



The Value of Gratitude by Nancy Rummel, ACC

What a great celebration we had at ILS this month as one of our clients landed a general manager position with a prestigious FORTUNE 200 company. That he found an even better executive position in five months after his position locally was eliminated is impressive. Even more remarkable was his attitude of gratitude during the search.

The day his former employer bid him farewell is a day he will never forget. This MBA executive and father of three never suspected his job was at risk. Unlike many people in this situation, he refused to be embarrassed or allow himself to feel self-pity. After the initial shock, he picked himself up, selected a career coach, and went to work saying, "My job now is to find my next job."

The career coaching process always centers on effective networking and, like most people, this client did not understand the richness of his contact list. When told that he would find his next job by asking every contact to help him, he looked a bit askance, but he took on the challenge with zest. Using membership directories of his professional organizations, he sent a couple hundred emails asking people if they knew of any employment opportunities for a person with his credentials.

He was pleasantly surprised to find out how many people were happy to help, especially in this tough economy. People he had never met replied with suggestions and advice. One of these replies from a stranger led him to his new position. Of course, it was his own experience and attributes that resulted in the job offer. But he would never have known about this job if he had not networked very extensively and effectively. Like most jobs at his level, it was never listed on any web site.

During every step of his search, he expressed warm, sincere gratitude to everyone who helped him. Even when people said they had no ideas for him, he wrote great thank you notes because they took the time to reply. That's the way gratitude works – it brings out the best in people. It was exciting to see his contacts become anxious to help and really want him to succeed. They got involved in his story thinking that it may be them one day, and they'd want people to help. Had this person not reached out and not been grateful to those who helped, his job search easily could have taken twice as long.

The value of gratitude in creating positive outcomes has been well documented by psychologists over the years, and it's always wonderful to see it in action. Whether we are in a job search or leaders trying to get others to help us, how can we express gratitude more often and more deeply in order to create opportunities to succeed? The more we dedicate ourselves to improvement in this important area, the more effective we will be.