



Randy's Work *and You*

December Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

Wishing each and everyone a Happy Holiday and Prosperous New Year!

Job seekers can start *now* preparing for the New Year. The holiday season is busy but it is also a great time for networking. Many organizations are putting their budgets in order for fiscal 2007. It will serve you to be fresh in their minds for their hiring needs in the first quarter. I recommend accepting any invitations you might receive for parties and other social functions. Also, make plans to attend luncheons, talks and other business calendar events that interest you. Be among those receiving offers in January while other job seekers chose to stay home in December because they perceived the holiday times as "slow."

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

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This month's topics:

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1. Is This "Key" Element in Your Résumé?

By Joe Turner

Too many books on résumé writing are out-of-date. Although well intentioned and filled with other good information, most have not been updated for the job search realities of today.

Many eyes, including electronic, will see your résumé. The computer will "score" it by the number of keywords (also known as "buzzwords") the employer will find most relevant. If you don't account for this, your résumé will stay locked in some database while you sit waiting by the phone for the call that never

comes.

Put in a "*Keyword Competencies*" section.

One solution for the electronic gatekeeper is to include a special section called a Keyword Competencies section. You want to focus on the words most likely to be used by either a Human Resources staffing employee or a recruiter. They search résumés by keywords. The greater number of relevant keywords you can include, the higher relevancy score your résumé will be given.

You should include a separate section that lists all the relevant keywords pertaining to your career and skills. This section should best be listed at the beginning of your résumé to introduce the skill sets you possess early on from an interviewing standpoint. Include no more than 75 keywords.

For example, if you were a *Java Programmer*, your Keyword Competencies section might look something like this:

"Java, Visual C++, perl, tcl, application development, visual basic, Windows NT/XP, programming, GUI, html, project management, layer 2, BSEE, etc".

The idea here is to put in as many relevant, *searchable* keywords that describe your potential job title and skills. Be sure to include your technical skills, management or organizational skills, relevant software and/or mechanical abilities and expertise. Include anything that might be important to the particular job.

Added Tip: If you can locate a description of an actual job for which you are applying, copy in all the applicable buzzwords listed under required and desired skills. This includes education levels (if they require a BS in Electrical Engineering, then include "BSEE" as well).

If you spend some time on this, you should easily come up with a list of from 40 to 80 relevant searchable keywords to include here.

Summary

There are several important elements to consider when building your résumé, but if your document is not getting exposure then you've wasted your time. By simply adding relevant keywords you increase your résumé's odds of making it to the "possible" stack and you're receiving a phone call from a potential employer.

About the Author

As a recruiter, Joe Turner has spent the past 15 years finding and placing top candidates in some of the best jobs of their career. He makes it easy for anyone to find and land the job they really want all on their own in the shortest time possible. Discover more insider job search secrets by visiting <http://www.jobchangesecrets.com> <<http://www.jobchangesecrets.com/>>

2. Opportunity Knocks, And It Pays a Lot Better

By Erin White

From The Wall Street Journal

Managers like to say employees leave companies because of bad bosses or lack of career growth. A new report suggests a more straightforward reason: money.

In a survey of about 1,100 U.S. employees, 71% of top performers listed pay among the top three reasons they would consider leaving their employer. Yet in a sister survey of 262 large employers, 45% of employers cited pay as a top-three reason workers leave. Instead, employers thought promotion and career-development opportunities were more important. 31% of employers but 8% of top performers cited another oft-blamed culprit, relationship with a supervisor.

The findings are in a report scheduled for release this week by human resources consulting firm Watson Wyatt Worldwide and human resources association WorldatWork. Harris Interactive helped conduct the employee part of the survey. The surveys also found employers underestimate the retention value of health-care benefits.

The results suggest employers don't fully understand the needs of their top employees, frustrating companies' efforts to battle turnover as the labor market improves. "Employers have probably gotten caught up in this myth that employees leave their manager or they leave for better opportunities," says Laura Sejen, director of strategic rewards at Watson Wyatt. "Perhaps we're being a little unrealistic about the fundamental element of rewards, which is pay."

