



Randy's Work *and You*

April Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

It's hard to believe that the first quarter of 2006 has gone by all ready. Talent will be in demand more than ever before.

The War For Talent: *Fast Company* magazine reports that a yearlong study conducted by McKinsey & Co. indicates the most important corporate resource over the next 20 years will be talent. It's also the resource in shortest supply. And even as the demand for talent goes up, the supply of it will be going down. McKinsey's study involved 77 companies and almost 6,000 managers and executives.

Some interesting points from the article include:

- In 15 years, there will be 15% fewer Americans in the 35- to 45-year-old range than there are now. At the same time, the U.S. economy is likely to grow at a rate of 3% to 4% per year.
- In order to keep the pipeline full of talented people, almost all of the companies studied are starting to take nontraditional approaches to recruiting.
- Only 60% of the corporate officers at the companies studied said that they were able to pursue most of their growth opportunities. They have good ideas, they have money - they just don't have enough talented people to pursue those ideas. They are "talent-constrained."

So what will be your talent based value proposition?

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This month's topics:

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1. How Too Many Long Hours Can Be Bad for Your Career By Hunkar Ozyasar

Approximately 2,500 years ago, Confucius told his students: "To go too far is as bad as to fall short." Excessive work, he said, is as undesirable as laziness. As simple as this advice may sound, most of us still fail to grasp it, thinking that the only downsides of overwork are fatigue and burnout. In reality, the side effects can be much more serious. Especially for managers, hard work can become toxic at extreme doses and "poison" a career.

First, working excessively long hours can mask weaknesses. These may surface too late, when problems

are no longer easily fixed. Consider the manager who routinely does the work of her assistant because she failed to recruit the right person and train him properly. Her superiors may not notice the problem if she's willing to work hard enough. The individual may not even grasp the extent of her problem, as she will probably be busy praising herself for working harder than anyone else.

Consequently, this executive who needs urgent training in human management, instead, can be put in charge of a five-person team. This is when all hell breaks loose. Hard work can't make up for the inefficiencies she creates for five employees. After all, there are only so many hours in a day. If this manager weren't willing to work insane hours, the problem would have been exposed earlier and addressed before her promotion. In the end, she would go much further in her career. If, however, the problem surfaces as a result of a failure, the manager will have not only a long-term weakness to address but also a fiasco to explain.

Another problem with working long hours is that such a lifestyle is extremely difficult to sustain. An analogy is a company that relies exclusively on price cuts to gain market share. Charging \$1 for a product that costs 98 cents to manufacture is not a sensible strategy, because it leaves no room for error. The first labor strike or product recall can easily drive the corporation into bankruptcy.

Similarly, a manager who is working as much as humanly possible has little time to handle common life challenges -- a sick parent, a new baby or a new home purchase. Any additional time required for these things usually must come from working less, as there is often nothing else in such a person's life to cut back on. The ability to outwork others declines as the years go by. As you age, your body, too, will start to protest those all-nighters and refuse to run properly on pizza and Diet Coke.

A third reason why working long hours isn't a sound career strategy is the ease with which it can be copied. It is difficult for a competitor to come out of nowhere and know your customers as well as you do or match the rapport you have developed with top management. But someone can, and often does, appear out of the blue and send more e-mail, prepare more presentations and return more phone calls. To put it in consulting jargon, hard work isn't a "sustainable competitive advantage."

You might ask: "How do I know if I am working too hard?" Here are three ways to tell:

1. **Compare your hours to your peers'**. Keep an eye on how much time they're spending in the office and try to achieve similar or better results with fewer than average hours. If your hours are above average and your performance isn't, you're probably compensating for some kind of shortcoming.
1. **Listen to how people define your strengths.** Adjectives such as "hardworking," "dedicated," or "committed" shouldn't show up among your top three qualities. These are copied easily and can't differentiate you as you advance in your career. If you have doubts, pick up a copy of a business publication and read a profile of any top manager. You rarely will find those qualities among their strengths. The list may include "visionary," "bold," "good communicator" and other descriptors, but probably not "hard worker."
1. **Finally, ask yourself how much harder you could be working if you really wanted to.** If the answer is, "Not much harder," you're in trouble. Should your boss present you with an excellent opportunity and ask you to try harder in return, you'll likely fail to rise to the challenge. You are already trying as hard as possible and can't do any better.

