

## **How to Meet Your Next Boss**

***Need a job? Don't just apply to openings, meet more people***

Mary-Frances Fox  
*Strategy Magazine: October 2/2001*

Informal conversations that are not focused on 'are you hiring' is what it really takes for workers with several years experience to open doors to relevant jobs" says Mary-Frances Fox, President of career management consulting firm Work Creatively.

In the majority of cases, up to 85 per cent, people find their next job through their personal and work ties, but many people give up too soon because they don't know how to do this effectively' says Fox. As a consequence, they may be out of work longer and not find as good a job.

When you are unemployed, your job is to strike up conversations with all the people who could lead you to your next boss, Fox says. Use the down time to meet new people in the same field.

The challenge for adults with more than two or three years experience, says Fox, is that the right jobs seldom get advertised. Focusing on the classifieds is often a wild goose chase as advertised positions are often not at a high enough level or have other major restrictions.

Companies often do not have to resort to advertising to fill positions geared to an experienced person's skills, personality and requirements, including salary. So instead of replying to the many ads that are barely at your level, "focus more on people. Past bosses and coworkers, and family and friends know a lot about you and want to help.

But don't ask them to let you know of openings - people rarely hear of anything", Fox says. The best question is simple: ask for two or three names of people they know who are somehow involved in your industry or line of work. People still don't realize how helpful they can be to each other just by sharing their business ties. Why? Companies call on their informal relationships with other divisions, suppliers, and employees when they need to find new people. It is faster, cheaper and less risky for companies to interview a few people mentioned by those they trust, rather than screen dozens of replies from strangers.

Build your industry information pipeline by asking friends and former colleagues 'who should I be talking to?'. These contacts will be receptive because of their personal connection and because you are qualified. They have another vantage point on the industry, and know additional people located around the field.

Phoning or writing the actual person you would be working for is the other major way to uncover work opportunities for people with established skills and experience, says Fox. Talking about how your know-how can help relieve the company's or departments' "headaches" gets managers' attention long enough for them to get to see your abilities and consider how the company could use these.

*Mary-Frances Fox is president of Work Creatively Career Advisors Inc. She can be reached at (416) 922-4476, (888) 315-0003 or mffox@workcreatively.ca.*