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# The One Thing You Should Do to Find a Job in 2011

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Face to face networking. That's how you land a flesh and blood job. Get off the computer, stop with the job site searches, emailing and texting. Pursue your contacts until they'll meet you in person. It can be a Starbucks or a beer at the corner bar. But you want to look one another in the eye, talk face to face, feel that personal chemistry.



One meeting over coffee is worth a thousand hours answering online job postings.

Such is the message of a fun [story](#) that ran in *The New York Observer's* Media Mob column this Tuesday. The paper's Nick Summers tracked down four recent high profile media hires and asked them how they landed their new gigs. Ron Fournier, former D.C bureau chief of the AP, got hired as the editor of *National Journal* at an informal lunch. *The New Republic's* Michelle Cottle met Tina Brown for coffee and wound up with a new job at *Newsweek*. Pulitzer Prize-winner Robin Givhan, also had coffee with

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"I have always expected that as soon as I'm laid off I'll want to do nothing but have

Tina Brown that turned into a job offer. Joel Lovell, formerly of *GQ*, got hired by his old chum and new *New York Times Magazine* editor Hugo Lindgren, after an easygoing lunch. The meeting was more like a chat between friends than a job interview, Lovell told *The Observer*.

This doesn't happen only in the tight-knit media world, say two of my best job search sources, Roy Cohen, a job coach and author of *The Wall Street Professional's Survival Guide*, and Orville Pierson, a senior vice president at HR consulting firm Lee Hecht Harrison and author of *Highly Effective Networking: Meet the Right People and Get a Great Job*.

"It happens everywhere," says Pierson. "If you're the hiring manager, your first choice, your safest choice, your best bet, is to hire someone you already know. Adds Pierson, "Your second choice is someone who is known by someone you know." When networking, always meet face to face if humanly possible, he recommends.

Cohen says he's seeing a less formal approach to job hunting and hiring even among the usually staid Wall Street crowd. "It's all about relationship building," he says. "There's not as heavy a reliance on recruiting firms." Companies don't want to pay recruiters' hefty fees. "Recruiting firms are dinosaurs," he notes. That means job seekers should go directly to their contacts and push for in-person meetings. Coffee is a great way to go, says Cohen. "A cup of coffee is the language of people with a short attention span."

It seems to work for Tina Brown.

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#### ABOUT ME

Since Forbes hired me in 1995 to write a legal column, I've taken advantage of the great freedom the magazine grants its staff, to pursue stories about everything from books to billionaires. I've chased South Africa's first black billionaire through a Cape Town shopping mall while admirers flocked around him, climbed inside the hidden chamber in the home of an antiquarian arms and armor dealer atop San Francisco's Telegraph Hill, and sipped Chateau Latour with one of Picasso's grandsons in the Venice art museum of French tycoon François Pinault. I've edited the magazine's Lifestyle section and opinion pieces by the likes of John Bogle and Gordon Bethune. As deputy leadership editor, these days I mostly write about careers and corporate social responsibility. I got my job at Forbes through a brilliant libertarian economist, Susan Lee, whom I used to put on television at MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour. Before that I covered law and lawyers for journalistic stickler, harsh taskmaster and the best teacher a young reporter could have had, Steven Brill. [See my profile »](#)

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