

## Today's Best Way to Land a Job

More and more employers are advertising their job openings. So, the old advice that networking is the best way to land the job isn't as true any more.

If you don't have a great network, you may do better to focus your job search on answering ads — if you use the right approach.

**Step 1.** Every few days, look for on-target jobs on the Web site of 10 or 20 employers you'd like to work for, the Web site of your professional association or union, local employment Web sites such as sfgate.com/jobs and other national Web sites. And don't forget about the newspaper: After reading this column, just turn the page. Voila, job ads!

**Step 2.** Only apply for jobs for which you are qualified. If an employer wanted to hire someone without the qualifications, he would not waste time and money placing an ad and screening a stack of applications. He'd hire a friend, relative or insider.

**Step 3.** Recognize that most job ads yield many applicants, so your cover letter must make crystal clear that you have the qualifications. For most jobs, this cover letter is optimal:

*Dear (Insert name of employer),  
I was excited to see your job for a (insert job title) in the Chronicle because I believe I'm well qualified and would enjoy the work.*

Then write, in capital letters, "JOB REQUIREMENT #1." Beneath it, in a few words, explain how you meet that requirement. If there's a requirement you don't meet, explain, if true, how you might compensate or that you know you could learn it quickly. Repeat that process for each of the other job requirements listed in the ad.

*I've accomplished a lot in my work. For example, (Insert, in one paragraph each, one or two stories that state a problem you faced at work, how you approached it, and its positive resolution.)*

*There's much more to me than can be described in writing, so I hope you'll choose to interview me.*

*Sincerely,  
Joe Job Seeker*

**Step 3a.** Decide whether to include your resume. If your resume won't make you appear head-of-the-pack, don't include it, even if the ad requires it. Usually a resume will eliminate you if it has even one of the following flaws: insufficient relevant experience, unexplained employment gaps, job-hopping or the lack of a required degree. If your resume has one of these flaws, it's usually better to stand or fall on the above cover letter, which highlights how well you fit the position.

**Step 4.** If the employer is a small organization, consider walking your application in. Tell the receptionist, "I'm applying for a position here as (insert job title) and am excited about it. Do you think it's a mistake for me to try to hand deliver it to the person who'll be making the decision?" Sure, many if not most times, you won't get to meet the hirer, but as long as it wasn't too much of a hassle for you, it's worth trying. At minimum, the receptionist will tell the hirer of your polite enthusiasm. Note: Walking your resume in will rarely work at large employers. They usually have firm policies against that sort of thing.

**Step 5.** Even if the ad says, "No phone calls," if you're really excited about the job, I recommend that you phone the employer a week after applying. Say something like, "Hi, I'm Jane Jobseeker, and I applied for the job as X. I'm excited about the position, so I figured I'd take the liberty of calling to follow up. I'm wondering if you think it's a mistake for me to ask to talk briefly with the person who's doing the hiring." Again, even if the person doesn't want you to speak with the hirer, he will probably tell the hirer of your enthusiasm. And if you're lucky, you'll have gotten yourself a phone interview.

**Step 6.** Remember, job searching is a numbers game. The odds are small that a single application will result in a job offer, but if you use the above method to apply for at least a few on-target jobs each week and interview well (See [www.martynemko.com/pub/articles/interview.shtm](http://www.martynemko.com/pub/articles/interview.shtm) for advice on interviewing) I'll bet that, unless you're a wonderful networker, you'll land a good job sooner than if you relied mainly on networking.

*Career coach Dr. Nemko's radio show airs Sundays 11 a.m. to noon Pacific time on KALW 91.7 FM or worldwide on [www.martynemko.com](http://www.martynemko.com). The site also contains more than 400 of his published writings. The Reader's Choice poll rated his book, "Cool Careers for Dummies," the No. 1 most useful career guide.*



# The Great American Dream Challenge (Part I)

By Marcia Wieder

"The American Dream" was first referenced in the book "The Epic of America," where James Truslow Adams wrote, "Here life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement."

