

## In with the New Job Search

BY ROBYN GREENSPAN AND MARJI MCCLURE

For many job seekers, it's a perfect storm of confusion: A struggling economic environment and ultra-competitive job market coupled with 21<sup>st</sup> century tools and resources that can stretch comfort zones. Then there are those who had previously answered the door when opportunities came knocking and now have to actively find new roles. In any case, job search has never required this level of planning and structure and purpose, says Bobbie LaPorte, a career coach with RAL & Associates, a California-based consulting firm that provides leadership and career development services.

While it's now common knowledge that the Sunday newspaper's classified ads are a prehistoric route to executive positions, there are other elements of job search that have been modernized too. ExecuNet has witnessed job search transformation over the last 22 years, and we've outlined the evolution for you.

### JOB BOARDS

**THE OLD WAY:** Scanning the online job boards for appropriate listings and mass emailing résumés to the companies advertising open positions.

**IT DOESN'T WORK BECAUSE:** The entire job search process is more competitive today and companies are inundated with résumés. Responding to job postings just yields a false sense of productivity for executives as they wait for companies to respond to their applications. Plus, ExecuNet research shows that positions with salaries over \$200K aren't posted online — mainly for competitive intelligence reasons. "As the number of available candidates has increased in the last 12 months, the number of posted executive (VP, Director) positions have gone down," notes a survey respondent.

*This is an excerpt from the ExecuNet full length article "In with the New Job Search" If you'd like to read the full article, [Upgrade Your Membership Now](#).*

*ExecuNet is a private network for high-level executives who believe the right connections, insights and market intelligence can lead them to the right opportunities. A recognized authority in executive recruiting and human capital, ExecuNet also provides access to confidential six-figure job opportunities and authoritative resources to help top executives advance their careers.*

**THE NEW WAY:** Use job postings to research industries and companies and gain insight into hiring trends. Posted job descriptions can also be useful in learning relevant industry keywords that will resonate with potential employers and recruiters.

Executive coaches Bob Sloane and Tucker Mays, co-founders of OptiMarket LLC, advise high-level job seekers to spend less than 10 percent of their time on published job postings. “As a hiring manager, the last thing I want to do during a downturn is advertise a position. I’ll get flooded with résumés,” says a survey respondent. “Someone who comes to me informally before I publish a job posting and tells me how I can solve problems I hadn’t quite formulated into a job description is likely to get the job without any job posting ever happening.”

## RÉSUMÉS

**THE OLD WAY:** Creating a document that only lists work experience and job history.

**IT DOESN'T WORK BECAUSE:** Traditional résumés often don’t provide a candidate’s true capabilities. If hiring managers can’t quickly discern the problems you can solve for their organization, your résumé is dismissed.

**THE NEW WAY:** Résumés need to be converted into a branding document that provides a complete picture of skills, capabilities, and a clear value proposition. Résumés need to include highlights of work experience and success stories. At the same time, the résumé needs to demonstrate what the executive can do for potential employers. “Make sure you’re giving them what I call the ‘wow’ — achievements that are going to make them say, ‘Wow, I’ve got to talk to this person,’” says résumé expert Louise Kursmark.

## NETWORKING

**THE OLD WAY:** Using job search as a catalyst to attend professional events, hand out business cards and ask for job leads.

**IT DOESN'T WORK BECAUSE:** It’s difficult to be memorable when you are merely exchanging business cards and not building relationships.

**THE NEW WAY:** The value of building relationships is undisputed: 73 percent of executives reported to ExecuNet that networking led them to career opportunities. “If you are someone like me, who hasn’t made networking a part of your day-to-day...change that, learn how,” says a survey participant.

The Internet has certainly changed the way networking is done. Developing connections with contacts via online social networks has quickly gained in popularity. Closed online communities, such as ExecuNet, enable executives to connect, share career and business information, and build trusted peer relationships. “Networking has provided leads to positions, new friends, an opportunity to help others and a way to retain and improve my professional and management skills,” says a survey respondent.

Gatherings, such as ExecuNet’s monthly regional meetings, are effective in cultivating connections with executives that can lead to mutually beneficial relationships. Regardless of whether you call your contacts, meet with them at business events or connect via online services, it’s important to regularly communicate with your contacts and find ways to help them reach their goals.

## INTERVIEWING

**THE OLD WAY:** An initial phone screening followed by a face-to-face meeting.

**IT DOESN'T WORK BECAUSE:** Interviews are no longer Q&A sessions with hiring managers; they are often a series of intense behavioral-based sessions with organizational decision-makers.

**THE NEW WAY:** Before the first contact, candidates and companies are researching each other. Executives are conducting extensive due diligence to target companies, identify their pain points and how they can best solve those problems, while talent managers are sourcing and tracking potential employees for their pipelines.

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

**THE OLD WAY:** Executives didn’t view their job search as a business development activity.

**IT DOESN'T WORK BECAUSE:** It gives the potential employer too much power, instead of the candidate being targeted and selective about the company worthy of their talent, leadership and strengths.

**THE NEW WAY:** Executives are skilled implementers of business development principles, as they are always keeping a watchful eye for mutually beneficial B-to-B and partnership opportunities. Job search is not any different, and executives need to view themselves as business partners seeking a new alliance. Conduct equally exhaustive due diligence and develop a comprehensive strategic plan for your six-figure job, just as you would for a multimillion dollar business deal.

## THE SKILL SET

**THE OLD WAY:** Current in-role performance was indicative of potential success at a new job. Organizations helped executives keep their skills sharp with leadership training programs and budgets for professional development.

**IT DOESN'T WORK BECAUSE:** There is a lot of “A” talent available in the marketplace, and more than half of search firm recruiters surveyed by ExecuNet thought companies would be leveraging the economic climate through the first half of 2010 by “trading up” with new hires for existing jobs. Cost-cutting has squeezed budget allocations for executive development.

**THE NEW WAY:** Executives are individually responsible for developing themselves into powerful talent packages. Self-directed continued learning to build strengths and update skills, supplemented with strong industry knowledge and market intelligence, integrated with the strategic vision to effectively lead organizations through current and future challenges, and the agility to quickly adapt to fluctuating conditions, is required. “There is still opportunity for executives who are proven problem-solvers,” says a survey participant. “These are people who can guide companies through very difficult times, using creativity, initiative and persistence.”

## OUT WITH THE OLD

If you’re just beginning your search, or if your current job search has stalled, now is the perfect time to try something new. A more aggressive, updated approach could be just what you need to jump-start your search and secure a new position soon — especially if your prior commitment to your job search hasn’t been as diligent as today’s challenging times require. Says one survey respondent, “My question to unemployed job seekers is: How bad does your situation need to be before you will be willing to try something different in your job-seeking techniques?”

For additional tips on how to succeed in today’s “new” job search, [Upgrade Your Membership Now.](#) ■