



HOW TO FIND A JOB (yes, even now)

MEET NINE WOMEN WHO
RECENTLY LANDED TERRIFIC
POSITIONS. THEN TRY THEIR
WINNING STRATEGIES YOURSELF.



"I USED MY ALMA MATER'S ALUMNI SERVICES."

YOU CAN GET HIRED

There's no sugarcoating it: Today's job market is daunting, with about six applicants for every open position. Read on to learn how you can be The One.



"I gave speed-networking a try."

Meryl Steinberg

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Human-resources and payroll-benefits coordinator.

HOW SHE DID IT: Following a year of unemployment, Meryl snagged a job thanks to 30 bucks and a few hours in a bar. After nearly two decades as the benefits manager for the National Basketball Association, in New

York City, Meryl, 54, was laid off in the fall of 2008. Traditional job hunting turned up nothing, so a fellow unemployed friend suggested that they check out a high-speed-networking event (sponsored by Networking for Professionals, a local organization), in which 30 or so businesspeople meet clients, one-on-one, for five minutes at a time. Shortly after the function began, Meryl met Shannon Walker, manager of board relations and stewardship for the nonprofit organization Madison Square Boys & Girls Club. "I noticed her friendliness, determination, and extensive experience," says Walker. She forwarded Meryl's résumé to her boss, and just over a month later Meryl was employed once again. "Everyone else at the event had a job and was selling a product, but I didn't feel out of place," says Meryl. "I was there to expand my circle and network."

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ Prepare a 15- to 30-second bio beforehand. "Be sure to include your profession and a recent project or accomplishment that you're proud of," says Caroline Ceniza-Levine, a New York City-based coach with SixFigureStart, a career-coaching firm.
- ▶ Hand out business cards printed with your name, phone number, and e-mail address and a generic title of the position you're looking for, like "marketing executive" or "accountant."
- ▶ Find out what the next step is if you feel you've made a connection. Be clear about when you're going to follow up and whether an e-mail or a phone call is preferred.

Jenny Best

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Director of Internet marketing and sales.

HOW SHE DID IT: When Jenny was laid off from her interactive-marketing job in May 2009, her good friend and former college roommate Kathy gave her one piece of job-seeking advice: "Call the alumni career office!" (Kathy had done that back in 1987—when they were graduating from Lehigh University, in Lehigh, Pennsylvania—and had an offer before graduation.) One week later, Jenny, 44, sat in Lehigh's Alumni Career Solutions Office as Lori Kennedy, director of alumni career solutions, made suggestions for strengthening her résumé and refreshed Jenny's memory on interviewing techniques, since she hadn't interviewed in eight years.

Jenny returned to her West Chester, Pennsylvania, home armed with a specific plan: to update her profile on LinkedIn.com, an online professional networking site; compile a list of possible local employers; spend six hours a day job searching; and check in regularly with the career office. The plan worked. Within two months, she had two job offers. She is now working for a Philadelphia-based medical-publishing company, and like Kathy, she can't recommend the alumni career office strongly enough. "People pay thousands of dollars for the support that I received for free," she says.

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ Check out your alma mater's website to see what career services are available to alumni. If you don't live near the campus, "chances are, you can still work remotely through phone appointments or Web seminars," says Kennedy.
- ▶ Don't show up empty-handed. Have a résumé drafted and ready for critique. Bring all your job-search materials—what you've tried, whom you've spoken to—so the office can help you move forward.
- ▶ Network through your alumni association. "Most have a database of alumni contact information that you can search by specific company or industry," says Kennedy. Or attend an alumni event. "You could meet someone at a tailgate party who is looking to hire," says Kennedy.



"I found work through a transitions group."



"I PUT AN AD ON FACEBOOK."

Marian Schembari

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Book publicist.

HOW SHE DID IT: When Marian, 23, graduated from college in May 2009, she hoped to work in publishing. Inspired by a book she had read about "guerilla marketing" (a.k.a. unconventional self-promotion), she posted

ads for a job she wanted on Facebook, using the site's template and targeting users who had disclosed in their profiles that they worked for a major New York City publisher. Alongside a smiling photo of herself, the headline read, I WANT TO WORK AT... and the name of the publishing house listed in the user's profile. Those who clicked on the ad were taken to Marian's résumé, which she says received more than 700 views in two weeks. Not long afterward, she landed a gig at a boutique publishing firm. She has since moved on to become a freelance social-media consultant, and she credits the ads with giving her a career boost. "It was an attention-getting tactic," she admits. "But I needed to take a risk to land the position I wanted."

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ Be succinct. You have only 160 characters to work with in a Facebook ad.
- ▶ Project a professional appearance. Include a photo of yourself in interview attire, says Mauri Schwartz, president of a San Francisco-based career-management firm.
- ▶ Take a more conservative route if you're looking for a job in finance, government, or education. E-mail potential employers a link to your résumé on LinkedIn.

