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## 3 Ways to Ask For Job Hunting Help--And Get It

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When you're job hunting, what is the right-and wrong-way to ask for help? I've been thinking about this question a lot lately since, in the past few months, I've been contacted by three acquaintances in that situation (ironically, they're all lobbyists - i.e., professional networkers). Yet despite their shared profession, their varying approaches provide a good road map of what to do - and what to avoid. Here are the three most important steps:

**1.Reach out early and often.** Several years ago, I met Steve through a task force in which one of my clients participated. After he left his job, he made the right textbook move: sending me, along with probably everyone else in his database, a personal email saying he was looking for work and asking if he could pass along his resume. It's the perfect low-intensity strategy because it doesn't take much time to personalize a template email, it doesn't inconvenience anyone, and it might yield some early nibbles of informational interviews or job leads.

**What He Did Right:** He cast a wide net. You should plan to email literally everyone you know (otherwise, how are they going to know to be on the lookout for job opportunities for you?).

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**What He Did Wrong:** No follow up. I haven't heard from him in months, which means he's likely to have dropped off other people's radar screens, as well. His Facebook status says he's still unemployed. You should check in at least every 6-8 weeks with a friendly note and reminder you're still hunting.

2. **Get face time with your friends.** Soon after Joe, a former nonprofit vice president, was laid off, he emailed me, wanting to meet. While it's enough to check in via email with casual acquaintances, if you want to mobilize your friends on your behalf, it's good to schedule a coffee to get advice. You will much more likely be "top of mind" for them if you meet. Let the other person choose the date, time and location and make sure to pay for the drink. Since they're doing you a favor, you don't want them to feel like it's "costing" them money or time.

**What He Did Right:** He asked for face time and let me pick the place and time to make it convenient for me.

**What He Did Wrong:** He ended up cancelling the day before, claiming a stomachache and vowing to follow up with alternative dates. You can guess: I haven't heard from him again - and he's not going to get any job leads from me anytime soon. If you do secure a meeting, treat it like gold.

3. **Give back.** Greta, my third laid-off friend, recognized that in networking, giving is just as important as getting. As she's been meeting with contacts, her focus hasn't been solely on herself or her next job. For instance, after she met a prominent business contact at church, she set up a coffee to introduce me to him.

**What She Did Wrong:** Nothing!

**What She Did Right:** Too many frustrated job seekers become solipsistic, asking only what you can do for them. Greta's big picture view - and keeping an eye open for how to benefit others through advice, connections, or information - is what sets her apart. Any savvy employer would want that perspective- and knowing that gave her the courage to start her own lobbying firm recently, because she knows she has the skills she needs.

What have you done to get others invested in your success? And what do's and don'ts have you seen in others coming to you for help with their job searches?

***Dorie Clark*** is a strategy consultant who has worked with clients including Google, Yale University, and the National Park Service. Listen to her [podcasts](#) or follow her on [Twitter](#).

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