

Your Job Search Is a Marketing Operation and You Are the Product

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

Someone who wants to succeed in finding a job must understand marketing. Regardless of what you do, your job search is a marketing operation. The more effectively you market yourself, the more jobs you will get, the better jobs you will get, and the more successful you will be. The people who market themselves most effectively are the ones who do the best in their careers.

In both your career and your life, there is nothing more important than marketing. Good marketing will get you jobs, promotions, and the success you are seeking from life. Marketing will bring you friends, even help you find a mate. Marketing makes the world go around.

Obviously marketing requires a product. *A product is something people buy or use to solve problems.* It is as simple as that. A product can be a person, place, or thing.

- Need to clean your teeth? You buy a toothbrush.
- Hungry? You buy food.
- Need to get somewhere? You buy a car.
- Need to get somewhere fast? You buy an airplane ticket.

Yet people are products too:

- Need to fix your broken leg? You buy [the services of] a doctor.
- Need to have your car fixed? You buy [the services of] a mechanic.
- Need to have someone wait tables in your restaurant? You buy [the services of] a waiter.

To be as effective as possible in your job search, you have to understand you are a product. You must get yourself out to the market and do everything you can to find buyers. You must make your product as attractive as possible and you must highlight your best characteristics to ensure everyone is aware of them.

The Three Aspects of a Successful Marketing Campaign

In order to market your product effectively, it is important that you understand the following concepts:

1. Product distribution and promotion
2. Product packaging
3. Product characteristics

That is all that's needed to sell a product. You need to "drill down" with each of these concepts to sell yourself as effectively as possible.

1. Product Distribution and Promotion

A successful sale means a product needs to be distributed. Proper distribution and promotion help people become aware of products. To buy a product, you need to be aware of it. People become aware of products through advertising (i.e., promotion) and distribution.

There are likely thousands of brands you are familiar with because of advertising, and some brands are more familiar than others. When you think of clothing detergent, Tide comes to mind. Macaroni and cheese? For most of us, it's Kraft.

Advertisers have drilled this level of familiarity into us and it works—we buy their products.

In addition to advertisements, people become aware of products if they are available where they shop. The products Wal-Mart sells, for example, have instant and massive distribution.

Generally, the more effective the distribution and promotion, the more it can cost (within reason). We pay more for the products and brands we know because we are comfortable with them. If a gadget is distributed widely, the odds of us purchasing it increase exponentially.

2. Product Packaging

The proper packaging can help the product sell. You may pay \$150 for what would otherwise be a \$25 shirt, for example, because of the way the product is presented and sold. The same goes for a watch, jewelry, food, coffee (think Starbucks), and so forth. Packaging is highly relevant in determining how well various items do in the marketplace.

Different products require different packaging. Before Apple invented the iPod, MP3 players had been around for years—used mainly by tech geeks. Once the MP3 player was packaged as an iPod in Apple's slick, easy-to-use way, sales of MP3s took off. That was packaging at work. Proper packaging helps products sell for higher amounts (or sell at all).

3. Product Characteristics

Product characteristics describe the product itself. You purchase the stereo. You purchase the car. You purchase your degree from Yale.

Every product has certain characteristics; some more valuable than others. In marketing, the characteristics of the product will help to determine if someone will buy it. For example, if someone wants to buy a home on the ocean, then a home in Kansas is not likely to appeal to them. Similarly, if someone wants to hire someone with fifteen years of experience in a law firm, then someone fresh out of law school will not do.

Promoting Yourself Effectively

If you want the best job possible, this requires an in-depth understanding of how to distribute and promote yourself, how to package yourself, and your unique traits—your most compelling characteristics.

You Must Distribute and Promote Yourself Properly

In 1984 I was in Chiang Mai, Thailand. I rented a motorcycle with a full tank of gas and started riding outside of the city. After going over various dirt roads for two or three hours, I rode into a small village that was so remote people were wandering around naked and covered in dust. Animals were all over the street, people were living in thatched huts, and it was, quite frankly, the most remote place I have ever seen in my life.

I stopped my motorcycle and looked around in amazement. There were no motorcycles, no cars, or any other sign of modern civilization. In fact, I do not think a car or truck could have even gotten into the village if it wanted to because there were no roads; just dirt trails. There was no gas station or other sign of commerce anywhere.

As I sat on my motorcycle looking around, I noticed there was a large red cooler sitting in front of a hut. Attached to the cooler was a generator that I could hear humming. The red cooler had “Coke-a-Cola” written on it. I went up to the hut where the cooler was and for around the equivalent of twenty-five cents I purchased a cold Coke. It was the best Coke I had ever had.

I never forgot this experience because I was in the middle of nowhere. There was no other sign of commerce anywhere—yet, here was someone selling soda on the side of the road.

This example shows the power of distribution and how effective it can be in getting your name out there. Coca-Cola has very wide and aggressive distribution all over the world. I was in the middle of nowhere and Coke was available. The more places your product can be seen, the more likely it is to be purchased.

Your goal in the job market and in the world is to be found and “purchased.”

You need to be seen.

Everything you have done and all your experience and accomplishments are in the past. What is in the future is your being “seen” by all the people who might be interested in hiring you.