"I USED AN ONLINE JOB CLEARINGHOUSE."



Clarissa Murphy

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Interactive project manager.

HOW SHE DID IT: Dire economy or not, Clarissa, 30, was so unhappy at her job as a Web manager for an entertainment network in the summer of 2008 that she vowed to find a new position. She posted her résumé on 10 websites—both big (Monster.com) and small (nextny.org, a local job site). "I frequently fine-tuned the wording of my objective and reloaded my résumé every three

months," she says. "That kept it in the 'updated' section employers supposedly look at first." She got some interviews but no offers. Then, last December, a recruiter for WPP, one of the world's largest media communications agencies, noticed Clarissa's résumé on Monster.com. After an interview, Clarissa was hired. "Monster made the initial connection," she says. "Then I used my personality and industry knowledge to get the job."

Rachel H. Javanovic

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Human-resources generalist.

HOW SHE DID IT: After being let go in the spring of 2009, Rachel wasn't sure where to turn. Then she learned about Crossroads Career Network, a national nonprofit Christian ministry with an emphasis on job counseling, which had a chapter nearby at Grace Church, in Eden Prairie, Minnesota. "At a challenging time, it was comforting to be with people who shared my Christian beliefs and who provided smart advice," says Rachel, 27. The meetings were so helpful that she signed up for an intensive group that met weekly and covered different topics, including effective networking and interview do's and don'ts. Rachel says her dedication—and great qualifications—caught the eye of one of the group's leaders. When a spot in that woman's medical-device company opened up in December, she suggested Rachel. Now happily employed, Rachel mentors job seekers: "I help people boost their confidence so they're ready to get back into the fray."

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ If your place of worship has a career-transition group, sign up, says Brian Ray, an executive-search consultant and a founder of the Crossroads Career Network (crossroadscareer.org). If not, find a nearby institution that offers one (most don't require you to share their religious beliefs). Look for a group that focuses on finding a job, not one that just offers moral support.
- ▶ Connect with group leaders after meetings and ask them to help you set up an action plan.

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ Use free job-searching sites, like SimplyHired.com and Indeed.com, says Cheryl Palmer, president of a résumé-writing firm in Washington, D.C.
- ▶ Incorporate keywords that come up in job postings into your résumé, such as "customer relations," if you're in sales.
- ▶ Post multiple versions of your résumé, with each version focused on the pertinent skill set for a specific type of job.



"I REGISTERED WITH A TEMP AGENCY."



"I turned my volunteer job into a real one."

Margaret White

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Nonprofit program manager.
HOW SHE DID IT: Stuck in a "directionless" job search after leaving law school in 2007, Margaret felt on many days that it was useless to get out of bed. By the end of 2008, she needed to plug herself into something positive. And so she called

the New York City headquarters of Step Up Women's Network, a nonprofit that connects female mentors with underserved teenage girls. Margaret, 32, had attended the group's events previously. "I asked to volunteer, even if I was just collating papers," she says. Within five months, what started out as work on an "as needed" basis turned into a full-time gig helping Step Up's program manager. (Margaret's family lent her money to pay her expenses.) "I loved being productive," says Margaret, who helped run meetings, made presentations, and trained other volunteers. In February, the program manager left, and Margaret was perfect for the role. "Margaret delivered day after day as a volunteer, so I knew she would be a great hire," says Jenni Luke, Step Up's executive director. "And she is."

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ Offer to speak at Rotary Clubs, schools, book clubs, and other events on behalf of the organization, says Mei Cobb, vice president of volunteer engagement for United Way Worldwide. "People at nonprofits are passionate about what they do and will take note when you help recruit."
- ▶ Don't immediately announce you're hoping for a paid position. "That's like starting a new job and declaring on your first day that you want to run the place," says Cobb.

"I POSTED MY RÉSUMÉ ON CRAIGSLIST."

Liora Stein

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Strategic business and product-development consultant.
HOW SHE DID IT: Over the years, Craigslist.com had been good to Liora. She had found ride shares, scored free furniture, and even met her fiancé, Louis, there. And so, last spring, when she moved from Atlanta, where she owned her own business, to Brooklyn, she posted her résumé on Craigslist's New York site. Her post, titled HEALTH-CARE PRODUCT EXECUTIVE LOOKS FOR ASSIGNMENT, went up at 11 P.M. on a Sunday. By the next morning, the CEO of a medical-supply company in Brooklyn had looked at Liora's résumé and responded, asking for her salary requirements. When Liora, 47, left the subsequent interview, she was elated. Not only was her potential employer amenable to her traveling frequently back to Atlanta, where her three children live with her ex-husband, but the office was also easily walkable from her new apartment. "People think Craigslist is the unlikeliest place to look for a legitimate, good-paying job," she says, "but this position was everything I had hoped for and more."

