

Circle of Influence – 18.08.2013

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Three tips for mid and senior executives looking for better jobs - network, network, network.



In June, a study by global management consultancy Hay Group showed that one in four Indians in the organised sector will **likely change jobs this year**. The study, conducted with the Centre for Economic and Business Research, said the massive employee turnover will be triggered by expectations of an economic revival. In the same month, the Manpower Employment Outlook Survey predicted an increase of more than 18 per cent in hiring for the three months through September.

Despite the persisting downturn, the two surveys do not come as a surprise. Why? Job movement tends to peak after June, the month by which most companies complete their employee appraisals and people start looking for better opportunities. A job switch, however, is tricky for mid-to-senior level executives. "This is what we call the 'passive pool', which tends not to easily reach out for jobs even at the best of times," says G.N. Udiaver, Director at Manpower Group firm Experis, which focuses only on mid-to-senior level recruitments.

Mid-to-senior level executives take into account not just a fatter pay package while looking for a change. They also look for a better work profile and greater responsibilities as they build their careers. So, what should they do to get what they want? Mid-to-senior level employees on a job search need to be crystal clear about their **career objectives and aspirations**.

Look Before You Leap

Start networking and seek opportunities that can showcase your skills

Tweak your CV to match the role you are applying for

Know which function you want to get into

Approach executive search firms

Tap into alumni network

List out career experts by tracking job portals

Don't feel embarrassed while making a networking call

Reconnect with recruiters who have contacted you in the past

"Employees need to understand the exact DNA of the new workplace. If this is not done, the chances of having to move again will be very high," says Ashwin Shirali, Regional Director of Human Resources at hospitality group Accor India.

The most important skill required to find the opportunities available is networking. "It's important to continuously network with people from your relevant field and people who believe in you," says Asim Handa, CEO of staffing firm Gi Group India. Handa says there is no need to feel embarrassed making networking calls. "One must remember that most positions are filled through referrals, and most people come across such situations," he says.

Quality jobs are not easy to come by. One can start scouting for a job by tracking various recruitment portals or following a job board on professional networking site LinkedIn to analyse particular sectors or job positions. Tweaking one's curriculum vitae to match the role and functional responsibilities one is looking for is the next step.

Networking is critical for two reasons. One, the job market in India is mostly relationship-based, says Jyorden T. Misra, Managing Director at Spearhead InterSearch, a firm focusing on senior-level recruitments. And two, companies are increasingly stressing peer-review of candidates.

Many executives and graduates from reputed institutions often tend to reach out to their alumni networks, says Deepak Chandra, Deputy Dean at the Hyderabad-based Indian School of Business. Chandra says the institute has a network of 5,251 alumni across 25 countries.

Vidhu Shekhar, who graduated from the Indian Institute of Technology, Kharagpur in 2004, says his **seniors referred him for jobs** and he did the same for some of his

juniors. "It's easier for me to convince my HR or my senior about a candidate who is from IIM Calcutta or IIT Kharagpur, than about a candidate from some other institute," says Shekhar, who is pursuing his Ph.D in economics from the Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta.

Those who are wary of posting their profiles on job portals such as Naukri.com and Monster.com can directly reach out to specialised executive search firms such as Spearhead, Randstad, Elixir, Quadrangle, Michael Page International, and Mount Talent Consulting. The search firms help executives expand their networks, tailor their applications, prepare for interviews and find a job. Naukri. com has launched a premium portal that allows jobseekers to apply directly to search firms without registering on the site, says Hitesh Oberoi, Managing Director and CEO at Info Edge (India), which owns the job site. Gary James, Regional Managing Director for Asia Pacific at Michael Page, says a large number of queries come directly to its consultants, who have been recommended to jobseekers by people already familiar with the company.

Help is also at hand for those who are looking not just for a job switch but a complete career change. XLRI-Jamshedpur has a funding programme that helps its alumni in starting a venture, says Chand Narayan, CEO of Hyderabadbased marketing communications firm Hum Consulting. "XLRI's social entrepreneurship projects are the most talked about," says Narayan, who graduated from the institute in 2001.

A reality check is in order, however, for executives who want a new job mainly for a substantially higher salary. "Companies are being cautious and are offering average hikes of around 15 to 20 per cent," says Sangeeta Lala, Co-founder and Senior Vice President at recruitment consultancy and staffing firm TeamLease Services. "Mid-level managers can manage to negotiate this with their current employers."