

How to Create Opportunities Rather Than Compete for Them

[Vault, by Natalie Fisher](#)

Some days you feel invisible in your job search. Why is no one responding to your resume? You're doing everything right: you're actively applying, you've got a great resume (you know because you've had it reviewed by a professional), you went to school, and you worked hard to get a degree. So why does there seem to be a lack of opportunities out there that you can actually grab?

Part of the problem is competition: for the good opportunities that are available, the competition tends to be very steep. How do you get past this? I have a few things to share in this post that will change the way you look at it, plus a few tips for how you can do things differently.

What happens when you rely on the visible opportunities only

When I say "visible opportunities," I am referring to the jobs in plain sight: those promoted on job sites or company websites. The first ones you see as soon as Google figures out you're on the hunt.

- When you don't have much experience and throw your hat into the ring with a bunch of other, more experienced candidates, then of course it's going to be difficult to stand out.
- Job sites are great for many things; however they are businesses themselves, and their goal is to get as many eyeballs on their postings as possible. For YOU, this means that hundreds of people see the job posting, and it means that hundreds of people can apply for it, leaving you as only ONE singular person who needs to get through a sea of candidates with a single strong resume--assuming it doesn't get filtered out by application tracking software before a human even sees it.
- **Creating your own opportunities means that you don't have to compete for attention** going after a relatively small pool of jobs. Instead, you can actually create your own "blue ocean" of opportunities by reaching out to people who can hook you up with opportunities that aren't posted.

Creating vs. Competing

Around 85 percent of job opportunities are secured by someone creating an opportunity for themselves--through networking and reaching out to people, having conversations and opening up doors. This is happening every day, and those who are not in on these conversations are going to be left struggling. If you master this, things like resume keywords, cover letters and even your experience level suddenly matter a whole lot less--because you are no longer competing with thousands of other candidates.

- Creating opportunities is not something people study or really take the time to learn the do's and don'ts of, but once you master it, you will never be limited in opportunities again.
- The most common mistake people make when reaching out to people they don't know (and why most people don't get responses) is because they focus on themselves first.
- They focus on what they want and what they need, and they don't take into consideration the other person's schedule or need for information, or even give them a reason to help them. It's what I call the "I, I, I syndrome," and those messages get ignored.

The keys are to reach out to the right person, with the right message, in the right way.

This is what that message looks like:

1. Describe how you found them, (i.e. when researching a company or role).
2. A respectful check-in (Make sure they don't mind you emailing them).
3. Say something nice & specific about them (make them feel unique and recognized).
4. Where you are right now (If you're just graduating, finishing up school, or in a role right now).
5. Now, ask for what you want (a chat or phone call).
6. Attach your resume.



Going from initial opportunity → to interview → to job offer

Now, once you've secured a few initial opportunities with potential hiring managers (or connectors who can connect you to a hiring manager), the next step is to have a meeting where you impress them, ask them the right questions, and have the type of dialogue that leads to an interview or a referral.

The way you meet this person and the way you present information to them and speak with them will make the difference as to whether they become an connection who will help you out (now or in the future) or won't.

Following up on the opportunity

Taking follow-up a step further than most people is one thing you can do to stand out. Once you secure a meeting with someone and you have a 1:1 conversation with them, you mean a lot more than a random resume that comes across their desk. You can use this conversation in the future or potentially very soon after the meeting itself, depending on how it goes.

Once you've nailed down your initial opportunity creation strategy, your meetings are going well, and you've got your follow up figured out, then work the system in order to start seeing a MUCH higher response rate than you will with any online position. Why? Because you're no longer competing. You're now seen as a completely different type of person. You're no longer a drop in the bucket of a thousand resumes. You're one person who did things differently.

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