

Playing Hide and Seek with Contacts

A friend of the family was recently planning her daughter's seventh birthday party and found herself faced with a frustrating problem. She had been unable to locate the party supplies themed with her daughter's favorite television show, and her daughter refused to choose another character theme. She complained to a colleague at her office about the problem. The conversation was overheard by another employee whose neighbor had thrown the same themed birthday party over the weekend for her own daughter. My friend was given the neighbor's email address, and after a quick note and a friendly telephone conversation was led to a graphic designer able to produce personalized supplies for a very reasonable price. She ended up throwing her daughter's dream birthday party and received compliments about her party favors, *plus* she turned around and sent a handful of referrals back to that graphic designer.

How often have you assumed you were stuck with a problem because you had no one to help? How much more would you accomplish if you knew that a friend-of-a-friend had the solution? Often your answer is a few closed doors down the hallway, and all you have to do is knock on one to gain entry to the next.

We've used this month's newsletter to focus on the idea of viewing your contact list as a starting point to a wealth of resources instead of the end-all-be-all. The idea of "six degrees of separation" is not a new one, but it's so often underappreciated. We hope you find inspiration to look to your own relationships as a source of the first degree; perhaps it will take some time to find your solution, but if you persist down the line, you may eventually find yourself led to your ultimate goal!

I have enjoyed "speaking" to many of you by way of your emails and comments on our site. Please continue to send feedback and article ideas for future issues to newsletter@flowork.com.



This month's FlowTIP:
Dig deeper with contacts.
See page 3 for more information.

What's New?

Dr. Hatala on Twitter

Want to stay up-to-the-minute with social networking news, tips, and ideas? Follow Flowork founder, Dr.

John-Paul Hatala, on Twitter! If you don't already have one, sign up for your own account at www.twitter.com, then search for *jphatala* and click on *follow*. You can also view Twitter updates on the Flowork homepage at www.flowork.com.



Dr. Hatala Blogging on ContactPoint.ca



Dr. John-Paul Hatala has been chosen as a Blogger on the popular career practitioner website, Contact Point, a multi-sector online community for professionals in the career

development field. To take a look, visit www.contactpoint.ca. Make sure you stop by soon and check it out!

Online Flowork Training Programs

Flowork is pleased to announce the release of two new online training programs; Social Capital Development Training and Strategic Job Search Management. Both of these programs are now available online at the Learning Community at Flowork. Flowork is also pleased to announce that if you are a non-profit, you can gain access to these training programs for your staff and clients free. Email us at onlinetraining@flowork.com to gain access to the training programs to see if they are right for your staff and clients.



Leveraging Social Media in the Job Search: *The Power of Online Connectivity*

More than ever before, the internet is a resource for accessing opportunities that drive an individual's career development. Websites like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn have provided an access point for individuals to tap into the social resources that exist on the internet. The key thing to remember, though, is that it is only access to the tools being provided, not a guarantee of results. Time, effort, and attention are all required, and doing the right things for the right reason is essential if a return on the investment is going to occur.

When thinking about the hidden job market it's important to spend some time helping the job seeker focus on the contacts in their network. A majority of contacts may not have the ability to make hiring decisions, so the individual may be wary of utilizing these relationships to further their career.

Remind them that these contacts also have relationships and contacts of their own that may connect them to the job-related information they seek. This is, after all, the true meaning of networking — and, in most cases, is also where the most credible job opportunities are found since the contacts are verifiable resources of information.

Leveraging social media as a viable job search tool can be a powerful vehicle for job seekers. The key to utilizing social media is to find a way to get an individual's existing connections to work for them. For example, they will want to spread the word to let people know that they are in the process of conducting a job search. That way, their contacts can keep a lookout for job opportunities on their behalf.

As long as the job seeker is clear on what type of information they are seeking, the possibility of contacts coming across helpful job-related information — and actually considering it for the job seeker's purposes — will dramatically increase.