Watson Wyatt focused on top performers because those are the employees whose retention companies value most. Attitudes among average performers weren't significantly different, Ms. Sejen says. She says employees are becoming more focused on pay, contributing to retention problems. For the third consecutive year, employers are reporting increased difficulty retaining employees, Watson Wyatt says.

Nationally, the annual rate at which workers quit their jobs was the highest last year since 2001, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Last month's unemployment rate of 4.4% was the lowest since May 2001.

Employees' increased focus on pay should come as no surprise given cutbacks to health-care and pension plans, Ms. Sejen says. The average employee is forecast to pay \$3,305 next year in premiums and out-of-pocket costs for health care, a 7.8% increase over this year and more than double the \$1,640 paid in 2002, according to human-resources consultant Hewitt Associates Inc. At the same time, 61% of 950 companies surveyed by Hewitt offered defined-benefit pension plans this year, down from 73% of a similar sample in 2000 and 91% in 1985. To top it off, employers have kept average raises modest in recent years. "When you put all those pieces together," Ms. Sejen says, "it's fairly intuitive that employees are going to be more heavily focused on pay."

Deborah Keary, director of human resources for the Society for Human Resource Management, says pay typically becomes more important as the labor market improves. In a bad economy, workers say, "I don't care how much you pay me, I just want to have a job," Ms. Keary says. She says pay is a contributing factor to turnover, along with development opportunities and other issues. Companies can't neglect any of them, she says. "You can't single out pay or single out job opportunities," she says.

Some career experts question whether pay is pre-eminent. They assert that pay often isn't the root of employee dissatisfaction, even when employees say it is. Meg Montford, an executive-career coach in Kansas City, Mo., says clients who blame pay often have a deeper problem such as career stagnation, boredom, or feeling unappreciated. "They may come to me with the idea that it's pay, but usually that's a camouflage for something else," she says.

Some employers agree pay has become more important in recent years and are taking steps to address compensation issues. "We're seeing people starting to try to kidnap our talent, and us having to keep them," says Peter Ronza, compensation and benefits director for the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, Minn., a private Catholic institution. "The poaching is starting to happen again." Mr. Ronza says about two-thirds of the university's employees are nonacademic workers and managers, for whom many local businesses compete.

To bolster retention, the university has ratcheted up efforts to determine market pay rates and identify underpaid employees. St. Thomas set aside more money for merit raises this year, and increased by 30% its budget for pay increases for employees whose pay is below market or whose salaries have been neglected, Mr. Ronza says. "We have some people we really need to take care of right now," he says.

To reward top performers, university administrators instructed managers to give them bigger raises this year than to average performers. The university also is starting to test bonus programs with an eye toward expanding them.

3. Boomer Corner: For a Happy Retirement, Don't Swap Office for the Front Porch

Here's the latest thinking on retirement: Don't.

By Jonathan Clements
WSJ

That doesn't mean you shouldn't retire from your job. But what will you retire to? Many people give scant thought to what they will do after they quit the work force -- and the result can be depression, mental deterioration, declining health and possibly a shorter life.

To avoid that fate, experts say you need to treat retirement less like a lengthy vacation and more like a career change.

We spend 40 years plugging away at our jobs, struggling to amass enough money so we can enjoy a few fun-filled decades at the end of our lives.

Yet having a heap of money doesn't guarantee a happy retirement. There are three key reasons.

First, no matter how much you hate your job, it is likely providing you with far more than just a paycheck. Work gives a structure to your day, lets you exert influence and garner praise, offers friendships with colleagues, and provides a sense of purpose and identity.

Second, if you're married, retirement means you will suddenly be spending far more time with your spouse. The potential for conflict is huge, especially if one spouse is used to running the household while the other works.

Third, many folks have the wrong notion of what retirement is all about, argues Eric Sundstrom, a founder of My Next Phase and a psychology professor at the University of Tennessee. My Next Phase offers coaching and Web-based programs for those approaching retirement.

"There's what I call vacation confusion," Prof. Sundstrom says. "They think of retirement as rest well-deserved. Once you've rested up, now what? People who are engaged live longer and happier than those who sit on the porch and rock or who play endless games of golf."

