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SECTION EC1

## Think 'outside the box' to land job

### Use imagination to find those hidden sources

By Claire Bush  
Special for The Republic

Tight job markets call for creative job-seeking strategies. In the Valley, much of the hiring going on now is in small to midsize businesses, according to career coach George Fleming.

"These companies don't have the infrastructure or money to hire a search firm. And they don't have time to sift through piles of resumes sent in response to an ad," Fleming says.

Here are a few "outside the box" suggestions for determined job seekers who want to cash in on this hidden job market.

■ Visit in person. When commercial truck driver Gina Cervantes was seeking work, she visited a half-dozen companies within a five-mile radius of her home in Tempe.

"One company told me they had no openings and that employee turnover was zero," Cervantes says. She requested and filled out an application anyway. Within a week, the company called with a job offer. "So much for zero turnover," she adds.

■ Try a team approach. Fleming advises job seekers to pair up and visit companies that sound interesting.

"Bring a resume, but no expectations. Just talk to people and be open to possibilities," Fleming says. The team concept works because "two can better handle" if rejection comes along," he adds.

■ Read all about it. Trade magazines and the business section of the newspaper are treasure troves of information about corporate movers and shakers, career advisers say. In 1993, Denise Chaffin, a recruiter in the engineering industry, read in a newspaper business section about the planned expansion of Motorola's Scottsdale facility to include the Iridium program, a global satellite infrastructure being developed by the firm.

"Motorola was going to hire about 1,000 engineers. Someone was going to have to process those hires," Chaffin says. She contacted Motorola, using information in the story to direct her resume to the correct decision-maker at the company. "I got the job," Chaffin says, "although no help-wanted advertising had even begun." When Chaffin found herself out of work during Motorola's company-wide layoffs in 2001, she



### Resources

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again turned to the newspaper. She soon read about a Tempe electronics firm, Primarion, which had received a substantial amount of venture capital for a planned expansion. After making inquiries and completing an interview process, Chaffin was hired, again, without responding to an advertisement. Her non-traditional job search method "really works," Chaffin says. It has also increased her knowledge of the industry. "Staying current about newsmakers in my field allows me to be one step ahead of the game. It's a good way to provide my own job security."

■ Be prepared to show what you can do. When Cervantes was conducting her job search, she dressed professionally for each interview, but carried a change

of clothing and work boots with her, in case a potential employer asked her to test drive a truck. Although Cervantes was not required to demonstrate her driving skills during the initial interview, the preparation boosted her confidence. "I told the hiring manager all I needed to do was zip into the ladies' room and change, and I'd be ready for a road test. I felt more in control, knowing I was ready for the next step of the process."

■ Don't limit your job search to professionals. The employment grapevine is alive and well.

"Let your closest friends know you are repositioning yourself," Fleming says. "They know you and take a personal interest in you. They'll be willing to go the extra mile." Many of today's employers are overburdened with administrative work and don't have time to handle hiring duties, Fleming adds. "These companies tell their employees and friends what their employment needs are, and the grapevine provides them with candidates." A caveat: Use discretion if you are employed and you don't want your employer to know you're looking.

Finally, remember that if a new position is slow in coming, it might be a signal to switch career gears. "People can explore becoming a consultant, launching a business, or buying a franchise," Fleming says.



Gina Cervantes