



4. Networking

GUERRILLA MARKETING YOURSELF

by Dave Jensen

I have a library full of business books on marketing. It's one of my favorite subjects. As a business owner, I've had to strategize the successful marketing of my company's services for many years. Although I've never had formal training in marketing, I can trace my love for this science back to a book that I first read in 1983: *Guerrilla Marketing* by Jay Conrad Levinson.

Fourteen million copies of this book and its sequels have been sold in the years since its publication, and Levinson's term "guerrilla marketing" has become part of our popular language. But it wasn't until 2005 that Levinson applied his marketing concepts to job-hunting in his latest book, *Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters*, co-written with executive recruiter David E. Perry and published by Wiley.

In this month's column, I'll take the best of Levinson and Perry's concepts from this excellent book and adapt them to the world of the sciences. Some adaptation is required because, despite its great value, the book suffers from the same problem as most generic job-seeking advice: Not every career tip you'd recommend to a widget salesperson makes sense for a scientist.



“Personal branding is not about presenting a false image. It is about understanding what is unique about you—your accomplishments, experience, attitude—and then using that to differentiate yourself from other job hunters. Your brand is your edge in the job market.”
—Levinson and Perry

Marketing Yourself on the Cheap

I read an interview with Levinson many years ago in which he was asked why his innovative marketing approach was targeted only to small businesses. The author responded with a term that I remember to this day. He writes for firms, he said, that “suffer from resource poverty,” so his guerrilla marketing methods are cheap. That’s what I like about this approach. Postdocs and grad students suffer from resource poverty as well.

One of the major concepts in the *Guerrilla* series is that you need to avoid doing what everyone else is doing. Thousands of scientists—your competitors—read the local newspaper ads every Sunday and scan the back sections of journals. Their job-search time is consumed by filling out Internet forms and mailing letters that start with that polite, old address, “Dear Sir or Madam.”

Make no mistake: Levinson and Perry don’t believe that you need to walk away from all the usual elements of the job search, such as writing applications and sending CVs. But if you want to catch the really big fish, they argue, you need to play in a smaller pond.

Moving to the Smaller Pond

One of the first things that these authors recommend is to set up what they call “the war room,” a place where you can be sheltered from all distraction. This is your private space, where you go specifically for job-seeking efforts. This distraction-free zone—which needs to have a desk, a chair, a computer, and a telephone—will help you focus, even if it is just the corner of an apartment. Think of it as a radio announcer’s cubicle, with an “On the Air” sign on the door (even if it there really isn’t a door).

It is critical that you do not try to run a project like a job search from that small desk across from your lab bench. Too many distractions.

Once you’ve established your war room, turn your sights to what the crowd *isn’t* doing. I’ve written about networking many times in this monthly column, so we won’t go deeply into the subject this month; more information on networking can be found in a search of the “Tooling Up” archive.¹ But it’s hard to talk about guerrilla marketing without touching on networking because most people don’t like to network, so they neglect it. Guerrilla marketers recognize that if other people are neglecting it, that makes it a fine, small pond to play in!

The war room is where you go to make e-mail and phone contact with an ever-broadening list of networking contacts. It’s also the place to plan your own public relations (PR) campaign.

PR has gotten a bad rap in the last couple of decades. We hear about “spin doctors” who represent the oily side of PR, putting a positive, dishonest gloss on even the most negative stories and situations. But that’s just one small side of PR; PR can also mean putting across a positive message that happens to be true. In a job search, PR is important because getting your name out there is half the battle. PR is really about trying to put yourself in the right place at the right time by means of a publicity campaign and some creative prowess. I’d call it “networking on steroids.”

Here Are Three Ways to Go About Getting Your Name and Capabilities in Front of Others.

(1) Anyone can have a business card, not just those who have “real” jobs. In industry, exchanging cards is much more common than handing over a CV or résumé. Your card should have the logo of your university or institution and possibly even a few comments about your area of expertise on the reverse side. Have you ever seen business cards from employees of Apple Computer? Some of them read “Software Wizard,” or “Business Development Guru” in place of a stuffy title.

With a little humor, you can sometimes get across a short who-am-I statement with more punch than a three-minute verbal introduction.

(2) Participate in local meetings of associations and trade groups in your field of interest. Get on their committees and volunteer for jobs that no one else wants to do. You’ll gain a reputation as a person to count on, and it will benefit you with increased visibility. It always surprises me how a savvy postdoc can find a spot on a committee filled with “insiders,” those few people every association must have to succeed. Even desirable committees such as the “social committee” have jobs that no one readily volunteers for (clean up after events, keep the e-mail database, etc.). No matter what your role is, you will have gotten your foot in the door and a chance to work with these insiders.

