

Now what? A game plan for job seekers who have already tried everything

Written by Julie Desmond
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Sometimes I meet people who are really down on their luck. They've been out of work a while and feel their prospects are low. They can't see a way out, and yet, to me, the path is so clear it's practically paved in little yellow bricks. Recently, I talked with an engineer in just this situation. The game plan we came up with together is straightforward and simple and one you might want to try if you've already tried everything and still can't find a job.

Resume: It should be concise. What job do you want? Say so.

Target companies: Choose five or six companies that are large enough to hire frequently (maybe you've seen their ads or job postings) and then one or two very small firms that interest you for absolutely any reason. Maybe they make cool stuff or they are environmentally smart, for example. Make a commitment to follow these companies – request informational interviews, connect with people on LinkedIn who work at these places, and just generally keep them on your radar. You don't have to stalk anyone, but just maintain a high level of interest and knowledge in what they're doing, so if you do get an interview, you will be knowledgeable and confident going in.

Connections: If you have been looking for work for very long, people close to you might have forgotten what you're looking for. Develop a line or two (seriously, a two second commercial) that you repeat to everyone. "I want to be a fry cook." Or "I want to work at BigCo Labs." Or, "I want to get into medical device manufacturing." That's it. Then people will remember and think of you when something relevant comes up.

More connections: Join me on LinkedIn and look through my connections. If there's anyone in there you'd like to meet, let me know. I will gladly introduce you around. Especially look for recruiters; they know what's going on out there.

Projects: There's money in projects for people with certain skills. You can get started through temp agencies.

Relocation: If you can't find work here, perhaps your skills are more in demand in another part of the country. This gets complicated, but if you are willing to relocate, your range of possibilities grows exponentially.

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Finding work is hard work. It's sometimes tiresome and sometimes thankless. To have fun and be effective, seek out people and companies that are interesting to you. Continue to learn and connect and, yes, the job offers will find you.

Julie Desmond is a Contract Recruiter for a Fortune 500 company in Minneapolis. Write to julie@insightnews.com