their active search assignments. In this respect, [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com) is probably the most active hub of this kind of activity, but savvy candidates should also consider getting involved with sites such as [www.ryze.com](http://www.ryze.com), [www.zoominfo.com](http://www.zoominfo.com), and [www.ziggs.com](http://www.ziggs.com). In each case, all you need to do is submit a profile outlining the highlights of your career history, making sure to include the keywords and competency areas most relevant to your ongoing career goals. Beyond that, it's totally up to you. You can dive in and get fully involved in each

site's complete functionality, or you can log off and walk away—confident that your profile will continue working for you behind the scenes.

● **Plug into the association circuit.** While cyberspace is gaining ground, there's still no substitute for physically getting out of the house and becoming a known quantity in your local business community. Involvement with trade associations and professional groups is one highly effective way to accomplish this, and with thousands of such organizations available to choose from, you should have no trouble finding a few you'd be willing to get involved with on a regular basis. And if you go the extra mile and volunteer as an officer or board member, your visibility will be greater, still.

● **Publishing and public speaking.** Want to become recognized as a "thought leader" in your given field or industry? If so, it's probably time to try your hand at writing, public speaking, or a combination of both. Pen an article. Sketch out a white paper. Or simply pick a topic that's near and dear to your heart and seek opportunities to blab about it at your local chamber of commerce and similar venues. After a few such efforts, you'll start to gain recognition as "God's gift to project management" or the "go-to consultant for business turnaround situations."

● **Ready to go for broke?** Ultimately, the leading-edge frontier of the career visibility and "personal branding" movement involves crystallizing your ideas into a personal website, on-line portfolio, professional blog—or perhaps all of the above. Some executives are even hiring consultants (at prices ranging from \$5,000 and up) to design complex packages of personal branding materials on their behalf, including video résumés. These types of commitments can eat up inordinate amounts of time and money, however, and at the present time, this level of self-marketing is probably not for everybody unless you're planning to make a living as an independent consultant. What's more, these methods can also hurt more than they help at times, since some employers find these efforts to be a bit over the top and feel they say more about the candidate's need for ego gratification as opposed to anything else.

In the end, it all comes down to how seriously you take your career and whether you're willing to take a number of proactive steps now in order to reap the benefits down the road. So consider trying out a few of these ideas—and when you start receiving regular calls from employers and recruiters, you'll thank yourself!

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