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"One organization with a long record of success in helping people find jobs is The Five O'Clock Club."

FORTUNE



Successful Job Hunters Demonstrate The Art and Science of Networking

by David Madison, Ph.D., Director, The Five O'Clock Club National Guild of Career Coaches



Alan Rothman described his successful search to 200 HR professionals

ogy. But as a result of a restructuring, my job was eliminated, and the firm sent me to The Five O'Clock Club for outplacement, as a part of my severance package. My job was over on a Friday and I started attending the Club the following Wednesday."

Effective networking goes far beyond telling as many people as you can that you're out of work.

Alan was not only eager to attend; he worked the Club's methodology enthusiastically. "Alan was thorough in his assessment," points out one of his coaches Ruth Robbins. "He worked hard on our two primary assessment exercises, the Seven Stories and the Forty-Year Vision. So he was able to articulate his strengths and accomplishments, and he pulled together a clear vision of where he wanted to go—which meant that his Two-Minute Pitch to use on interviews was brilliant." "Actually," Alan admits, "my Seven Stories became fifteen stories,

because of what I had done in my work life—and how I wanted to position myself."

The Club has always stressed with job-hunters that networking and direct contact are the two most effective ways to generate interviews. But effective networking goes far beyond telling as many people as you can that you're out of work. Alan's approach to networking turned out to be a blend of science and art. "I made a list of all the people I knew and all of the people I wanted to know. I used the Club's techniques for targeting exactly where I wanted to be, what I needed to say and how to position myself. I created an Excel spreadsheet, and saved every imag-



One of Alan's Five O'Clock Club career coaches, Ruth Robbins

Keeping Networking Metrics on Excel

What kind of a career can be built on having both a law degree and an MBA? While there might be many possibilities, Alan Rothman has followed a unique path. "I am a non-practicing attorney with an MBA, so I ended up working for a large law firm in its marketing and business development department. It really was an intersection of law and technol-

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inable bit of information I had gleaned from anyone. I had also created a network diagram illustrating who knew who. Some people turned out to be hubs, other people were the spokes. Knowing that a lot of people knew each other helped clarify my targets and advanced my search.”

Alan also saw the value of enhancing his résumé—and thus his pitch—even as he was between jobs. “I did *pro bono* work for Legal Services of New York. It was actually a legal technology project. This made it possible to say on interviews, ‘This is what I’m doing at the moment.’”

Ruth was impressed with Alan from the outset. “I liked his energy and enthusiasm, his talents and his smarts. He not only read the books, he imbibed them. He absorbed them—he took his job search to the next level.” The night before the interview that resulted in his job offer, Alan was reading about interview techniques in *Mastering the Job Interview and Winning the Money Game*. “I plucked out one great nugget of wisdom. When I was asked, ‘Do you have any ques-



Anita Attridge, Alan's other Five O'Clock Club Career Coach

tions?’ I said, ‘On my first day of work here, what will you consider important? What are your priorities?’ I think that tipped it in my favor.” Alan was hired for a role in knowledge management. “We capture as much information as we can about lawyers’ expertise at the firm. We analyze it, we leverage it and redistribute it all sorts of ways.”

While Alan worked with Ruth Robbins for private coaching, he attended the weekly small group lead by another senior coach, Anita Attridge—and he brought all of his energy and enthusiasm to the group as well, which

is a key factor in achieving job-search success as rapidly as possible.

Don't Give Up When You Hear “We're Not Hiring Now”

When Shahzad Hasan was laid off after working at a major bank for four years, he admitted that he was very depressed—but most of that feeling evaporated once he got to the Club, upon the recommendation of a friend, and saw that he needed to treat job search like any work-related



Shahzad Hasan was businesslike about his search

project. His coach Harriet Katz noted that Shahzad was, “Very business-like. He read the books, took the methodology to heart and organized his efforts.” As Shahzad says, “I took charge of the process. I was very disciplined about it. My goal was to spend seven or eight hours a day on my job search, talking to people, sending out résumés, finding more people to contact, researching on the Internet. There were days when I didn't feel like doing anything, but I forced myself to do something for at least two or three hours a day.”

“I made a spreadsheet of all the people I talked to, and saved every imaginable bit of information.”