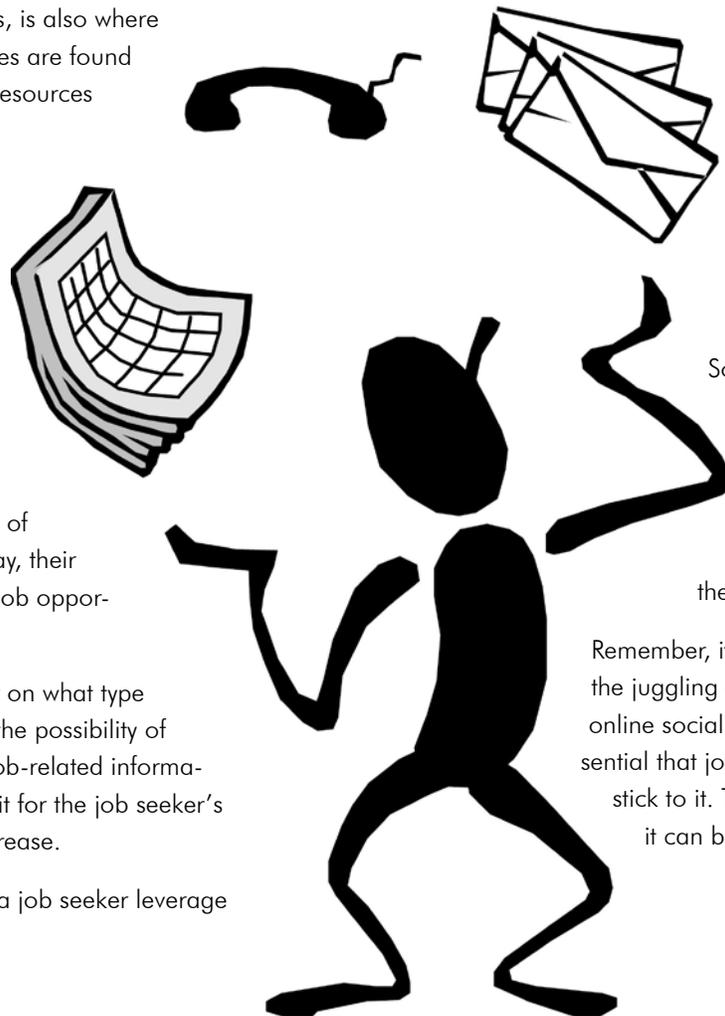
So here are four tips for helping a job seeker leverage the power of social media:

1. **Make sure they have a purpose.** In other words, ensure that they are aware of why they are visiting these sites in the first place. This will help them focus their message and increases the likelihood that someone will actually be able to help.
2. **Determine how they will measure success.** Are they seeking specific industry information, job leads, contacts? Once they determine what they are looking for they can easily see if the time they are spending is worth it.
3. **Figure out what they can offer.** Get the job seeker to think of things that they can contribute to their network. Perhaps they bring with them information on a particular industry or have a list of contacts they can share with others. Whatever it is, it is essential they have something to offer those who are willing to help.
4. **Don't worry about the numbers.** It's not how many friends or followers they have on the social networking web-

sites that matters. It is much more important to focus on the quality of the individuals with whom they are connected, and on how they are able to leverage those contacts to help them. Reminding them that the actual job leads are usually beyond the first or second degree of separation.

Social media can be intimidating even in the best of times. But if job seekers follow the four tips presented here, they can start off on the right foot and think strategically about their approach.

Remember, it takes time — and is often quite the juggling act — to tap into the power of online social networking websites. It is essential that job seekers develop a plan and stick to it. They'll be surprised how powerful it can be.



Six Degrees of Separation

Is It the Key to the Hidden Job Market?

In 2003, research emerging out of Columbia University finally corroborated the age-old notion of “six degrees of separation” as legitimate, suggesting we are all much more connected than we realize.

In the face of increasingly negative media reports respecting the present economic situation, should we embrace this logic in seeking employment?