Finding answers.

While it is easy to identify retirement's pitfalls, it is much harder to avoid them. Want to improve your chances of a happy retirement? Spend some time chewing over these four questions:

#1. *What are your passions?* "People may not know, because they buried them so long ago," says Denver financial planner Joe Sturniolo. "Many, many people give up on their passions early in life." Mr. Sturniolo conducts workshops for clients who are facing major transitions, such as retirement or divorce. To help these folks figure out what they're passionate about, he might have them write down what achievements they are most proud of or what they would do if they inherited \$10 million. Alternatively, he will ask clients to recall the happiest moments from their childhood or college years and what they were doing. "You're trying to find times in their lives when they were excited," Mr. Sturniolo says.

#2. *What is your purpose?* With a little thought, you can probably put together a list of activities you enjoy. But that alone isn't enough. Suppose you love tennis. If you spend your retirement playing three sets a day with friends, you will quickly become bored and unhappy. But if you coach the local high-school tennis team, you will have a sense of purpose. "You feel fulfilled when you're doing something that's both important and satisfying," Prof. Sundstrom says. "What's your reason for getting up in the morning? If work had given you a purpose, you either have to figure out a new purpose or you'll languish and die."

#3. *How will you replace the stimulation of work?* When you are in the work force, you have to get yourself to your job every morning, deal with colleagues and grapple with work-related problems. Taken together, that gives you regular physical, social and intellectual activity. All this goes away upon retirement, so you need to make more of an effort to exercise, see friends and keep yourself mentally sharp. For some folks, this can be tough. For instance, if you aren't particularly disciplined, you might struggle without the structure provided by work and you will need to prod yourself to exercise regularly. Similarly, if you are an introvert, you may find it difficult to establish a new group of friends, especially if you move to another part of the country. "The most important factor in a successful retirement is the strength of your social network," says Margaret Altmix, director of coaching services at Navigating Your Retirement, an online coaching program recently launched by Employee & Family Resources in Des Moines, Iowa. "It's much more important than health and wealth."

#4. *What's your new role at home?* Before you quit the work force, you should hash out a slew of issues with your spouse, including how much you will travel, who will handle which chores, and how much you will each be able to spend.

"One of the questions is, how much alone time do I get?" Ms. Altmix says. "In the past, it might have worked very well spending eight or 10 hours a day apart. You also need to talk about who does what. You've had these roles for years and years, and now they're going to change. You need to talk early on, before the resentment builds."

4. Success Story

Michael H. mid-forties

Michael started his career as a clinical psychologist back east several years. He honed his natural skills of creativity, active listening, influencing and organization.

He decided to go for something in the business world and came to California. He caught the dotcom boom and worked at a startup in a strategic alliance and a general management role. He was then laid off.

Michael could have gone back to his clinical psychology practice but decided against it. Through networking, he obtained a position of VP of Business Development with a startup company working for equity.

Then it was time to move on. He is now the World Wide VP of Business Development for a well-financed global company. He is making the highest salary ever with a good stake in equity.

In 1999 he knew hardly anyone in California. He accomplished all this through networking.

5. Humor Department: Rejection Letter Response Template

The next time you get a rejection letter from a hoped-for employer or publisher, just send them the following:

Dear [name of the person who signed the rejection letter],

Thank you for your letter of [date of the rejection letter]. After careful consideration, I regret to inform you that I am unable to accept your refusal to offer me [employment with your firm/a contract to publish my book].

This year I have been particularly fortunate in receiving an unusually large number of rejection letters. With such a varied and promising field of candidates, it is impossible for me to accept all refusals. Despite [name of the co or agency that sent you this letter]'s outstanding qualifications and previous experience in rejecting [applicants/manuscripts], I find that your rejection does not meet with my needs at this time.

Therefore, I will initiate [employment/publishing] with your firm immediately following [graduation/job change, etc. - get creative here]. I look forward to working with you.

Best of luck in rejecting future [candidates/manuscripts].

Sincerely,
[Your Name]

6. Words that Inspire

"The highest reward for a person's toil is not what they get for it, but what they become by it."
--John Riskin

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