If, on the other hand, you have room to crank up the hours when needed, you can dig into your reserves when the race heats up. This will enable you to perform at your best when it matters the most -- a key quality that differentiates the stars from the rest.

-- Mr. Ozyasar is a former high-yield bond strategist for an investment bank in New York. This article is

excerpted from the book he is writing: "When Time Management Fails."

2. Job-hunting online gets trickier

Federal regulations kicked in that will make Internet job hunting more complicated. Here's what candidates need to know – and change -- now.

By Anne Fisher FORTUNE senior writer

February 6, 2006

NEW YORK (FORTUNE) - Friends, be warned: If you're hoping to find a new job through a job board or other online channel -- or if you're an employer seeking candidates on the Web -- the world just got a little bit more difficult.

New federal guidelines meant to standardize how employers track data on the diversity of their job-applicant pool are taking effect starting today for jobs at federal contractors -- and similar rules will kick in later this year at U.S. companies with more than 50 employees. And resumes and search approaches that worked perfectly well before may no longer do the trick.

In the new system, federal regulators will be checking to see that companies are keeping diversity data on all applicants, according to a new, more uniform definition of "applicant."

According to this definition, an applicant must "express interest" in the job, whether by sending in a resume, applying on the company's site, or whatever other means the company requests, says Gerry Crispin, founder and principal of CareerXRoads and a long-time Internet job hunting expert.

That "expression of interest" must show that he or she has *all* the qualifications for the job listed in the company's job description (not just some or most of them) -- and those qualifications must be specific and measurable.

The applicant must be considered for a specific current or future position, and "never remove himself from consideration for the job," says Crispin. For example, "if I have a job opening in Boston, for example, and you've specified that you want to work in Chicago, I can infer that you've removed yourself," he says.

To comply with these new rules and get the most diversity, employers will have an incentive to keep the pool of applicants for each job relatively small and as random as possible. To make sure you're considered now, you'll have to:

1. **Follow the company's instructions.** "If an employer says that, to apply for a given job, you must go to their web site and enter a certain code number, then do that," says Crispin. "Otherwise your resume will never be seen."
2. **Spell out your qualifications clearly.** "Pay very close attention to the specific qualifications an employer lists for a particular job, and make sure your resume contains those exact words," Crispin says. For instance, if a job description includes the words "three years of credit accounting experience," put "three years of credit accounting experience" on your resume. "Don't just list a credit-accounting position with the dates you had it and assume someone will figure it out," Crispin advises. This may mean you have to rewrite your resume for each job opening you apply for.
3. **Keep your resume up-to-the-minute current.** "The rules allow companies to pick a random pool of applicants by searching the job boards for 'most recent' qualified applicants," Crispin notes. "In those cases, no one will even look at a resume that is more than two or three weeks old." Yikes.
4. **Target specific companies and visit their web sites often.** "The first announcement of a job opening very often appears on a company's own site before it is posted anywhere else," says Crispin. If enough applicants turn up on the site, the employer is unlikely to look any further. "Companies really do not want 500 or 1,000 applicants for each job," Crispin says. "If they get 30 who are qualified, that's a reasonable number for a hiring manager to consider and select from."
5. **If someone is referring you for a job, make sure you -- and they -- understand how to do it.** About one-third of all new hires now come through employee-referral programs, and companies are still permitted to run these however they like, as long as they follow a consistent policy. So if your pal at Ostrich Corp. wants to refer you for a job, know what Ostrich's policy is (whether via the company web site, having your friend submit your resume for you in a particular way, or what-have-you) and follow it to the letter.

Of course, it remains to be seen whether the new rules will actually increase diversity in companies or just create extra work for everybody. Either way, if you're looking for a new job, you can't afford to ignore them.

3. Boomer Corner: Mid-life Crisis: Changing Careers Mid-stream

ByTeena Rose.

