



Job Search and the Power of Planned Happenstance

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Have you ever noticed some people seem to have all the luck when it comes to career success? While it may seem like good fortunes, these professionals are likely doing something *different*. [Patricia Polischuk](#) explains how seeking out new experiences can create new opportunities, career paths, and relationships.

“Why are some people so lucky when it comes to finding the right job at the right time and I seem to struggle to find work?”

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This question, in a variety of forms is asked by almost all my clients before we begin our career coaching relationship. What I have found after many years of working with clients through economic good times and bad is that, in most cases, finding the right job is all about luck. However, I happen to agree with the philosopher Seneca who said, “Luck is when preparation



meets opportunity,” and I coach my clients to create their own luck!

Early in my career, I read, *Planned Happenstance: Making the Most of Chance Events in your Life and Your Career*, written by John D. Krumboltz and Al S. Levin and it changed how I looked at the job search process. The work focuses on the theory that individuals can create opportunities for themselves by being open to unexpected events and actively seeking out new experiences. Engaging this approach—I have coached clients to expand their networks, connect with people and seek out new experiences while reducing (not completely eliminating) their dependence on the published job market. As a result, my clients have found opportunities, career paths, and relationships that they would never have come across had they not done something differently. In a post-pandemic job market, this theory is particularly relevant as the nature of work and job search has been transformed.

Here are some ways that the theory of planned happenstance can be applied to job search in today’s marketplace:

1. **Stay open to new opportunities:** With the pandemic’s disruption of the job market new jobs have been created and industries altered, it’s important to remain open to new opportunities that may arise unexpectedly. This could include exploring different industries, taking on freelance or contract work, or pursuing a career change.
2. **Be proactive:** Rather than waiting for opportunities to come to you, actively seek out new experiences and connections. This could include attending in person and virtual networking events, connecting with people on social media, or participating in classroom courses or online webinars.
3. **Develop a growth mindset:** Embrace the idea that learning and growth can happen in any situation and be willing to take risks and try new things. This can help you develop new skills and experiences that can make you a more competitive candidate in the job market.
4. **Be adaptable:** The pandemic has shown us that the job market can be unpredictable and constantly changing. Being adaptable and flexible can help you navigate these changes and take advantage of unexpected opportunities.
5. **Identify and work through your limiting beliefs:** Whether working with a professional coach or talking to a mentor, or trusted friend, seek assistance to call out what’s holding you back from trying new things and develop solutions to overcome those obstacles. For example, if you experience anxiety when attending large networking events, start with online communities and meet with people who share your interests and hobbies. Networking happens one conversation at a time.
6. **Understand that careers are no longer linear:** It’s amazing how, in my own career, the decision to take a chance and try something new—including volunteer work—allowed me to obtain skills, diversify my network of contacts, and gain experience which has served me well in future roles. Overall, the theory of planned



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Recommended Reading: Discover the Importance of Recruiter Relationships.

Steve Rosen walks through the Do's and Don'ts for candidates when it comes to nurturing this important relationship. [Read more](#)

Our Contributors

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