Life changed dramatically for us all on Sept. 11, 2001. Even now, life feels uncertain and many have lost hope entirely. Some say this is not a time to dream. I say, there's never been a more important time. Without vision, companies and countries fail, and without our personal dreams, hopes and aspirations, life can become meaningless.

For this reason, I have created The Great American Dream Challenge.

## The Challenge.

If we define a dream as something that you want, that has heart and meaning for you and that you believe in, what are your dreams? Dreams are precious and essential and can change your family, community and the world. Your dreams can make you a better and more passionate human being. If no dream is too big or too small, the real question becomes, simply: What matters to you and what are you willing to do about it?

The Challenge is simple, yet powerful. Pick a dream — (at least one) small or large, personal or professional — that matters to you. Make the commitment to achieve it (or a portion of it) by Sept. 11, an essential day to demonstrate that we are a nation of dreamers. On that day, members of My Dream Circle will come together at a live event in San Francisco to demonstrate that we are still hopeful and we are still dreaming. We will celebrate our success and create new dreams for the year ahead.

To join the Challenge, set 9/11 as the date for you to accomplish something important. Get started today by going to [www.mydreamcoach.com](http://www.mydreamcoach.com) and post your dream or email it to me directly. Whether you have a dream or are in need of a new one, here are a few to inspire you.

## Inspiring Dreamers

**Jerome Williams, pitcher, San Francisco Giants** — Jerome's proud father told me that when Jerome was growing up, he would ask his son, "Is your dream to play like the kids on the street or the guys on TV?" Jerome always knew, "I'm going to play on TV." After a recent winning streak, he said, "I love having fun with fans. When I was younger, growing up in Hawaii, we never really had big-name stars, and when we did, they'd blow you off. When I got drafted, I told myself I wouldn't be like that." Great dreamers inspire others to go for their dreams, too.

**Elizabeth Shaver** — Shaver's noble dream is to create an educational model for prison reform, integrating education and rehabilitation. She created a strategic partnership between the California Institute for Integral Studies and San Quentin State Prison. She is writing the preliminary curriculum, including training of graduate students to teach there and raised money to hire a grant writer. One person's dream can and does make a difference.

**Sharon Smith, CEO of Girl Scouts of Southeastern Pennsylvania** — Her vision is that teenage girls learn to stand up for their dreams while being mentored by women executives. Every summer, we gather at Camp VIP, sleep in tents and teach the girls to overcome obstacles. Four years in a row, Citizens Bank has sponsored this event, putting its resources where its heart is — into the community. This is an example of a Team Dream that understands today's dreamers are tomorrow's visionaries, who will shape our world.

**Bruce Wilkinson, author of "The Dream Giver,"** — He is the founder of Never Ending Gardens, a project he launched in South Africa (where he now lives) to meet the critical needs of hungry people. This is a low cost, low maintenance way of continually providing a food source. In just months, over 500 sustainable gardens were planted. Certified Dream Coach, Tanya Thomas' dream is to make an impact in the world and her husband Jerome's dream has always been to travel to South Africa. They depart Friday to work with Bruce, embarking on a dream that is of a personal, professional, relationship, altruistic and fun nature, all at once.

## A Myriad of Dreams

Some of the dreams posted on [www.mydreamcircle.com](http://www.mydreamcircle.com) include writing a novel, publishing a book, running for political office, building or buying a home, starting a company, growing a lucrative coaching practice, losing weight, running a marathon, getting married, having a baby, moving to a foreign country, learning a second language and starting a non-profit organization.

Whether your dream is for yourself, your community or the world, this is your chance to act, to get help in making it happen and to support others in doing the same. You are not alone. Make your dream a reality by joining The Great American Dream Challenge and share your resources and successes. Watch this column for more information and to read what happens. Let's prove that dreams are alive and well in America!

*America's Dream Coach, Marcia Wieder is an internationally recognized speaker and best-selling author. For more info or to join her community of dreamers, visit [www.mydreamcoach.com](http://www.mydreamcoach.com).*