Teena Rose is a columnist, public speaker, and certified/published resume writer with Resume to Referral <<http://www.resumebycprw.com/>> . She's authored several books, including *How to Design, Write, and Compile a Quality Brag Book* <<http://www.resumebycprw.com/brag-book.htm>> , *20-Minute Cover Letter Fixer* <<http://www.resumebycprw.com/cover-letter-fixer.htm>> , and *Cracking the Code to Pharmaceutical Sales* <http://www.resumebycprw.com/resume_pharm_book.htm> .

You're 40 something. You're underemployed, or worse unemployed, you're tired of the daily grind, you're bored (or frightened) and you're wondering where your future went.

Join the club. Massive layoffs across the US industrial sector mean you're far from alone. Millions of white- and blue-collar workers are rethinking their career paths. Maybe you should, too.

Build on What You Know

You have experience and that's valuable. To walk away from 15 years in marketing to become a goat herder is *not* a good career move. Build on what you know.

Examples

An auto engineer picks up a temporary teaching certificate after a three-month crash course in principles of education and becomes a high school CAD instructor. It doesn't pay as much, but the intangible rewards more than offset the smaller paycheck.

A real estate agent, tired of the late night phone calls and 60-hour workweeks, starts flipping properties on the side. She knows the market, the inspectors, the contractors, the lenders – she's plugged into the local real estate grid from the top down. So, she takes what she knows (of immense value) and starts her own property management company buying, selling and renting properties.

A CPA becomes Director of Development for a local non-profit, a pediatric nurse takes the helm at a drop-off kid care franchise – you get the idea. Build on what you've got.

Make a Critical Self-Assessment

Sit down with a nice cup of cocoa and make a list of your professional skills and personal attributes that could be leveraged in a new career. You'll be surprised at the extent of your skill set.

Your list should include proficiency using computer software programs (these are transportable skills required on almost every job), special training and knowledge acquired on-the-job.

Now, here's where the cocoa comes in. Make a second list of your professional shortcomings. If you think a hard drive is the evening commute, it's time to go back to school.

Go back to School

Adult education, the local community college, technical schools, four-year universities, workshops and seminars are all great places to develop new skills and update old ones.

Get the certificate, license, the degree or the credentials you need to start down your new career path.

Study the Job Market

What's hot and what's not? Well, the IT sector seems to be hot again while manufacturing is in free fall. There's unprecedented demand for health care providers and educators at all levels.

Go through the classifieds to see what's hot in your region. Or, maybe you're willing to relocate. That'll expand your options!

The Absolute Worst Thing You Can Do

Don't quit without a plan of action. That's walking the tightrope without a net. If at all possible, give your notice, clean out your desk and move on to the rest of your life starting first thing Monday morning.

Now, if you're 'in between positions' (read unemployed), you're walking that tightrope without a net anyway!

In this case, the key is to find a job – any job to keep the creditors at bay. Build on your skill set by designing a resume, cover letter and thank-you letter that demonstrate *how* your skills translate to this new position,

business or industry.

And if you don't know how to best position those skills on your paper introduction to potential employers, hire someone who does. Using a professional resume prep service is one of the best investments in a brighter future you'll ever make.

Read more articles from Teena Rose <http://www.resumebycprw.com/resume_articles.htm>

4. Success Story

By Kevin Donlin

-- Kevin Donlin is the author of "The Last Guide to Cover Letter & Resume Writing You'll Ever Need," a do-it-yourself manual that will help you find a job in 30 days ... or your money back. For more information, please visit <http://www.CollegeRecruiter.com/guaranteed-resumes.php>

Kevin Shares success stories on his website.

Job-search goal cards work

Here's a story sent in by Fred, from Chanhassen, Minn. He got hired, in part, by using my "job-search goal card" technique in his search.

Fred writes:

"On Tuesday, May 24th, I attended the Star Tribune job fair at the Minneapolis Convention Center and heard you speak. You said to write down our ideal new job on a 3x5 card and read it every day until we found a job.

