

Be Proactive in Business and in Your Job Search

By [Harrison Barnes](#)

The gloomy estimates you've heard about business failures are not exaggerated. As many as half of all small businesses launched in the United States this year will not be around by the end of next year. These businesses will remain as little more than painful memories in the minds of the people who launched them. The big question is why do so many businesses fail? Is it because of lack of venture capital? Bad location? Inexperienced ownership or management? Simple miscalculation of market demand?

Every week for as long as I can remember, there is a giant pullout advertisement for an electronics store called Fry's in the Los Angeles Times. I have not seen giant ads for any other electronics stores in the Times – just this one. In the past five years, I have also read in the same paper about one electronics store after another experiencing major financial troubles, and eventually closing. I think Fry's has probably survived for one reason: the company does not sit passively and wait for customers. Instead, it goes out and finds customers by advertising as aggressively as it can every single week, all year round.

You need to be just as proactive with your career. If you are looking for a job, you need to broadcast yourself to everyone the way Fry's does. Fry's may have the best locations in Southern California. Fry's may even have the best merchandise, the [best managers](#), and the best salespeople in its stores. But none of that matters if Fry's is not being proactive and letting people know it exists.

In late 2008, the unemployment rate in California was above 7.8 percent. In 2010 it rose to over 10 percent. When you see unemployment numbers like this and read the related stories, you always see something else as well: the papers talk about a percentage of people who have simply given up on looking for jobs. This is the last thing I would ever want you to do. I do not want you to give up. I want you to be proactive.

The main reason people fail in their job searches or in business is due to the lack of proactive strategy. You need to be proactive in order to survive.

First, make sure you are in fact seeing all of the job openings available. If you are spending your time on job boards like Monster or CareerBuilder, you need to realize you are seeing only the jobs that employers are paying to have advertised on those specific sites. You need to look at all job search sites, in all newspapers, and on all employer websites. You need to have complete access to every available job in the market. Not being aware of every available job in the market is a huge mistake that can lead to missed opportunities.

This is what we do at [EmploymentCrossing](#): we consolidate every job in the market that we can find into one place. We gather jobs from employer websites, newspapers, and other job boards.

However, being proactive goes further than this. You also need to apply to every single job you can possibly find for which you think you may be a good fit. Even if there is no current opening – give it a shot. Most people only apply for a few jobs when seeking employment.

I have seen people refuse to apply to a company because they knew someone there who did not like the management. This is not a smart decision. Companies have numerous departments and depending on the company's size, potentially hundreds of different supervisors. Refusing to try a company due to one person's bad experience, or even a group of people's bad experiences, is not wise, and there is no place for this within a proactive strategy.

In addition to applying for every open job you can find, you need to track down "hidden" and unseen [job openings](#). How many times have you made an impulse purchase? How many times have you purchased something because you saw it at the right time? The same idea applies to how employers often make hiring decisions. Someone happens to be at the right place and time, and they are hired.

One of the most effective ways to get a job, in my opinion, is through the targeted mailing of your résumé. This is what our company, Employment Authority, does. This almost always generates a significant number of leads when someone is looking for a job. Targeted mailing involves [sending your résumé](#) to a group of employers in the area who match your career interest. For example, if you were searching for a bank teller job, you would mail your résumé to a group of companies in a given city that typically hire bank tellers. This method of pursuing employers is most likely to secure you the sort of job in which you are most interested, and it is highly proactive.

When you cold call an employer, or send an unsolicited résumé, you are also being proactive. You will stick out in the employer's mind much more than the average person who is applying for a job in a classified ad. The employer is also likely to believe that you are interested in them specifically. Furthermore, the employer is given the chance to evaluate whether or not they have a need – all without having to do any advertising, since you are going to the employer proactively.

Businesses often fail for the same reason that people fail to get a job: a lack of proactive measures. Be proactive in your job search. Do everything you can to track down a position and get hired.

THE LESSON

Being proactive in your job search begins with ensuring that you are actually seeing all of the available job openings. Leave no stone unturned, and apply to every possible job even if it seems like a remote possibility. Targeted mailing is another method of proactive job seeking, and can be one of the most effective means of obtaining your career goals.