

## **Four Ways to Make a Personal Connection**

**How to put your own personal touch on job-search milestones and ensure that you're memorable.**

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As a recruiter and career coach, I'm shocked how often people conclude their entire job search can transpire in front of the computer as they become "masters" at applying for jobs.

The fundamental problem with this scheme? Systems don't get the jobs. People do! While the power of technology is immense, you cannot have the computer tethered to you every minute of your search campaign. You must push the edge of your comfort zone and demonstrate solid people skills. Whatever your professional discipline, if you are in a job-search mode, then you are currently in sales! That means you must be memorable.

Review open positions online and submit your resume to those positions, but be mindful of the personal touch.

From this point forward, you must look at yourself as a sales executive, and you must recognize that the only way to close the sale is by getting in front of the target company.

Consider these four points on how to use your personality to break through:

### **1. Scanner versus human**

The "human factor" wins. Writing your resume for a scanner is great, but without human interaction, the odds of your success are slim. Companies are looking for people who fit their corporate culture. Your next employer wants to hire someone who can be effective in the job, play for the team and drive results. It's not possible to assess all these attributes through an online, scan-able resume.

### **2. Facebook versus networking event**

You must get out of the house and engage with people on a different level. Staying cooped up at your home office in a T-shirt is unlikely to get you the job of your dreams. Job-support groups popping up all across the country can help get you connected to people of influence in your target companies. You will not know about these events and certainly will not get the right introduction by staying home.

Put on a suit and attend mixers or networking events in your local area.

### **3. LinkedIn references versus stimulating conversation**

You must try to do whatever you can to connect with people on neutral ground, where you can invest in the discussion and develop the relationship you need to advance your efforts. Common wisdom dictates, "You become most like the people with whom you surround yourself," so it's critical that you think about some of the most successful people in your network who you can take to lunch or coffee. Senior-level leaders love to help people, and they usually enjoy getting to know more in a casual, yet professional setting.

#### 4. E-card versus Hallmark

Your human touch is manifest when you reach out to thank someone in the form of a hand-written card. As leaders at some point in our career, we have put the invoice to the side while we quickly open the envelope that looks like it might be a card or an invitation. The same is true of the hiring manager or people of influence in your last interview. You must send a hand written thank you card.

In today's saturated market, it's important to realize that you're competing for attention in a field full of contenders. That means you must take immediate steps to set yourself apart in the selection process.

Use personal touches. Do something that someone would say is "very you." Be human. You must be the champion in raising the bar of excellence, and you never want to be the person worrying about the bar someone else has set! If you define the standard and set realistic expectations along the way in remembering to inject the "human factor" into your search strategy, you are making great strides setting yourself apart in the process.

Go get 'em!

*Dean Tracy is a professional recruiter, public speaker and career coach based in northern California with an emphasis on placing and coaching professionals at a national level. He is the founder of the National Leadership & Career Management Advisory Group and also serves on the Leadership Team for Job Connections, which is recognized as one of northern California's largest and most reputable professional networking groups.*