It has been said that 80% of jobs are hidden. In other words, there may be job opportunities available with contacts (or byway of a contact’s contacts) within an individual’s network. This clearly valuable information is often missed by job seekers. After all, with the rise in popularity of “cyber” social networking sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and MySpace, the focus has been increasingly on establishing new connections. Ironically, though, as most of us focus on expanding our list of contacts, we have little awareness that our own circle of friends and family could potentially offer a veritable wealth of job-related resources.

Thus, if the science supporting “six degrees of separation” is true, we must find ways to help not only job hunters, but employment agencies, government program managers, HR professionals, and recruiters alike.

Flowork founder Dr. John-Paul Hatala suggests that few of us know how to truly tap into our existing social network and gain access to that elusive hidden job market. “There are several research-supported solutions,” he says, “which can arm the newly unemployed with the know-how and confidence needed to make headway in the face of an increasingly daunting job-search.”

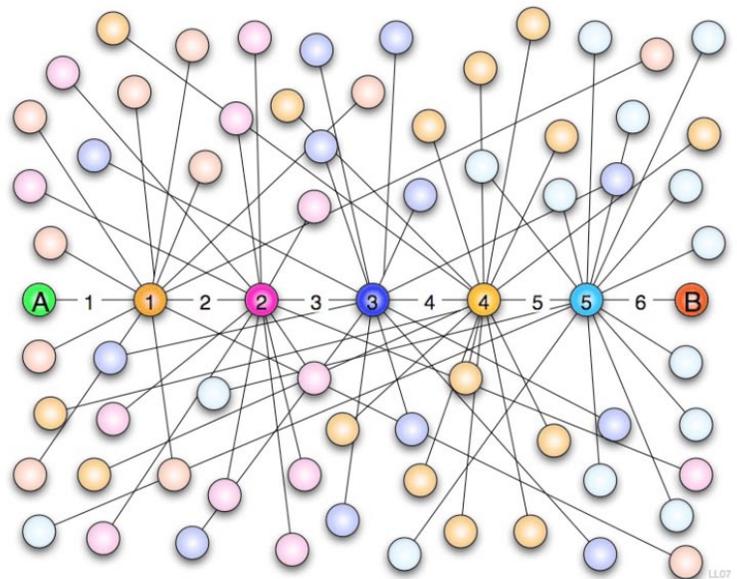
Dr. Hatala’s research and associated training programs reveal that the main challenge facing job seekers, in terms of leveraging one’s own social network, is a profoundly yet deceptively simple one: *how to strategically use it.*

Indeed, most of us fail to think strategically about our social

networks, Hatala suggests. People do not know how to approach their circle of friends and broach the topic. The good news, Hatala goes on to say, is that it is a trainable and learnable skill-set.

“Strategic social networking” then, will be a key for many of us these days, in order to penetrate what seems to an otherwise elusive, “hidden” job market. After all, the unemployment rate currently is the highest it has been for some time. By learning to leverage one’s social network, however, one can avoid becoming a statistic.

The answer, if the research is any indicator, may be less than six degrees away. It may be as close as your existing social network. According to Dr. Hatala, the necessary strategy and specific know-how in terms of how to leverage our social networks may thus be the distinguishing factor which determines the success of some job hunters versus others, vis-à-vis this “hidden” job market that so many of us are now facing.



This Month’s flowTIP:

Dig deeper with contacts. The likeliness of approaching someone for information and actually getting what you seek is probably a 50/50 proposition. It’s more likely that the contact knows someone that can help (versus them being able to help on their own). This is a very important point to remember. The fact that someone can’t help you doesn’t necessarily mean you should walk away. If you find that they cannot help, ask them if they know anyone that might. If they say yes, ask for a referral or introduction. On the surface it may appear that you only know a few individuals, when in fact you may be connected to hundreds of helpful resources. It’s not just who **you** know, but also who your **contacts** know that is important.

