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Hired! Going to church to get a job

Confronted with a tough job market, Michael Butler reached out to his community and received multiple job offers.

By [Jessica Dickler](#), CNNMoney.com staff writer

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NEW YORK (CNNMoney.com) -- In today's tough economy, many people are praying for a job offer. When Michel Butler headed to church, he ended up with multiple offers.

One year ago, Butler, 42, was a consultant in the home-building industry in Texas with aspirations of building his own spec homes in the Dallas/Fort Worth area. But six months later, he was an unemployed husband and father of three with no job prospects to speak of.

"The market here really hit the skids in late June, early July, and I knew it was time to consider something outside the industry," Butler said.

First, Butler joined a free career workshop at a local church, which was open to the public. They met every Saturday evening and covered everything from networking to resume writing and interview skills.

"I think that church organization was really a feather in my cap," he said. "It helped me focus on my next steps and also gave me refreshers in interviewing and resume writing," he said.

Then, Butler plugged back into some old networks, including college friends and former employers.

One friend introduced Butler to a local business coach who put him in touch with a few hiring managers and by October he had two interviews in two different industries.

Prudential offered him a job as a financial service agent. They would pay for the training but Butler's income would be largely based on commission. Although that wasn't ideal, he accepted right away.

Then came another offer, this time for a marketing position with a six figure salary. "I couldn't pass it up," Butler said, so he quit

Prudential shortly after starting and went to work as relationship manager at Spear One in Dallas.

Aside from the bigger salary and better job security, "the best part about my new position is that it is fun," Butler said, which is the last thing he imagined he'd be having after his last career crumbled.

Getting off the couch

Our panel of career coaches agree that Butler was wise to tap into local organizations that could help him brush up on his job search skills and expose him to other job seekers sharing their experiences.

"Church groups are a good way to use existing community connections to expand your network of people," according to Career and Business Consultant Kathy Robinson. But the danger is that "you could be getting 20-year-old resume advice," she warned. "As long as the members are keeping themselves current on job search techniques it's actually a fabulous resource."

He was also smart to dig into his networks, said Ford Myers author of the upcoming book, "Get the Job You Want, Even When No One's Hiring."

"The wrong thing to do is sit at home in your pajamas and apply to jobs online," he said, "it's isolating and depressing."

Reconnecting with college friends, former coworkers and even other unemployed workers in the community can pay off big time. "That's called networking and that's the single most important activity anyone can do when they are in transition," Myers said.

For Butler, those connections led to not one, but two job offers and the experts agree that while not encouraged, quitting one new job to accept a better offer is acceptable in today's market.

"It's every man for himself in this economy," Myers said.

Butler's first responsibility is to himself and his family, according to Gerry Crispin, co-owner of Careerxroads, a consulting firm based in New Jersey.

Even after finding full-time employment, Crispin recommends that workers stay in touch with recruiters and keep up with their other resources. Keeping yourself in the game is essential to getting job offers.

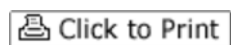
"Are you ever 100% out of the market? Yeah when you're dead," Crispin said, "or retired," he added.

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