(3) Write (and publish) an article on a topic that has nothing to do with your project. Get your name out there by writing about career issues for a site like this one, or write for your local paper on what it is like to be a scientist in today’s job market. You would be surprised what can come back to you in the form of job leads from just getting exposure — *any* exposure. (Although for movie stars it’s sometimes said that even bad publicity is good, in the case of a job seeker, your creative guerilla marketing approaches have to be credible and reflect well on the real you.)

A Company Called “Me, Inc.”

According to the authors of *Guerrilla Marketing for Job-Hunters*, many technical professionals, scientists, and engineers have difficulty seeing themselves as anything more than a commodity. If you think of yourself as “a” Ph.D. biochemist with a background in enzyme kinetics, say, you are a



commodity for sale in a crowded market. Getting paid top dollar is very difficult when you are something that the employer can find anywhere.

You need to present yourself to the world as much more than a list of lab techniques. This involves what marketing people such as Levinson call “branding.” The best way to think about branding is to imagine yourself as a company offering a variety of services. (See my earlier article, “The Concept of Me, Inc.”)

Reference: Jay Conrad Levinson with David E. Perry, *Guerrilla Marketing for Job-Hunters* (Wiley, 2005). ISBN 0-471-71484-4.

“Personal branding is not about presenting a false image,” Levinson and Perry say. “It is about understanding what is unique about you—your accomplishments, experience, attitude—and then using that to differentiate yourself from other job hunters. Your brand is your edge in the job market.”

What’s the best brand for a young scientist or engineer? Certainly, you want to have a brand that speaks specifically to your area of technical expertise, but it is critical to add a personal spin to what you bring to the table. I can tell you from experience that one strong bonus to add to the marketing focus of any highly competent scientist is to become known as a *problem solver*.

Moving from a Commodity to a Brand

Think about your skills and abilities using the Challenge-Approach-Results format. With paper and pencil, sketch out all the major problems you’ve solved in your time in the lab, starting with the most current and working backward—these are the challenges—on a page that has three vertical columns. The center column, Approach, gets you thinking about the specific action that you took to solve the problem highlighted on its left. Finally, in the right column, list the result. Write succinctly, with just a couple of sentences in each section.

Now sit back and look at this document. You will be impressed by your problem-solving ability. Do you think that a person who has developed their critical-thinking and deductive-reasoning skills in this way is only of value to people who put them to work in the lab? No way! As a professional problem solver, an entirely new world will open up to you in the job-seeking process.

After many years of reading the *Guerrilla Marketing* series of books, I can tell you that moving from commodity to brand is something that can increase your short-term and lifetime income by a significant percentage. I know, because guerilla marketing worked for me. Without placing a single advertisement, my small company begun in my garage became an entity with a recognized name that, 10 years later, attracted the interest of a \$4 billion company. Thinking back upon the reasons for this, I can come to no other conclusion than that Jay Conrad Levinson’s methods work well.

This article first appeared on ScienceCareers.org (Next Wave) at: http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/2006_04_21/tooling_up_guerilla_marketing_yourself/

1. Tooling Up Archive: http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/0000/tooling_up_index
2. The Concept of Me, Inc.: http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/0140/the_concept_of_me_inc

HOW TO GET A GOOD CONNECTION

by David Bomzer

Surveys indicate that 50% to 75% of people found their last job through networking. You can network several ways, including networking by phone, giving a presentation, or networking face-to-face. This article will focus on three types of face-to-face networking: one to one, one to many (e.g., in a meeting), and many to many (e.g., at a conference).

There are many opportunities for face-to-face networking, including professional association meetings, social gatherings, and job fairs. The mechanics, tips, and tools in this article are applicable to all three types and to the different situations. You must decide which types and places work best for your face-to-face networking.

Effective networking requires creating a dialogue.

But first, here is a short quiz about networking.

Why Network?

- A) To meet people
- B) To get a job
- C) To make money
- D) Next Wave told you to

Why network among strangers?

- A) To tell people you're looking for a job
- B) To build relationships
- C) To get calls when job openings and opportunities occur
- D) Next Wave said it would be good for you

When networking you should ...

- A) Talk about yourself
- B) Talk about your ideal job
- C) Ask questions and build rapport
- D) Talk about Next Wave



If you answered, respectively, A, B, and C, then you are on your way to success. You'll also recognize that it's possible to break effective face-to-face networking down into three component parts: Meeting the Person(s), Establishing Rapport, and Communicating Effectively.

Meet the Person

Face-to-face networking begins with attitude and body language. You may recall learning that dogs sense fear; well they—like people—can also pick up on a person's attitude. A useful attitude is an important aspect of networking. Useful attitudes include being warm, enthusiastic, relaxed, curious, helpful, patient, and interested.

