



Randy's Work *and You*

August Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

Resumes are indeed marketing tools but read on:

Resume Inaccuracies

According to two separate online surveys sampling 350 HR professionals, 61 percent said they find inaccuracies in resumes after background checks.

Some interesting data emerged in answers to the question posed in an online. Background Checks/Resume Inaccuracies' survey: "When investigating the backgrounds of job candidates, how often do you find inaccuracies in their resume?"

6% said "often"

77% indicated "sometimes"

27% reported "rarely"

2% stated "never"

9% responded, "We do not investigate the backgrounds of potential employees."

The second survey on effects on hiring decisions based upon discovering inaccuracies revealed these stats:

86% said it was either "very important" or "important"

2% said "no effect on hiring decisions"

Source: www.shrm.org

ANNOUNCEMENT:

"NOW WHAT?"

Are you thinking of making a big change in how you make a living or how you live your life? Are you looking for just what may be holding you back?

I am now a licensed "Now What?" coach. In just 90 days, you can have a new life direction. It is a concrete and time bound process for finding a new path.

After all, as my teacher Laura Berman Fortgang said, "It's not what you do, it's who you get to be."

For more information hit the reply button and type **NOW WHAT** in the subject line

Copies of all past E-zines are archived on my website. Feel free to pass this E-zine on.

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This month's topics:

- 1. Job Searching as a Marketing Effort**
- 2. Firms Revamp Performance Reviews**
- 3. Boomer Corner: Over 50 and Unemployed. There is Hope!**
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1. JOB SEARCHING AS A MARKETING EFFORT

- Scott Brown

Most job seekers realize that the job searching process is a marketing effort. It requires some degree of "sales" skills. However, a common mistake job seekers make is perceiving sales skills as imposing their will on someone else. This comes from thinking about selling abstractly, or thinking about how stereotypical (and often unsuccessful) sales people try to sell things. The truth is no one wants to be "sold" on something, and that includes recruiters and employers. If you think about times you came to decide you wanted to buy something, most likely it can be boiled down to one of two motivating factors: an opportunity and/or a challenge.

Think about kids who buy the Nike Air Jordan sneakers. They buy them for the *opportunity* to be like Michael Jordan. Challenges typically occur when there is a dilemma about living up to one's image of themselves. For example, someone may buy a Mercedes because they felt an internal challenge about being successful and not having a car that shows that success off. In terms of personal negotiation and persuasion skills, offering opportunities is a less risky option than offering challenges, even though both can motivate people to make a decision. Offering challenges is best done subtly, because an obvious challenge can be taken as an insult.

Here's an example of what we're talking about: Let's say you want an employer to make a decision to hire you within the next week. If you call them a couple days before the end of the week and inquire about whether they've made a decision yet, that would most likely not be successful because you have not inspired any challenge or opportunity in the employer's mind. In fact, it could have the opposite effect because the employer might think you're desperate and think you're not such a rare opportunity.

However, if you do a good job of presenting yourself as a top-notch candidate, and you present the employer with opportunities to reach their objectives if they hire you, and you give the employer a reason why they have to make a decision within a certain period of time, you have then created a challenge. If the employer perceives you as a highly desirable candidate and thinks there is a chance someone else may hire you before them, a personal dilemma has then been created in their mind where they will want to live up to their image of being a desirable company to work for. They will also feel challenged in terms of their skills as a recruiter and being able to recruit a top-level person.

PRESENTING OPPORTUNITIES

Presenting opportunities is necessary in effective selling, but it's not just a tactic because it requires that you do some real work, and for it to be done well, you have to be genuinely committed to the opportunity you're presenting. Offering an employer a compelling opportunity requires that you create a vision in your mind of the possibilities and that you share your vision with them. And creating a vision requires that you understand the dynamics of the company and how your background can be helpful to what they're trying to achieve. Researching the company before the interview through personal contacts and the Internet can help. You'll probably also need to ask questions in the interview about the employer's objectives and how they see you fitting in.

Your vision can come across as more credible if you share with the employer stories about things you've done in the past, which illustrate your competency in terms of being able to do what you envision for them. This conversation should be a back and forth discussion, and the more the employer talks about how they see you fitting in to their plans, the better. The clearer the picture they have of you coming in to their building every day to do the job they're considering hiring you for, the better.

