



## Job Hunting in Tough Economic Times

*A discussion document reviewing factors effecting job hunting, which is even more challenging in difficult economic times*

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There aren't many guarantees in life however it is reasonable to say that if you are in business for long enough you will see the full range of economic conditions in the markets you serve from 'boom' to 'bust' and back again and it is so often the case that the bigger the 'boom' the bigger the 'bust'!

Let's consider where we are today. With a 'bad news' obsessed media fuelling what are clearly more challenging and uncertain economic times finding a new job takes more effort than in a buoyant market

So what points may we want to take into consideration when looking for that key new role?

### **1. The golden rule**

Network extensively. There is no question that the people who take the least amount of time to find a new opportunity have the largest industry network. Basically people can't offer you a job if they don't know you exist.

Depending upon your job function there are a variety of ways to build your network, try web based services such as LinkedIn, make yourself known to the key recruiters in your industry, increase you profile by presenting at conferences or at least submitting a poster. Author articles for industry journals and above all learn the basic principles of networking for when you do meet others in your industry.

Networking is never complete. It is best done a little at a time and often as it is a constant on going process. It is never too soon to start as it is best begun before you need to rely on it to help you find a new career path. As with all business interactions relationships play an important role and it is too late to start them only when you need them. *See our knowledge base article on Networking*

### **2. Know what you are marketing!**

Do you know exactly why you should be hired? The answer because I really want this job is not even close. How are you going to demonstrate that you can add value to a potential employer? Remember you are the product and your CV is your marketing collateral, if it is not enticing it is not going to sell you. Carry out a personal offer analysis, know our key strengths/benefits and any USP's. Once identified who is going to value these the most? Different employers and different roles require different strengths. Before you make any application make sure you can answer in a few concise sentences, why it is in the employer's benefit to hire you and what evidence can you provide to support any of the statements you make. Avoid fluffy statements like "above average intelligence and hard working". When you write down any statement give it the "So What" treatment – i.e. could anybody respond in such a way to what you have written? Identify how you can demonstrate the value you have added to organisations in the past, what you have contributed and therefore what you may contribute in the future is far more important than a personal statement that will be like nearly everyone else's. A list of "achievements" on your CV is far more important than a list of "responsibilities". Being above average intelligence and hard working may be behind why you have succeeded but on their own as statements they are almost worthless. It is the proof of the value you have added that counts.

### **3. Decide how to market yourself**

As above make yourself known to the relevant recruiters. Check out journals and websites for advertised vacancies. Do you know all the places to look? If not ask around, do some research. Which recruiters do others in the industry you know use, where do they place or look for job adverts?

In addition to looking for opportunities being advertised or brought to your attention by recruitment consultants decide what proactive steps you are going to take for yourself. Do you want to be a machine gun and send a CV to every possible company or a sniper, taking careful aim and targeting fewer selected companies? With today's communication technology the former takes less effort and like most things in life the easy way is usually the way to fail! The best results almost always take time and effort. If you have correctly identified your key strengths the next step is to identify which companies in the market are most likely to benefit

from these. By targeting fewer companies you can customise your approach to each. Remember what each company wants may be slightly different; by treating each target company as a unique opportunity you can provide them with the information that is most relevant to them.

Always have a standard CV that covers everything you have done but when writing to apply for a specific role or to make a general enquiry about opportunities in a target company customise your CV to highlight the most relevant areas with regard to what they may well be looking for. A CV is a selling document designed to get you an interview. One CV can never be both comprehensive enough to cover every detail of your career and specific enough to highlight only the most relevant information for a given vacancy/company. If you send a standard letter and/or CV to a lot of companies how likely is it your approach will stand out above other making the same application?

Don't rely on recruitment agencies, of course register with the relevant ones but take personal responsibility for your future. Is any recruiter likely to know you, your market better than you? Yes they will have contacts with hiring managers and HR but you can identify these people as well. Making a direct approach demonstrates personal commitment and resourcefulness and there will not be the recruitment price tag on your head that a recruiter needs to stay in business. If you do not know who to target start at the top. To get people's attention try sending a letter not another e-mail to sit along side the 100's already in their inbox. Make sure the envelope does not look like it contains junk mail to be looked at never. Hand write the address and mark it private. Think "how am I going to get my application read by the right person?"

#### **4. Stay employable**

If you are unfortunate enough to find yourself out of work it is essential that you remain employable. It is all too easy to drift into a rut, become frustrated or anxious. None of these traits will help secure your next opportunity which will come. But how do you do this? Key is to have a plan for you time. Being out of work is not the time to take a break, paint the spare room or do any of the other jobs that have been on the to do list for so long. Once you have accepted a job offer take the holiday, paint the spare room or whatever needs doing but not before. Working on the points above, networking, understanding exactly what you are marketing and identifying possible opportunities is a full time project. In addition when evaluating your key strength identify areas for improvement and take a course, read some books to improve your skills/knowledge in these areas. Not only will this improve your performance once back in employment it will help you secure your next opportunity by demonstrating to future employers your drive, self awareness and discipline.

#### **To summarise**

- It is never too early to start building your network
- Know what you are marketing, take time to understand your key strengths
- Have a plan on how to market yourself
- Take actions to remain employable



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### **About You**

If in order to meet your personal and business objectives you need to recruit the best people, train and develop your existing team, develop the knowledge and skills of a key manager, raise additional funding or make an acquisition or divestiture we would like to speak with you.

If you are interested in developing your own knowledge and skill set to achieve further success and make the most of your talents with proven coaches we would like to talk.

If you are looking for your next career move or wish to have some impartial and experienced career advice we would like to hear from you

### **Our Customers**

US companies looking to establish themselves in Europe needing to recruit and/or wanting assistance with the associated logistics.

European start up companies looking for additional funding, the recruitment of key staff or assistance with their HR processes.

Established small businesses to the largest international corporations looking to recruit train and develop their existing staff, review their HR processes or make an acquisition or divestiture.

European Distributors looking to recruit and/or train and develop their existing staff.

Venture Capitalists looking to recruit early stage commercial people into companies they have invested in.

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