

Graduation Nation

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Networking Internally Gives You the Advantage

Last week Forbes, Inc. posted an article titled: **Job Seekers: 7 Tips On Applying For A Job Within Your Company**. The article's author, Lisa Quast is correct when she writes, "... it takes just as much work to obtain a new job at your current place of work – and sometimes more – because the expectation is that you'll be more prepared than an external candidate. So don't take anything for granted." Quast then lists 7 tips to be successful in obtaining the internal position. All good tips. It's just that I found the article missed the most important tip when you are looking for a new job within your current company. The *one* tip that actually gives you the advantage over internal and external candidates—**network internally** and start networking as soon as possible. I think of networking internally (also referred to as collaborative networking) as follows:



Networking is about building relationships and helping others and so is internal networking. Internal networking is when you reach out and connect with colleagues within your department, division and organization, even if your job doesn't require you to do so. It's going beyond your normal scope of job responsibilities. Being an internal networker means you are

looking outside your immediate, day-to-day activities and thinking about how you can connect with and create value for others in your company.

Networking within the company is not politics. It's smart business.

Co-workers won't always appreciate (I'm trying to be polite here) their work peers who successfully network internally. Often it's because people have an expectation of what various roles should be. For example, a sales rep is expected to network externally to create a sales pipeline and internally because to make the sale a sales rep might need information from different departments. However, with internal networking, people tend to be leery of their co-workers who seek connections beyond their daily scope or department. These activities are often perceived as "sucking up" or "playing politics."

Josh (named changed) works in the Chicago office (8 employees) of a 200+ person company headquartered in NYC, that also has small offices in Northern and Southern California. Each office has its own set of clients and rarely do the offices share clients or work across offices. When Josh started, he was on a steep learning curve. However, after the first few months he was not billing as many hours as he thought he should be. He reached out to his peers in the other offices to learn how busy they were on projects, what kind of work they were doing and what their monthly billable hours were in comparison to his. He soon recognized they all wanted to be more connected. Josh organized monthly calls. called upon senior people to attend to answer the groups



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"I'm just launching my career...help" questions, and when he went to NYC with some friends, took time to visit the NY office. People started to know his name, his work and importantly, when working in a satellite office, the NY teams were able to put a face to a name. Because Josh networks internally, he has worked on projects with each of the offices broadening his experience. He can easily call upon subject matter experts in any of the offices quickly providing clients with the information needed to make decisions. Josh is developing a collaborative network. On Josh's first annual performance review, unit leaders from the other offices contributed reviews and his boss often commends him for the connections he's making throughout the company. Josh has been promoted twice in his almost three years at the company, and although he's not interested— at least not now— he has been asked to join the NY office team.

Did Josh play politics? No. Josh is an effective internal networker who goes for the win-win. He created connections because he believed that reaching out to others would help all involved, including the company. Here's what Josh did to create a supportive network.

- **He had (and still does) a good relationship with his boss** and asked for ideas on who he should get to know in the company. Josh broaden his business acumen and learned from others in the company. It helps to know other business unit leaders if you want to apply for other jobs within the company.
- **He let others know he was interested in cross-office projects.** He became familiar with the work of the other teams and has helped on their projects. Because he's known he would not be considered a risky hire as an external candidate might be.
- **He invited co-workers to advise him on projects** and earned a reputation of someone who is always learning.
- **He shared his experience** with his peers and created away for others to do the same. Josh demonstrated his leadership skills.
- **He spread the word in his office about the people he worked with from the other offices.** He shared credit and his network.

Internal networkers like Josh have an advantage when applying for jobs within the company because they have shown they are a good fit, people know them and their work, and they have internal references— people at all levels who can speak to the quality of work they do.



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As for the Forbes article 7 tips...

Tip #1: Take the interview process seriously.

Tip #2: Speak to employees who are already in the job you want.

Tip #3: Meet with the HR representative (often called an "HR business partner") responsible for the department you want to work in.

Tip #4: Let your manager know if you decide to apply for the open position.

Tip #5: Gain the support of your current manager.

Tip #6: Introduce yourself to the hiring manager.

Tip #7: Make yourself stand out, after the job interview is over.

Posted by [MORE THAN A RESUMÉ](#) at 12:27 PM



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