OFFERING A CHALLENGE

Presenting an opportunity will take the employer a long way in the direction of making a decision in your favor. However, a challenge is needed in order for the employer to feel like they need to make a decision imminently. The challenge doesn't have to come from you: it can come from an outside source. For example, if you've offered a compelling opportunity and their boss told them a decision has to be made today, they may feel challenged to make a decision for that reason.

If you've ever seen the movie "Glenn Gary, Glenn Ross" with Al Pacino, Alec Baldwin and Kevin Spacey, you may remember the line "ABC: Always Be Closing." Offering a challenge is closely related with the idea

of closing. However, no one wants to feel like they're being "closed." No one wants to feel like they're being manipulated. But if the person feels like they have to make a decision, it can be beneficial to you (assuming the opportunity you presented is compelling). If you came across as very impressive in the interview and discussion of opportunities, the employer may already feel challenged to make a decision because they don't want another company to take you first. You can subtly offer a challenge yourself by mentioning you have received another offer, which you haven't decided on yet (if that's true). Remember, you don't want the employer to perceive the challenge as artificial. If they do see it that way, they'll feel like you're trying to "sell" them.

SUMMING UP

In summary, effective selling in job search situations is about inspiring the employer to see you as being highly valuable and getting them to feel a sense of challenge when it comes to being able to hire you. Some ineffective selling techniques, such as calling after an interview to just "inquire" about your application status, can be counterproductive and can make you come across as less valuable. When it comes to interviewing, it's more important to get it right the first time and make a good impression on the first try.

Scott Brown is the author of the Job Search Handbook (www.JobSearchHandbook.com). As editor of the HireSites.com weekly newsletter on job searching, Scott has written many articles on the subject. He wrote the Job Search Handbook to provide job seekers with a complete yet easy to use guide to finding a job effectively. To download your own free copy of the Job Search Handbook, visit www.JobSearchHandbook.com

2. Firms Revamp Performance Reviews

By Erin White
From The Wall Street Journal Online

When Whirlpool Corp. streamlined its performance-review process two years ago, employees complained they didn't get enough feedback. So Whirlpool in January introduced a more expansive system, requiring managers to meet with workers at least quarterly.

Some Whirlpool managers carry the edict much further. Jeffrey Davidoff, who oversees marketing for Whirlpool's North American consumer brands, used to conduct reviews twice a year. Now, he reviews his eight immediate subordinates for up to 45 minutes every two weeks. "I'm noticing much better results," Mr. Davidoff says.

The double-reversal at the Benton Harbor, Mich., appliance maker shows how employers are groping to make the much-loathed staple of corporate life -- performance reviews -- more relevant. This time around, the stakes are higher. With baby boomers nearing retirement, companies want to improve tracking of employee talents and anticipate skills gaps.

"CEOs of organizations are now asking, 'How do we know the true potential of our people? How do we know what they really contribute?'" says Kirk Rogg, a senior vice president at Aon Consulting in Chicago.

Consultants say an unusually large number of employers have tinkered with review systems in recent years. National Cooperative Bank in Washington, D.C., conducts more frequent reviews. Forest-products firm Weyerhaeuser Co. and gas and electricity company KeySpan Corp. changed rating scales or descriptions to help fight grade inflation. Texas Children's Hospital gave employees more responsibility to draft their own goals and track progress. Some employers use technology to streamline reviews, while others, such as Whirlpool, push for more face-to-face discussions.

Experts say the diversity makes sense, because different tactics work better for different cultures. Whatever the format, they say reviews should foster meaningful discussions between managers and subordinates about performance and goals. They also urge employers to use reviews to link pay with performance.

Aon's Mr. Rogg, speaking generally and not about Whirlpool specifically, calls quarterly reviews "a great best practice." But he cautions that managers have to be efficient to avoid getting bogged down, and should space reviews far enough apart for behavior to change. Most companies conduct reviews once or twice a year. Mr. Rogg estimates that fewer than 20% aim for quarterly reviews, and maybe 1% succeed.

David Binkley, Whirlpool's human-resources chief and the driving force behind the performance-review changes, says the additional time is well spent. After all, giving employees feedback "is the role of a manager," he says. "Wouldn't spending more time on this be a good thing?"

