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You do need a resume, and it has to be flawless. But its details matter less than ever if you are looking for work right now. Your resume today is a reminder for the person you interview with about things they already know, because they likely already know you through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, friends of friends or professional circles. Do not imagine for a minute that sending an unsolicited resume to a company is going to get you a job. It might, but there are other ways, and they are faster and more effective.

Like I said, you do need a resume. Write it, polish it, keep it current. But instead of an end-all, it is now a critical tool. Post it over your computer and log in to LinkedIn, Facebook and then Twitter. Create or edit your profile according to your resume. Get a lot of keywords in there, things that might nudge a manager into staying on your site a little longer.

Candidates often ask, Should I add a line in the profile indicating “open to new opportunities”? If you are unemployed, you have nothing to lose by putting it out there.

Join groups that make sense and participate in online conversations as often as you check in with neighborhood pals or family. This is work and it’s old-fashioned networking, but it guarantees you stay current with others out there who share your interests. When you contribute professional expertise, thoughts, plans or ideas that help others, or ask a question and follow up on people’s responses, then you can invite people to join your network. They will have some idea about who you are, or will check out your profile to find out. This brings you, job seeker, to the attention of other people who might know people who are hiring.

At this point, you may be asked to send a resume. You’re ready with the document you’ve already created. It is consistent with your online profile, so the hiring manager calls you in for an interview. In person, you can provide additional detail about your experience and expertise.

Another way to get in front of hiring managers is to start out in a temporary position. Companies who faced major layoffs a year ago are gun-shy on hiring. Business seems to be picking up in some sectors, but no one wants to commit to employees just yet. Accept a temp position so that when hiring time comes around, the obvious first hire is already in the building: you.

People want to hire people they know. Creating a strong, reliable, consistent web presence is an easy way to introduce yourself to hiring managers long before a resume crosses the desk. Julie Desmond is a job search and hiring consultant in Minneapolis. Send career planning questions to Julie@insightnews.com .