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The Most Common Mistake You Might Be Making...

...**Waiting till you lose your job to network.** We all like to think our careers are secure, especially if we have been somewhere for a long time. “I’m too expensive for them to get rid of me”, I’d hear some people say. Some of us spend 10, 15, 20, or more years at the same company, moving through chapters of our professional lives, feeling confident that we’re part of a long-term plan. And then, one day, you’re called into a room with your boss and HR and told your services are no longer needed.

It’s a moment that stops you in your tracks. Thoughts race as you process the news. After a few days—or even weeks—you start thinking about your next move. You decide it’s time to jump back into the job market.



At first glance, it might seem easier than ever. Platforms like LinkedIn offer a wealth of job postings and a direct line to recruiters. But the reality is far less simple. Everyone is applying online—sometimes hundreds of resumes to the same posting—and it’s increasingly difficult to stand out. Suddenly, you realize the truth: your network is your greatest asset.

And that’s the mistake most of us make. We wait until we need it. Networking isn’t something to dust off when your job

disappears; it’s something to cultivate continuously. It’s not just about advancing your own career—it’s about being open to others seeking guidance, mentorship, or advice.

I’ve seen this repeatedly. People get comfortable in their routines: go to work, take care of family, hit the gym or a hobby, rinse and repeat. For years. Networking becomes an afterthought, pushed aside until the moment we suddenly need it. But meaningful connections

take time to build, and creating opportunities is rarely instant. On average, landing the right role can take six to eight months. In sales, I learned that for every 100 people you reached out to, maybe 10 would become potential opportunities, and you hope 3-5 would close. Job hunting works the same way: it's a numbers game, it takes resilience, and it relies on relationships you've nurtured over time.

Here are 5 things to consider to get back into the networking game:

1. Update Your LinkedIn Profile First

Before reaching out to anyone, make sure your profile reflects your current skills, experience, and goals. Think of it as your digital first impression. Add a professional photo, update your headline to highlight your expertise, and polish your summary with a few sentences about what you do and the type of connections or opportunities you're seeking.

2. Reconnect With Your Existing Network

Start with people you already know—former colleagues, classmates, or mentors. Send a simple, personalized message:

“Hi [Name], I've been thinking about reconnecting and would love to hear what you've been up to. Would you be open to a quick coffee chat or call?”

This warms the conversation without asking for a job right away and lays the foundation for mutual support.

3. Engage Thoughtfully With New Connections

When reaching out to someone you don't know well, do your research. Mention a shared interest, recent article, or group you're both in. Example:

“Hi [Name], I saw your post on [topic] and found it insightful. I'd love to connect and hear more about your experience in [industry].”

Always focus on building a relationship first rather than immediately asking for favors.

4. Be Generous With Your Time

Offer value as much as you ask for it. Share articles, comment on posts, provide advice, or make introductions for others. Networking is reciprocal, and being proactive about helping

others makes you memorable. Even just 30 minutes a week for virtual coffee chats can make a huge difference.

5. Schedule Networking as a Routine

Treat networking like any other professional task. Block time on your calendar for weekly outreach—whether it's connecting with two new people, commenting on posts, or sending follow-ups. Consistency is key; a network built slowly over time is far more powerful than a rushed effort when you suddenly need a job.

In conclusion, the key is to keep your network warm. Make time to connect with peers, colleagues, join professional networks and even reach out to people you don't know who reach out for advice. If someone is reaching out to you, remember, most people aren't expecting you to have a job for them; they simply want guidance, perspective, or to be top-of-mind when opportunities arise. A quick coffee, a virtual chat, or a lunch once every week or two can keep these connections alive. Networking is truly a karmic exercise. What you put into it, you will receive. By giving a bit of your time consistently, you create a network that works for you and for others. And when change inevitably comes, you won't be scrambling to build bridges—you'll already be standing on them.