That wasn't the company's thinking a few years ago when the company's managers were complaining that the review process was a time-consuming burden. In response, Whirlpool moved most of the system online, effectively reducing face-to-face meetings. Managers and employees primarily traded comments via the computer system.

But in employee surveys and focus groups, Mr. Binkley found some surprising results: Employees didn't think they were getting enough useful performance feedback. "We made a mistake," he says.

So, with backing from Whirlpool Chief Executive Jeff Fettig, who took over in 2004, Mr. Binkley changed the system again, instituting the quarterly meeting requirement, as well as stipulating that employees would draft their own performance objectives, to be reviewed by managers.

Mr. Binkley says the survey results were so clear that he encountered little resistance from managers about the additional time. Instead, employees say the hardest part of the new system is drafting the objectives, including at least one especially ambitious goal that goes beyond normal job duties.

That's a particular worry among some lower-level employees. "It's hard for us to come up with challenges or projects or assignments that help the bottom line of the company," says Sandra Corbitt, Mr. Binkley's administrative assistant.

Even Mr. Binkley had trouble with his goals. His boss, Mr. Fettig, "sent me back a couple of times," he says.

As one goal, Mr. Binkley listed the successful rollout of the review system. He pledged to survey employees on the quality of feedback, among other things. But Mr. Fettig had additional concerns. "Fair and consistent application," he scribbled on the paper. The human-resources chief revised the objective to include employee views of fairness.

So far, Mr. Binkley says, staffers and managers seem to like the more frequent feedback. One fan is Chris Ball, a senior sales manager who likes drafting his own goals. "I feel more ownership," he says. His objectives this year include exceeding sales targets for certain new products.

Mr. Davidoff, a veteran of the informal culture of ad agencies, has become a believer in more frequent, more personal reviews. "I am pleasantly surprised at how many day-to-day behaviors have changed" among his employees under Whirlpool's current review system, he says. One woman has begun to delegate more, for instance, after he recommended she do so in a review.

For a recent 45-minute review with a marketing employee, Mr. Davidoff brought a form with handwritten bullet points. He discussed a meeting the two had attended and said he was surprised the employee wasn't more assertive. "I would encourage you to defer to me less," he said.

The employee said she thought he wanted to take the lead, and that she attended "just for brainstorming." Mr. Davidoff said he was glad the conversation had revealed the misunderstanding. "This is a real eye-opener," he told her. They pledged to communicate better.

Mr. Davidoff cites such discussions in explaining why he has embraced the new review system. He believes the frequent reviews make him a better manager. With the new system "you tend to get at more underlying issues," he says.

The time Mr. Davidoff now spends on reviews, he says, was formerly spent doing more of the marketing work himself. Now, he focuses on coaching and developing his staffers to improve their own performance. "This is how the work gets done," he says. "If you believe in your people, the time with them is literally the best way to spend your time."

3. Boomer Corner: Over 50 and Unemployed. There is Hope!

- Lawrence Alter

Although it is often more difficult to get a job after age 50, don't despair, there is hope. You should feel encouraged by your years of acquired knowledge and depth of experience. Following is a brief picture of the realities in today's marketplace, the myths and truths facing the older American worker, and what you can do to enhance your employment opportunities.

The Realities:

The Age Discrimination in Employment Act of 1967 (ADEA) and The Older Worker Benefit Protection Act Amendment added in 1990 protects individuals who are 40 years of age or older from employment discrimination based on age. This protection applies to both employees and job applicants. By 2005, there will be about 55 million workers age 45 or older, or about 37% of the labor force. According to Susan Imei, ERIC Clearinghouse, by 2005 people age 55 and over are projected to be nearly 20% of the working age population compared to 12.5% in 1990. The Census Bureau estimates that by 2005, there will be 30% more older persons working and 30% more older workers unemployed. By 2010, the aging Baby Boomer generation will have dramatically increased the number of unemployed over 50, many of whom will be economically disadvantaged.

Myths and the Truths:

Myth: Older workers are unwilling or unable to learn new skills:

Truth: People over 50 are consistently enrolling in self-improvement and skill enhancement courses, and are usually willing to embrace new ideas.

Myth: Older people are more likely to become ill or disabled and take more sick days.

