

TIPs (Tactical Information for Progress)

by Kelly Persichetti

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With the ever changing employment climate, it's more important than ever to *professionally* differentiate yourself, and pay attention to your personal brand and the perception associated with your name.

Here are some functionally *candid TIPs*, (Tactical Information for Progress) that may help you on your path to personal and professional success:

A quick way to stay OFF the A-list!

When a search partner/recruiter calls or e-mails you, **ALWAYS RESPOND**, whether you have personal interest or not. If you never respond with either personal interest OR networking interest, you won't be contacted again. This holds true for rudeness as well. Remember, everything comes full-circle.

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Communicate clearly when leaving a voicemail!

This may sound elementary, but when you're on the receiving end, you might be surprised. When you return a call to someone who doesn't know you or have frequent communications with you, ALWAYS leave your contact information in its entirety, opposed to saying "It's Bob returning your call. Call me." Communicate your full name, and spell your last name. Speak slowly and clearly when leaving your phone number(s) and e-mail address, and INCLUDE your area code. This alone will increase your return response rate, as the recipient may be mobile and outside of your area code, and be positioned to respond to you virtually. Remember, this is the virtual age of texting, WiFi, and mobile communications.

Naming your softcopy resume is more critical than you may think!

Talent acquisition professionals, as well as, hiring managers, receive unsolicited resumes in high volume. With this in mind, you want to **KEEP YOUR NAME TOP-OF-MIND**, and make it easy for the recipient to store and retrieve your information. Name your resume **LASTNAMEfirst.pdf OR .doc**. If you have a more common name, include your middle initial and separate your **LASTNAMEmiddleinitialFIRSTNAME**, by UPPER and lower case for ease of read. If it all runs together in the same case, the recipient may not be able to easily read your name.

How important is an e-mail address!

In the age of the Black Berry, e-mails are a common and critical component of immediate impact and communication. Your e-mail address on your resume should be your personal e-mail, NOT your corporate e-mail. In addition, your e-mail should allow your full name to be visible to the recipient. This will also ensure consistency, and continue to keep your name TOP-OF-MIND.

Your resume is your marketing document!

In a resume, talent acquisition professionals look for content and ease of read. With this in mind, it's a good idea to highlight your core competencies at the TOP of the first page to include any professional certifications; i.e. – (CPA, CMA, PE, PMP, etc.). Beneath companies, it's a good idea to indicate the size of the organization, and what they do; i.e. - (857MM privately held consumer plastics manufacturer). Keep your resume to 2 pages. CV's are expected to be a bit longer as they tend to focus on R&D and academic related expertise and may include patents, authored periodicals, product innovations, etc.

Include your e-mail address, and ensure it's named appropriately with your name. Include your LinkedIn.com profile link, and ensure your LinkedIn.com profile is complete and professional.

Include some relevant accomplishments. Maintain chronological format. Maintain no more than 3 professional font styles and sizes. Comic Sans is not considered a professional differentiator. Keep in mind, full disclosure is best, and establishes a sense of trust from the onset, so include all experience and your graduation dates.

Keep your resume updated!

This speaks for itself, but timing is still a critical factor in search. Position yourself to be responsive with your marketing document by always keeping it updated.

Consider a personal business card!

A personal business card is an inexpensive way to aid in personal branding. Include your full name, as well as, any advanced academics and/or related certifications next to your name, possibly your headshot pic. Include all contact information, and consider including a webpage or site with your resume, as well as, your LinkedIn.com profile. Depending upon your areas of expertise, consider a personal slogan and possibly a personal logo on the other side of the card. This demonstrates your creative style, and leaves an image associated with your name.

Using LinkedIn.com is a good online professional networking resource!

LinkedIn.com is a low-to-no cost *professional* networking resource that will serve you well in establishing and maintaining your professional network AND your personal brand. Although it has 12.5+ million members, from a professional perspective, don't use it as a popularity contest. At the same time, having less than 20 connections isn't viewed favorably. It's okay to be selective about who you want in your network. Like anything, you will need to cultivate it on a routine basis, and offer value to your network. The time you invest in it will reflect favorably on you.

When you use the LinkedIn.com server to add connections or request recommendations, take the time to CUSTOMIZE YOUR INQUIRY to the individual, opposed to using the standard verbiage and hitting the "send" button.

When you set up your profile, get some objective views. Include your e-mail address in your profile and make it visible, so others can reach out to you more easily. Ensure your profile is complete. If you have a professional headshot, include it in your profile. Join LinkedIn groups specific to your interest. Create a professional LinkedIn group using your professional logo. If you don't want to be contacted by prospects or colleagues, then don't use LinkedIn.com. This would be self-defeating.

Use caution with social networks!