Social networking is job networking, experts say

From PressOfAtlanticCity.com • By Courtney McCann, Staff Writer • Posted Monday, April 20, 2009

Preston Porter joined MySpace four years ago as a way to meet new people at The Richard Stockton College of New Jersey in Galloway Township.

Now a college senior, Porter is using MySpace, Facebook, Twitter and other social networking programs just to get a job.

"I understand (social networking) in an organic sort of way. I've always participated in and enjoyed those types of things," said Porter, 22, of Lavalette, Ocean County. "Now it's turned into this whole industry thing where companies are using it to market themselves and to do job searches."

Rather than condemning Facebook and Twitter as a waste of time, college career counselors are touting them as useful tools when it comes to post-collegiate job search.

Every little bit helps, especially in today's job market. A recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers, or NACE, reported that companies will be hiring 22 percent fewer college graduates this year than they did in 2008.

Career advisors at Stockton were inspired to start hosting workshops on Facebook job searching two years ago after attend a conference hosted by the NACE. There they learned that many businesses are setting up Facebook accounts and vetting prospective clients based on their profiles.

"Once we sat in on that, it was like, 'Wow, we've never really thought about this,'" said Walter Tarver, director of Stockton's career center. "We set up our own accounts to see what was going on with those sites. It was an eye-opening experience."

Now, when students show up at Stockton's career center for counseling, they get a crash course in Social Networking 101. Today's employers want to see everything about their future employees, from their job history to their tastes in books and music.

"We make sure they have (on their Facebook profiles) their degree, when they're graduating, what their interests are, as opposed to just the generic comments and 'What are you doing right now?,' updates," Tarver said.

Jennifer Gushue, an adjunct professor of marketing at Rowan University in Glassboro, Gloucester County, advises her students to use LinkedIn, a Facebook-esque site created primarily for networking and job searching.



"They can look at the contacts for people in the industries they're interested in," Gushue said. "You can also have your resume on there, and you can have former internships to write you recommendations."

Porter, who will graduate in May with a literature degree, took it one step further and created his own Web site, called Prestope-dia.com.

The Web site includes Porter's resume, contact information, blogs, short stories and links to his profiles on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and MySpace.

In his blog, Porter wrote about being inspired by media experts such as Dan Schawbel, whose new book, "Me 2.0: Build a Powerful Brand to Achieve Career Success," promotes using social media tools in building a career.

Despite his creative writing background, Porter views social networking as his best chance of landing a job after graduation. He spent the summer setting up a viral campaign for a pet store in Missouri as an internship, and he continues to study the

marketing efforts of major companies to learn what works and what does not.

"A lot of PR companies claim to understand how the social media market works, but unless you live on those social media sites and know what to do and not to do, it's tough," Porter said. "A lot of companies are missing this, and that's where I think I can come through on the creative writing side of it."

Porter has tried pushing his friends in a similar direction, advising them to update their Facebook pages or start a blog. But he has found that some still do not believe that companies put much stock in social networking.

"I think a lot of people are ignoring this fact, thinking, 'Employers aren't going to look at my Facebook. They're not going to bother looking at my Twitter,'" Porter said. "But whether you want to participate in it or not, it's important to at least realize that employers are looking at this."

In that same vein, career counselors are advising students to keep inappropriate content, especially photos, off their Facebook and MySpace pages.

"Companies now realize they can track your social media footprint," Gushue said. "If your Facebook profile is filled with illegal, inappropriate or unprofessional images or thoughts, that could hurt you."

Flowork offers the benefits of social capital to anyone of any age. The Education Flowork Program offers educational institutions (Kindergarten through higher education) to ensure their students, faculty and staff become aware of the power of information by networking. Corporate Flowork and the Flowork Workforce Development Program introduces corporations, non-profit organizations, government, and workforce development groups to ways they might increase the flow of information between individuals, departments, divisions and units. Floworks founder Dr. John-Paul Hatala is available for speaking engagements nationwide. If you are interested in booking him for an on-site speaking engagement, please call us at 1-877-flowork or visit www.flowork.com and click "contact us" to discuss your needs.



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