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## CAREER CONNECTIONS

# Your resume is not your job search

By Ashley Petry

For Custom Publications

When Staci Ruffino's position as an events manager was eliminated in March, she jumped into her job search with gusto. She sought assistance from a career coach, tweaked her resume and brushed up on her interviewing skills. She also started setting up lunch dates — meeting with anyone and everyone who might move her job search forward.

"The people with the best networks get jobs because they get information. It's not socializing. It's information exchange."

—Kathleen McDonald, Career Investments

as events and camp manager for the Riley Children's Foundation. Despite the tough economy, she'd been out of work only two months.

### The best impressions are made in person

It's tempting to conduct a job search by sitting at a computer, tinkering endlessly with resume fonts and perusing online job listings. But the most effective job seekers are more aggressive and adept at making face-to-face connections.

"In this age of electronic applications, people feel really powerless," said Kathleen McDonald, president and CEO of Career Investments, the career-coaching firm that guided Ruffino through her job search. "A lot of things are outside of your control, but you have to identify the factors that are within your control."

One of the biggest factors, of course, is your professional network. McDonald advises clients to map out their networking assets, identify weaknesses and proactively focus on filling those gaps.

"The people with the best networks get jobs because they get information," she said. "It's not socializing. It's information exchange."

### Branch out with your goal in mind

To expand your network, check out alumni organizations, professional organizations and industry-specific networking groups, and keep in touch with former colleagues and classmates. If you identify a specific gap in your network — for example, if you want to meet someone who works at a specific company — it's OK to make a cold call to a stranger.

"Use every place you go as a networking opportunity," said Megan Brinkman, a career counselor with WorkOne. "Whether you're at church or standing in line at the grocery store, let everyone know that you're looking for work."

Another key to an aggressive job search: Treat your search as a full-time job. Brinkman tells her clients to get up, get dressed and get out of the house — and conduct their job search from a WorkOne center or a neighborhood coffee house.

"When I see people putting three hours a week into a job search, that can't possibly be effective or competitive versus the person who's putting in 35 or 40 hours a week," Brinkman said. "We have people in here working on their job search from 8:30 to 4 every day."

Many of those aggressive job seekers also take advantage of free WorkOne workshops on everything from resume writing to interview skills — all opportunities to get ahead of the competition.

In the end, however, it's about who you know, so the most aggressive job seekers get to know as many people as possible.

"Reach out to people, even if they're not that close to you," Ruffino said. "Your network expands every time you get to know one person."

Contact Custom Publications at [indypubwriter@indystar.com](mailto:indypubwriter@indystar.com).



Staci Ruffino used lunch meetings to make connections while she was unemployed. It took her just two months to land a job as events and camp manager for the Riley Children's Foundation.

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