I want to walk you through some “ninja” methods that will help you reach those people. This is among the most important things you will ever do in your job search:

[1] Create a professional blog. You might not take this seriously, but if you are seeking to make \$100,000 a year or more and establish a presence in the market, then you must have a professional blog.

I am not talking about the sort of blog where you reminisce about what you did over the weekend or describe your summer travel plans or entertain with stories of your daughter’s birthday party; I am talking about a blog where you comment briefly (or at length if you like) in a nonpolitical and inoffensive way about issues related to what you do for a living.

For example, someone who practices corporate law could post various updates about what is occurring in that field, such as the latest mergers and acquisitions activity. You might post links to pertinent articles or upload a video.

It is critical to be adding content relevant to what you do. You do not have to write a book. All you need to do is show up. Write something relevant. That’s it.

You may ask why it matters if you have a blog. The reason is that a professional blog shows prospective employers, as well as your various peer groups, that you are serious about what you do for a living. You must understand two things: (1) employers prefer to hire people who are passionate about something over those who are just dabbling in it; and (2) people prefer to recommend those interested in something over those who are just dabbling in it.

A blog shows you are not a dabbler. A blog keeps you in tune with the events and news surrounding your profession. A blog makes you more attractive as an employee.

Blogging will dramatically increase your reach. Your friends can easily be updated by your blog posts through Facebook, and your colleagues can easily be updated through LinkedIn (details below).

Every time you make a post you are promoting yourself. You are giving people something to remember you by. You are separating yourself from the pack and becoming that much stronger in the eyes of employers and others. You are demonstrating your interest in your subject matter and legitimizing yourself as an expert in whatever it is you do. You are showing that you are informed.

If you are not sure what you want to write about, simply go to <http://www.google.com/blogsearch> and see what other bloggers are up to. Enter keywords that are relevant to your career.

If you believe that posting to a blog is too difficult, check out Tumblr.com. This service will allow you to simply e-mail your posts to a specific e-mail address and they will be posted automatically to your blog.

[2] Create a profile on LinkedIn. I recommend that everyone who is job-hunting use LinkedIn. It allows recruiters and companies to find you if they are looking—and many use it exclusively to find employees. Complete a profile on this site, reach out to a few people, and make sure you accept people’s invitations when offered. I also recommend attaching your LinkedIn URL to your e-mail signature. Besides making yourself more visible, you can search for jobs on LinkedIn’s job board.

Recommendations from people who have worked with you are important. You should do your best to get as many recommendations as possible on LinkedIn. The best way for you to get recommendations is to write them for other people in your network. Without your asking for a recommendation, many of the people you write recommendations for will simply write one for you back.

You should also link your blog to LinkedIn. You want people in your LinkedIn network to see the various posts about your professional subject matter that are coming in from your blog. It is not difficult to do, and if you have a large network, it greatly increases your exposure.

[3] Create profiles at ZoomInfo, Naymz, and Jigsaw. These services collect information about executives and so forth from public records. If you already have accounts, make sure they are accurate, and if you don’t, create them.

[4] Get yourself a Facebook profile. You absolutely must have a Facebook profile. They make it easy to set up, and with 700 million members, it’s essential that you join in. Once you’re on, make lots of friends. If you are in the job market, the odds

are that someone in your circle of friends will be asked about you—at some point—by a potential employer. The more people in your network, the better your chances of finding the right job.

Remember that your career and your success will be determined by how well and effectively you market yourself. The more friends and others who are connected to you on Facebook the better your chances of connecting with the right person.

[5] Install BranchOut on Facebook. This service is similar to LinkedIn. It installs on Facebook and makes use of your contacts. It helps you expand your network by including everyone you know on Facebook, which helps you include friends and friends of friends in your network to increase the number of companies you can approach. Go to BranchOut.com for more information. There's even a job board!

[6] Create a Twitter account. A Twitter account makes you more visible. Follow people in your industry. Most of these people will follow you back. There are also various Twitter job boards such as @JobShouts, @TweetMyJobs, and @TwitJobSearch. Once you have an account, link your blog to Twitter. There are a ton of tools out there to do this. Here is one good tool: <http://twitterfeed.com/>

[7] Create a profile on About.Me. Using this service, you can put all of your web presence in one place. Here, you can create a personal profile page that allows you to point to all of your other properties on the web.

[8] Post your resume on every job site you can using Resume Boomer. Your objective is to be found by employers. In order to be found by employers, your resume needs to be accessible and online. Using Resume Boomer, you can put your resume online to be seen by major job boards.

[9] Hire microworkers to post your resume online on other sites. There are more than 55,000 job sites. It would take you forever to post your resume on all of the sites out there—and even sites like Resume Boomer cannot do it for you. To be as visible as possible in your job search, you should post your resume on all available sites. You can find a complete list of most of the sites out there (in your field) on the Google or Yahoo Directory. Once you have a list of suitable sites, go to www.ShortTask.com and hire microworkers to post your resume on these various sites. Put together a list of the sites and create a task on Short Task. You can find someone to do this for probably around fifty cents per posted site. Remember: You are increasing visibility.

[10] Get your resume in front of as many recruiters as you can using RecruitAttorney. If you are in the job market, you need to get your resume in front of as many recruiters as you possibly can. RecruitAttorney will instantly distribute your resume to every recruiter in your industry. It is important that all the recruiters out there are aware that you may be looking for a job.

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