"I just started working today (July 26) as a consultant, at \$65 per hour, on a 3-6 month contract that could go as long as 18 months. I am working at a major Fortune 500 company not far from my house. Conclusion: Mission accomplished. Thanks!"

Here's what Fred wrote on his job search goal card -- you can see how close he came to hitting the mark:

"I am a project manager / business analyst / CIO / controller who knows how to use technology to build new products and systems. I am making \$85,000 per year, and I enjoy meeting new people and problems."

Your Takeaway Lesson: When you write down a specific description of your ideal job and read it out loud at least twice a day, you will almost always get hired faster. Why? For the same reason you can start a fire with the sun's rays using a magnifying glass -- focus.

I recommend you write the following statement on a 3x5 card and say it 10 times out loud, three times a day -- when you wake up, during lunch, and before going to bed each night. This will imprint your job-search goal on your brain. And focus your efforts. And help you get hired faster:

"It's August 30 (INSERT DATE YOU WANT TO BE WORKING BY). I'm an effective INSERT JOB TITLE who adds value to the company lucky enough to have me. I'm making \$XX,XXX in a stimulating environment, doing work I love, surrounded by co-workers I enjoy."

To make this work for you, all you need is a clear idea of the job you want, a 3x5 card and a pen. This is not high-tech or low-tech -- this is no-tech. So you have no excuse for not trying it.

Good Job Kevin and Fred!

5. Humor Department: Take the job security quiz

The job security quiz will help judge how long you'll end up at your current job and what will become of you.

1. The boss appears at your cubicle and finds you playing DOOM at your desk, you...

- A. Swear to take the game off your hard drive forever, but first make a copy for his kid.
- B. Inform him that you're planting a virus in the program so that everyone who plays it on company time will get reported to Human Resources.
- C. Tell him that whatever he wants will have to wait until you've finished the level.

2. There's a cushy job opening in the mail department, stuffing envelopes with free samples. It pays twice as much as your current position. What do you do?

- A. Meekly suggest to your boss that transferring you might improve the morale of everyone who's been working with you.
- B. Politely ask your boss for a transfer and offer to split the salary increase 50/50 with him.
- C. Barge into your boss's office and demand reassignment so that you "Won't have to work under someone who should have retired before he became a laughingstock."

3. When your boss throws a party and invites everyone in the office except you, what do you do?

- A. Stay home and watch 'I Love Lucy' reruns.
- B. Show up at the party anyway, with a really expensive bottle of wine and a briefcase full of small, unmarked bills.
- C. Go over to your boss's house after everyone has left and throw rocks at the windows, shouting obscenities.

4. Your boss criticizes your work unjustly; what do you do?

- A. Listen politely, and then apologize.
- B. Blame someone else.
- C. Climb on top of your desk, and hold up a piece of paper on which you've written the word "union."

5. When the CEO parks his car in your spot, you...

- A. Wash and wax it, then leave your business card under the windshield wiper.
- B. Key it ... then tell the CEO's secretary you saw your boss near it, loitering suspiciously.
- C. Key it ... then proudly tell the CEO's secretary that you did it.

6. Your boss asks you to play Kooky the Clown for his kid's fifth birthday party, what do you do?

- A. Offer to pay for the costume rental and cake, too.
- B. Agree to do it, then blackmail a co-worker into doing it while pretending to be you.
- C. Agree to do it, then show up as yourself and tell the children that Kooky is dead.

7. The boss accuses you of not keeping the office clean; you...

- A. Clean the office while he supervises.
- B. Tell him that you delegated the job, then fire the underling you supposedly gave the job to.
- C. Clean the office again, but this time, you use your boss' face.

Scoring this test

Mostly A's: You have nothing to worry about. They'll never fire you because you're a doormat.

Mostly B's: You're not just going to keep your job, with your complete disregard for other peoples feelings, you'll positively shoot up the ladder of success. Congratulations! You're a real jerk.

Mostly C's: You are a career kamikaze. The boss would have fired you long ago, but he's terrified of what you might do.

6. Words that Inspire

"It is not death that a man should fear, but he should fear never beginning to live."

---Marcus Aurelius, Roman Emperor

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