Bernadette Penick

THE JOB SHE LANDED: University faculty assistant.
HOW SHE DID IT: After being downsized in early 2009 from the administrative-assistant position she had held for a decade at a New Jersey newspaper, Bernadette was distraught. Through chatting with former coworkers, Bernadette, 40, realized that most of the available openings appeared to be through temporary-staffing agencies. In spring 2009, she registered with a few near her Lawrenceville, New Jersey, home. Just days later, the mother of three interviewed with Princeton University, and she soon began temping in the ecology and evolutionary-biology department. She made herself invaluable by "staying late to assist my office manager, agreeing to take on projects, and always being calm, friendly, and punctual," she says. No surprise that when the position became permanent, this past February, she got it.

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ Register with a minimum of two temp agencies a week, until you're signed up with each one in your area or until you get work.
- ▶ Act as if you're a permanent employee: Get up from your desk, introduce yourself, and become a recognizable face in the hallway, says Joanie Ruge, senior vice president of Adecco, which staffs businesses worldwide.
- ▶ Keep up with the latest news by setting a Google Alert (google.com/alerts) for the company's name or the industry.

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ List your résumé only in the Resume section, not in the Jobs Discussion Forum or in Gigs. Employers won't find it in those areas.
- ▶ Never include a cell-phone number or an exact home address. Remember: Anyone can look at your listing. Instead, set up a dedicated voice-mail number for your work calls.
- ▶ Represent yourself professionally. No creative spelling or impassioned pleas, says Palmer.



"I WROTE A KILLER COVER LETTER."

Lisa Ferraro

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Website publicist and marketing director.

HOW SHE DID IT: "I've recently discovered your website and I've fallen in love..." So

began the letter that nabbed Lisa, a 47-year-old stay-at-home mom of three in Manhasset, New York, a job after 12 years out of the workforce. Last fall, Lisa, who paints as a hobby, stumbled upon an online gallery called Dailypainters.com; she loved the artwork sold there and began to buy pieces regularly from the site. Then one day she realized that the website she was talking up to all her friends could give her the perfect opportunity to meld her background in marketing with her passion for art.

When her kids were at school, Lisa wrote an e-mail to the gallery's owner. She deliberately chose a provocative subject line ("A proposition") so her message would be opened, then described how she had purchased pieces and looked forward to the site's daily e-mail newsletter. After a brief overview of her experience, Lisa cut to the chase: "I think your website could get more publicity, and now is the time to do it." She offered to work for free on a trial basis for several weeks to show she could get results. "The honesty in her e-mail was appealing," says gallery owner Micah Condon, who replied in less than two hours. "The best part was that I didn't have to go looking for the perfect person—she came to me!" Lisa now works for the site part-time from home. "It doesn't feel like work," she says, "since I'm pursuing something I love."

MAKE THIS STRATEGY WORK FOR YOU

- ▶ Start off strong. Use an enthusiastic tone, and lead with a recent significant achievement or a glowing endorsement. "Incorporate relevant quotes from a written recommendation that you've received," says Wendy Enelow, a coauthor of *Cover Letter Magic* (JIST Works, \$19).
- ▶ Indicate that you're familiar with the business and its specific needs. Refer to recent company news or cite information from the job posting.
- ▶ Use HTML code or hot links in your letter when sending it via e-mail. Then a potential employer can click through to your blog, LinkedIn profile, or online work.

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AFTER JOB LOSS: A FRESH START

In our June 2009 issue, *Real Simple* profiled five women who had been laid off during the recession. Fortunately, several have since found employment. Here's how two of them started pulling down a paycheck again.



Rhonda Williams

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Independent sales and marketing coordinator.

HOW SHE DID IT: Last spring, Rhonda was worried about making her mortgage payment and apologizing to her two sons that they couldn't go out for burgers. After being let go from an Orange County, California, technology incubator, Rhonda, 42, wondered if she could make it as a freelancer. The answer was yes. In March, a former coworker told Rhonda that her new employer was looking to hire someone with Rhonda's qualifications. She immediately sent in a résumé and nailed the interview; she's now under contract, working full-time. "I had the years of experience behind me, I understood the company and its goals, and I knew I could do this," she says. Rhonda and her husband are back on track financially, too (minus the hit her credit report took when they made one late mortgage payment). She says, "I'm so fortunate and blessed to be working."



Janice Goldklang

THE JOB SHE LANDED: Publishing editorial director.

HOW SHE DID IT: In January 2009, Janice, 55, found herself abruptly downsized after a 30-year career at a New York City publishing house. "I don't know how to describe myself anymore," she said to *Real Simple* at the time. This dark chapter in the married mother of three's life came to a close last October, when a head hunter called Janice about a position at Globe Pequot Press, a trade publisher in Guilford, Connecticut. "At first I wasn't going to consider the job because it was so far away, but I'm glad I gave it a second thought," says Janice. "It has turned out to be a nice fit." Despite the tiring 150-mile round-trip commute from her Pelham, New York, home, Janice says, "the people are wonderful; the town is bucolic. It's the antithesis of where I was before, and maybe just what I needed."