Very focused on his goal of finding a job at a hedge fund, Shahzad asked former clients and colleagues, friends and neighbors if they knew of people who worked for hedge funds. “I made a spreadsheet of all the people I talked to, took very good notes on what we talked about. I followed up on time, sent them emails, talked to them again.” All of this activity put him in touch with a manager at one of the hedge funds on the top of his list. “One of the first things I heard was, ‘Well, we're not hir-

ing.’ This might have been the end of the conversation, but Shahzad was ready with this Two-Minute Pitch. I said, ‘This is what I've done, this is what



Harriet Katz, Five O'Clock Club Career Coach

I'm looking for, and I'd just like to chat with you—if you could give me some advice on my job search, especially about some of the other hedge funds on my list.’ The manager was willing to help and suggested other people that I could talk to, and said, ‘Best of luck.’”

“The Club approach made sense. I did a 180-degree change, starting with assessment and lots of research.”

Shahzad had planted the seed. Not only had he sent the message, loud and clear, about his own talents, but it was obvious, from his go-getter attitude, that he might soon be hired by another hedge firm. Just two weeks later he got a call from the fellow who had wished him good luck: “We've decided to hire someone. We'd like you to come in for an interview.” His Two-Minute Pitch had made an impression! His first interview was followed a week later by the final interview. “I met with everyone, and it went very well.” A couple of weeks later the offer came on a Friday — and Shahzad started his new job the following Monday.

He had attended four sessions at the Club's Grand Central Branch.

Another Right Way to Make the Most of Networking

If you've been lucky in job search in the past, this really doesn't mean that you're good at job hunting. When Amanda arrived at the Club, she con-

fesses that she had been frantically trying to find a job for several months. What used to work for her wasn't working any more. "I was beginning to see that all my old techniques weren't getting me anywhere. In the past I'd looked on specialized websites, submitted my résumé, and that was it. Something usually came through."

"I forced myself to do something for at least two or three hours a day."

Having read about the Club in an article, she decided to give it a try. "Everything I learned here made sense. But I had to do a 180-degree adjustment. I did a lot of self assessment and a lot of research." Complicating her situation in this new search was her desire to move out of not-for-profit back into a role in healthcare—in some capacity. "All of the people in my small group kept talking about informational interviews, and that was something I wasn't used to. But once I forced myself to do it, the methodology began to really come alive for me." Amanda made her lists of contacts in her target areas, made the calls and asked for informational meetings. "These meetings just kept leading to more and more things—others to talk to, job possibilities to explore. People would say, 'Have you thought about this?' and 'Here are three people you should call.' In fact, there was a downside—I ended up with too much information. It was overwhelming."

But the abundance of information turned out to be a key factor in helping Amanda land the interview that resulted in her new job. She saw a job posted on a hospital website, but in submitting her résumé she mentioned three people she was sure that the HR officer would know—three people whom she'd come

across in her networking interviews. "Even if you spot a job posting that you think you're perfect for, having all the right credentials doesn't get

you in. Providing known references right at the start can give you a boost." And Amanda outclassed the competition through the whole process, landing a job as Assistant Director of Chronic Care Coordination.

Amanda's coach at the Club was Chip Conlin, one of our branch managers. "You can see that Amanda combined techniques," Chip points out. "She responded to an ad on the Internet—which is something she had done in the past. But she was successful this time because she moved out of her comfort zone. She got out there and networked. She met people who made the difference when it came to getting the attention of the hiring manager." ●



Chip Conlin, Five O'Clock Club Career Coach



"Having past accomplishments on your resume is fine. However, a smiley face in kindergarten might be going a little too far back."

The Job-Search Buddy System

Do you wish you had someone to talk to—fairly often and informally—about the little things?



"Here's what I'm planning to do today in my search? What are *you* planning to do? Let's talk tomorrow to make sure we've done it." You and your job-search buddy could keep each other positive and on track, and encourage each other to do what you told the small group you were going to do: Make that call, send out those letters, write that follow-up proposal, focus on the most important things that should be done—rather than (for example) spending endless hours responding to job postings on the Web.

With your buddy, practice your Two-Minute Pitch, get ready for interviews, bounce ideas off each other. Some job-search buddies talk every day. Some talk a few times a week. Most of the conversation is by phone and e-mail.

Sometimes, people match themselves up as buddies. Just pick someone you get along with in your small group. Sometimes, your coach can match you up. However you do it, stay away from negative people who talk about how bad it is out there. They will drag you down.

The small group changes over time: people get jobs; new people come in. If you lose one buddy who got a job, get another buddy.

Your buddy does not have to be in your field or industry. In fact, being in the same field or industry could keep you focused on the industry rather than on the *process*. But you *do* have to get along! The relationship may last only a month or two, or go on for years. Some buddies become friends.

Of course, you should see your Five O'Clock Club career coach *privately* for résumé review, target development, salary negotiation, and job interview follow-up. It's usually best to get professional coaching advice for these areas. ●