Insider's Tool #1: Finding a Positive Attitude. Try this technique to get a positive attitude before a face-to-face networking situation. Find a quiet spot, close your eyes, and picture a time you had a positive moment. Recall the sights, sounds, and physical sensations. Intensify the sensations. At the height of the sensations, squeeze together the thumb and forefinger of your writing hand, then relax them. Practice this several times. When that face-to-face networking situation arises, squeeze your thumb and forefinger as a trigger to recall the attitude.

Just as it does with other animals, human body language also sends a message. Body language can create a positive or negative presence—the degree to which individuals attract attention and how they represent themselves. There are four elements to positive body language that conveys a positive presence: standing with palms open, making eye contact, giving a welcoming smile, and offering a pleasant greeting.

Insider's Tool #2: Making Positive Eye Contact. To determine if you make positive eye contact, think of a face-to-face conversation you had today and try to recall the other person's eye color. Practice this observation in several settings until it feels natural. This simple exercise can help you start to focus on making more genuine eye contact when in conversations.

A welcoming smile offers a simple but effective message. At a recent training session I conducted, fewer than half of the participants were able to identify their own welcoming smile.

Insider's Tool #3: Practice Your Best Smiles and Greetings. Ask friends to tell you which of your smiles are most genuine and make them feel welcomed. Practice those smiles in a mirror. Make them a conscious part of your body language for face-to-face networking.

A positive greeting incorporates friendly gestures, eye contact, and a smile. The greeting should also be in a pleasant tone and use the other person's name. Use of a person's name communicates a message of familiarity. Also, repeating a person's name

To determine if you make positive eye contact, think of a face-to-face conversation you had today and try to recall the other person's eye color. Practice this observation in several settings until it feels natural. This simple exercise can help you start to focus on making more genuine eye contact when in conversations.

after being introduced immediately acknowledges that you are listening.

Establish Rapport

These basic tools will help you become ready to start meeting people. Once you've met someone, though, you will also want to create a positive connection with that person—to establish a personal rapport. One technique to build rapport is using synchronizing skills, adjusting your physical and vocal tools to be in tune with the other person. Synchronizing your physical attributes can include aligning gestures, body posture, body movements, facial expressions, and even breathing. You can also synchronize vocal attributes including tone, volume, speed, pitch, rhythm, and verbal fluency. Verbal fluency is using words that the other person prefers. It is analogous to trying to speak to someone using their native language. As with speaking a foreign language, use preferred words only to the degree that you are familiar with their proper use.

Insider's Tool #4: Practice Synchronized Conversations. Focus on synchronizing when having a conversation with a partner. After one minute, stop and reverse roles and then discuss what you each observed. Was the synchronizing subtle or was it obvious mirroring? Provide each other constructive feedback. It may help to have a third person as an observer to provide feedback.

It is important when synchronizing to make sure the words, tones, gestures, and body language are all congruent, i.e., send the same message.

Insider's tip: To build rapport, observe the person(s) prior to approaching her or him to network. This allows you to identify physical and vocal styles.

Effective Communication

Effective networking requires creating a dialogue. You can accomplish this through exchanging information and finding ways to assist one another. The first rule of effective communicating is ask, don't tell. Use open-ended questions—those that begin with who, what, when, why, where, or how.

Another effective technique is providing details from which the listener can easily extract information and then respond. One way to do this is by adding an information tag to your greeting, for example, "Hi, I'm David and I am a scientist." This expands your greeting and provides an opportunity for the listener to respond. Often they will either mimic your response or they may respond with a question, such as, "What type of scientist?" If they respond with an open question, a dialogue can begin. If they mimic your greeting, then you need to use an open-ended question to get the person talking.

Insider's Tool #5: Practice Using Open-Ended Questions. With a partner, practice using open-ended questions by having one person start by asking



an open question to which the other person must respond with an open question. Go back and forth for a minute. The listener should notify the speaker if they do not use an open-ended question.

Insider's Tool #6: Become an Active Listener. Active listening is giving the speaker feedback that acknowledges you heard and understood what they have said. This is different from paraphrasing. In paraphrasing, you are restating what the speaker indicated. In active listening you are extracting information from what they said and responding with new information that relates to it. A simple example would be: Person A says, "The job market is very competitive." Person B responds, "Yes, jobs I have applied for have received resumes from many qualified people." People like to know that they are being listened to. This is a way to show you are listening and participating in the discussion.

Putting It All Together

By practicing useful attitude, open body language, synchronizing, and active listening, you can master the three important tools to successful face-to-face networking. This article provided you a blueprint and tools to help hone your networking techniques. However, it is up to you to apply these to gain the insider's edge on face-to-face networking.

This article appeared on ScienceCareers.org (Next Wave) at: http://sciencecareers.sciencemag.org/career_development/previous_issues/articles/1470/networking_how_to_get_a_good_connection/