

Introverted Networkers

Many job seekers are frustrated in their networking activities because they feel intimidated about getting out and meeting new people. Their work has not required that of them up to this point in their careers. They have strong technical or administrative skills but little or no training in making and developing a network of business contacts.

The majority of good jobs will require some networking to get connected to the current staff inside the companies who will be doing the hiring. This throws cold water on the average job seeker in today's market. Is there any thing that an introverted job seeker can do to get some advantage on the extroverted one who makes friends of all they meets?

The first thing an introvert should do is question just how introverted they really are. Not all introverts wear bags over their heads in public. And not all extroverts love meeting all people all the time. So look into what things in the mind are causing networking paralysis. It may be that a little practice will break open the doors and release a whole new person on the dance floor.

Many people get into sales because it is often an easy port of entry into the job market. The pay is very low at first because it is based largely upon commission. There is a high turnover rate in the first years. The entry fee in low morale is high. Sales training normally focuses upon developing a mindset that helps one overcome the embarrassment of rejection. Those that stick to the process long enough usually become proficient at doing the basic mechanics of making phone calls, following up and following up and following up.

One of the most successful new car salesman in North Carolina is an introvert. At least that's the way he comes across. He is not mister glad hand. He does not go to mixers. He does not radiate confidence. He does not dominate the conversation. He is not the life of the party.

What is this introverts secret to success? He does what introverts do best. He keeps good records of his contacts and has a sound, long-term relationship with his customers. His secret is his thorough follow-up with those few who come into contact with him at his business and in his social life.

Whenever any one of his customers ever thinks of a car, they think of this low-key person. That's because he routinely makes contact with those he knows and who know him. There aren't many cold calls in his business. He keeps the old calls hot.

Introverts hate cold calls and meeting new people. Therefore, they need to use their talents in doing the nitty-gritty that extroverts detest. They need to stay in their secure home office and make calls to ac-

quaintances and get referrals from them to call others. They need to send copious thank you notes. They need to have a tickler file to make some form of contact with their precious few contacts on a routine basis.

Introverts read, gather more data and write more than extroverts. They like libraries and books; extroverts don't. Introverts tend to undersell themselves, not extroverts. These are big generalizations about types of people. However, the truth is that there are very few true, full-blooded introverts or extroverts. We are all hybrids.

We are often like chameleons, we adapt to the situation and environment around us. The labels we allow to be placed on ourselves need not become an excuse for performance in the job search. The hidden job market is the perfect place for the "quiet type". The level of competition is significantly less. The chance for one-on-one discussion is much greater. The hidden job market is where friends help friends. That is the perfect situation for someone who cherishes friends, for there are few of them for the quiet ones.

So look at this market as being one where the "thinkers" and "doers" actually have the upper hand. The door that needs to be opened is in the mind. And that will take some effort and practice. The failures will be temporary and the benefit to your working career will be immeasurable.

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