Truth: Attendance records are actually better for older workers than younger professionals. In their book *Successful Aging*, authors John W. Rowe, M.D., and Robert L. Kahn, Ph.D reported that older people are much more likely to age well than to be dependent. In the age group between 65 and 74, an amazing 89% reported no disability of any type. Extensive research has found no link between increased age and decreased job performance or absenteeism.

Myth: Older workers will not stay with a company very long.

Truth: In 1998 the Bureau of Labor Statistics pointed out that workers between the ages of 45 and 54 stayed on the job twice as long as those 25 to 34.

Myth: You don't teach old dogs new tricks.

Truth: In order to grow and become successful older workers have learned to adapt and accept change. They have acquired the knowledge – the seasoning – to better deal with failure and disappointment bringing stability and maturity to new situations.

Myth: Older workers are going to cost a company more money.

Truth: Older workers tend to be more stable and thus remain on the job longer than their younger counterparts. This translates to lower recruitment, hiring, and training costs. Older people also tend to be more consistent and are less likely to require constant supervision.

Myth: Older people have poor memories.

Truth: A Stanford University study found that, regardless of age, we lose about 75% of what we learn within 48 hours – unless we utilize the information. Workers over 50 are as apt to retain information as are younger workers.

What You Can Do:

* Don't allow yourself to be a victim. Your skills have helped you to be successful in the past. They will help you to be successful in the future. Believe in yourself and don't become discouraged.

* Empower yourself with optimism and embrace change. Let employers know that you are adaptable, versatile, and welcome challenge.

* Focus on smaller companies, even if you've spent your entire career working for large corporations. Smaller companies are less likely to discriminate based on age. They are more concerned with your ability to help them solve problems and make money.

- * Concentrate your efforts on networking and recognize that you can network with people you don't even know. Many executives are receptive to networking if you are not abusive of their time.
- * Consider a different job function or different industry. Be prepared to identify your transferable skills and package them so they can appeal to someone in a different field.
- * Do not apologize for your age and don't patronize a younger manager.
- * Consider doing consulting or project work. Companies don't usually extend benefits or pay Social Security taxes for consultants. You can save them money. Look at part-time opportunities and Temporary Agencies that specialize in your area of skill.
- * Emphasize your achievements and stress examples of loyalty in your previous employment. Show the employer that you will not have a long learning curve and that you can grasp and accept new concepts easily.
- * Be energetic. Try to look and act young. Exercise, get enough sleep, and eat sensibly. Show excitement about the opportunity. Employers will not hire you if you appear lethargic and lack enthusiasm. You can be 65 and look and act as if you are 50.
- * If you are being interviewed for a position you want, ask for the job. Send a thank you letter within 24 hours and call to extend a personalized thank you within 2 days.

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4. Success Story

Ken B. 50's

Ken had worked all of his life in sales and product management. Telecommunications was his life. He was very successful. One of the keys was totally putting others needs top priority—even before his own.

In 2003 he was laid off from his job. He worked for his church as an administrator for 2 years at half the pay. They really appreciated his help but Ken started to feel "unfulfilled". He finished his work at the church. He was now faced with the question of "Now What?". H didn't want to go back into telecommunications.

After some coaching and introspection, he re-discovered his love for teaching.

He sent me this note:

"I just wanted to let you know that your counsel to me over a week ago is still resonating in my brain and I followed your advice about setting the money issues aside until I resolved in my own heart and mind what I believe I'm "hardwired" to do. I'm very pleased to report that I interviewed at Liberty University this past Thursday, July 20th. They offered me a position on faculty as a Marketing Professor in their Business School. I have accepted the position and will begin work there on August 7th.

Ken"

5. Humor Department: Dream Job

Reaching the end of a job interview, the Human Resources Person asked a young engineer who was fresh out of MIT, "What starting salary were you thinking about?"

The Engineer replied, "In the neighborhood of \$125,000 a year, depending on the benefits package."

The interviewer thought a moment then said, "Well, what would you say to a package of 5 weeks vacation, 14 paid holidays, full medical and dental, company matching retirement fund to 50% of salary, and a

company car leased every 2 years - say, a red Corvette?"

The Engineer sat up straight and said, "Wow! Are you kidding?"

The interviewer replied, "Yeah, but you started it."

6. Words that Inspire

"The most exciting breakthrough of the twenty-first century will not occur because of technology but because of an expanded concept of what it means to be human."

---John Naisbitt,
Futurist and author of MegaTrends

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