Using online social networks can be helpful IF you're careful. Don't treat Twitter as a popularity contest. It's okay to block followers who may not be a positive reflection on your personal brand. Be selective using Facebook, and MySpace, especially with any pictures and comments you post. Remember it's easy to write things in the privacy of your own space and not consider who's eyes may see your comments. When you write a comment or compose an e-mail, know that statistics indicate it will be seen by 11 people for every single person you send it to.

Research, Research, Research!!

Research is a critical component to the job search, that is often overlooked. Doing your research reflects well on you, and moreover, it gives you more control in mapping out your path. Too often job seekers blindly send out several resumes and sit back and wait. This creates frustration and can be quite discouraging. Research supports a proactive approach and empowers you to have more control over exactly WHO you're sending your information to, and allows you to track your personal success, while increasing your network and maintaining open lines of communication. In this climate, it's important to approach companies directly. Your research may help you identify common denominators, such as, the CEO may have attended the same college as you did or the SVP, Ops belongs to the same professional trade organization you do, or the CFO is from your hometown. Those common denominators will aid you in introducing yourself to these decision makers.

Research increases your knowledge base of a specific industry, company, or hiring executives. Empower yourself with information and apply that knowledge appropriately. You can Google for hours upon hours, and still not find the information you need. If you need some assistance in with research, contact Kelly at kp@pgroup.net or 740-756-1301.

Google!

Along the lines of research, set up Google Alerts for specific companies you're targeting, as well as, your own name. Go to <http://google.com/alerts>, enter your search term, enter the "comprehensive" mode on the pull-down menu, and enter your e-mail address. When you've created your alerts, Google will email you whenever it indexes the terms in your alert string. This is also a way to see how you're branding yourself when you enter your name in the search box.

Get a library card!

Sign-up or renew your library card. There are many business resources you can obtain online from your PC that are **FREE** to library card holders. Some resources are available on-site ONLY.

Own your job search and career transition!

Don't continue to blindly send out resumes and wait for a response. Start mapping your job search or career transition proactively and empower yourself by first identifying 10 companies you would like to penetrate based on your personal criteria, including some select retained or contingent search firms. Research and document them, so you can track your personal progress. If you need full consult, individualized coaching, research and mapping support, contact Kelly OR Bill at www.CAREERADVISORSERVICES.com.

Don't underestimate the power of E-mail!

E-mails used to be viewed as a short form of quick communiqué. Not anymore. E-mail is a display of your written style of communication, and usually consistent with one's verbal communication style. Don't be lazy with your verbiage. Typically, e-mails are forwarded numerous times, and the communication string is for all to see. Every e-mail does not have to be novel, BUT the more the recipient is engaged by your content, the more YOUR NAME IS TOP-OF-MIND. E-mail also keeps those lines of communication open, so use it wisely.

Always send Thank You's!

After an interview, meeting or a trade show encounter, ALWAYS send a Thank You via e-mail. It has immediate impact in demonstrating your style, professionalism, responsiveness, listening ability, and continues to keep those lines of communications open, and yes, once again, it's another tool to KEEP YOUR NAME TOP-OF-MIND.

Network amongst professional trade organizations!

It's a good idea to network within your particular field and/or industry through related professional trade organizations. Position yourself to be viewed as a value-add to your trade organization. Many times you will find opportunities that you may not otherwise find. Industry tends to favor industry for many reasons.

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Network, Network, Network!

Don't underestimate the power of networking. A key element to networking is being responsive, even when it's not immediately self-serving. Don't reach out to someone you haven't communicated with in years, and suddenly ask for their help. Understand you need to earn and **CULTIVATE YOUR NETWORK** over time. It is not an entitlement. Networking/netweaving is about what YOU CAN GIVE, opposed to what you can get. If you approach networking with that in mind, it will serve you well in the long-term. Some say "it's all about who you know." In reality, **IT'S ABOUT WHAT THEY KNOW ABOUT YOU.**

What is behavior-based interviewing??

Most employers use behavior based interviewing, which is based on the belief that past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance. It is used to determine the applicant's potential for long-term success with their company, and critical to their succession planning initiatives. Be prepared for some of these questions in a phone interview. Research suggests it's 55% more predictive.

How can I prepare for a behavior-based interview?

We look for demonstrated examples of behavior from your past experience that is directly related to the job function. An example might be, if an employer wanted to know about your leadership ability and influence, they might ask something like "tell me about a time, when you had to persuade others to do something your way?" And be prepared to provide examples of when results didn't turn out as you planned, and what your next plan of action was.

Before starting the interview process, it's a good idea to identify 2 to 3 of your top selling points and determine how you will convey them using what many call **PAR (problem, action, and result).**

To be better prepared for behavioral interviews, keep a personal achievement diary at work and document your PAR (problem, action, result) stories. This will give you a documented reference of your accomplishments.

Wishing you well on your path to success!