Ever Think, "Nobody's Hiring?"

A note from Tory Johnson  1-4-2011

There was a time when finding a job meant an interview or two, a handshake and you’d start the following Monday morning. Makes me feel so old just saying that, as if I’m explaining the rotary phone to my kids—something that at 13 they’ve never seen.

You don’t need me to tell you there’s no such luck these days. Nothing is certain in the job market except one thing: we must all take total control of our careers. And the good news is we're all perfectly capable of doing just that. We’re most definitely in the era of the self-directed job search and career advancement. Nobody’s coming to bail us out. There’s no major job market turnaround on the horizon. But that doesn’t mean “nobody’s hiring.”

So what exactly does it mean? That it’s time to throw away all of your “that doesn’t work” isms and start fresh — right now.

People tell me all the time about what doesn’t work: “I’m on Facebook. Doesn’t work. I apply online. Doesn’t work. I show up at events. Doesn’t work.” They’re absolutely right. Just being on, just applying and just showing up won’t ever work.

What does work? All of those things if you’re being proactive instead of passive.

• Social media works wonders when you’re actively engaged in talking to people. A profile alone isn’t going to do much, but a user who’s chatting away with the right people and demonstrating her expertise — well, that definitely works. (For help on social media, download my special report here.)

• Applying online works only if you’re following up with a direct contact. Find someone who works where you’re applying and figure out how to get your resume in front of decision makers. (Blind posting? Don’t count on much.) Apply directly on the websites of companies you’re targeting and always follow the specific directions. Nearly 95% of the applications we receive here at Women For Hire don’t follow directions so they’re automatically disqualified.

• Show up at events only when you’ve done your homework. Who’s attending? Who do you want to be sure to meet? Instead of passing out your business cards and hoping for the phone to ring, ask for the card of someone you’re especially interested in following up with. That enables you to maintain control.

Make everyday a 5 by 5: five new contacts by 5pm every day. It works wonders for jobseekers and small business owners alike.