



Randy's Work *and You*

October Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

Ready To Jump Ship? The Insight Track: Exclusive Job Seeker Research for HR Professionals, published by careerbuilder.com, released these results from a survey of more than 2,500 workers (the sample consisted of members of SurveySite Web Panel; of the 2,500 surveyed, 1,000-plus were hiring managers):

48% of workers say they do not look forward to going to work
23% say they are dissatisfied overall with their jobs
47% of workers are dissatisfied with their pay
61% say their workloads have increased over the last six months
47% say their workloads are too burdensome
Nearly 30% of workers say they are struggling to balance personal and professional commitments
43% of workers say they plan to leave their current jobs in pursuit of a better work experience by the end of 2005

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

To subscribe, click on <mailto:randy@randyblock.com>

To unsubscribe, hit the reply button and type REMOVE in the subject line.

Upcoming Events:

Tuesdays, starting 10/4 and ending 10/25, 7:00 PM - 9:00 p.m.

In Larkspur, CA. I will be giving a workshop titled: "A New Kind of Retirement". Were you born between 1946 and 1964? What has changed? Nearly everything! Seeing a new kind of retirement is the first step in developing a plan that encapsulates the best part of the past with a new future! We will discuss transition into meaningful life/work arrangements as you reorganize your later years around core values and life challenges.

For details, go to <http://www.marinlearn.com/>.

Redwood High School

Classroom: 154

395 Doherty Drive

Larkspur, CA 94977

Contact Person: Julie Dashiell

415-945-3660 (Day)

October 31, 8:30 a.m., at Grace Cathedral, San Francisco, I will be the guest speaker for a GraceWorks Meeting. Topic will be "Maximizing Your Job Search". For more information, contact:

Helen Gore

GraceWorks

Speakers and Programs

510-814-1039

This month's topics:

1. **Troubleshooting Your Job Search in 2005**
2. **There's No Need to Pad Your Resume**
3. **Boomer Corner: The Merits of Hiring Older Workers**
4. **Success Story**

5. Humor Department

6. Words that Inspire

1. Troubleshooting Your Job Search in 2005

By Kevin Donlin

OK. You've posted your resume online. You've sent out a dozen copies answering classified ads. You've told everyone in your network that you're looking for a job. And nothing has happened.

Now what?

Since 1996, I've written/edited resumes for nearly 3,000 clients and refunded less than 3% of them for lack of results. Based on this experience, here are four ways for you to troubleshoot -- and improve -- an unsuccessful job search.

- 1) **Is your resume focused?** Your resume can't be all things to all people. Make sure yours has one main focus, such as sales or computer programming. Every word in your resume should contribute to that single focus you've chosen. If you try to go in too many directions, your resume won't appeal to anyone.
- 2) **Is your resume error-free?** You've heard this 100 times, so let's make it 101 -- a single typo can ruin your resume. But that's only partially true. Because even more things can go wrong. When proofreading your resume, you should also check for errors in spacing between words, inconsistent abbreviations, poor layout, tiny fonts and extreme length/wordiness. Example: inconsistent spacing is a frequent gaffe. It doesn't matter if you use one space or two after periods, but be consistent throughout. Otherwise, your resume will look unprofessional.
- 3) **Is your cover letter hard-hitting?** According to the Wall Street Journal's National Business Employment Weekly, "Your cover letter can make or break whether your resume goes into the 'yes' pile or the 'no' pile. A really terrific cover letter can change the reader's mind. "Use your cover letter to show off your knowledge of the company and the industry. And be sure to convey your enthusiasm for the job -- enthusiasm sells. But be concise! Nothing longer than 4-5 paragraphs or one page will work well.
- 4) **Is your job search a full-time job?** In this job market, the quest for employment takes time and effort. Think of finding work as a job in itself, requiring nothing less than your total dedication. So, ask yourself: "Am I really using all my available resources? Am I spending at least 4-8 hours and doing at least 10 things every day to find the right job?" For example, make sure you use -- really use -- your college placement office. Most students and graduates never visit theirs, according to my experience. Now go out and make your own luck!

For more information, click here: [www.gresumes.com <http://www.gresumes.com/book.htm?hop=jeanv>](http://www.gresumes.com/book.htm?hop=jeanv)
Kevin Donlin is President of Guaranteed Resumes. Since 1996, he and his team have provided resumes, cover letters and online job-search assistance to clients in all 50 states and 23 countries. Kevin has been interviewed by USA Today, CBS MarketWatch, The Wall Street Journal's National Business Employment Weekly, CBS Radio, and many others.

2. There's No Need to Pad Your Resume

By Linda Matias

It seems like a good idea, harmless in fact. Your friends assure you that everybody does it and that employers rarely check resume facts. Going on blind faith and convinced the truth hasn't been helpful so far, you seriously consider fabricating information on your resume. You adapt the school of thought that a little white lie never hurt anyone and lying on a resume is just that, a little white lie.

Cheating on a resume can be tempting, especially when one has been searching for a job for months or even years. However, we all know that fibbing is never a good idea, and the likelihood that you'll be caught is extremely high. Even if your "creativity" slips through the cracks, karma has a way of catching up with you. So either way, lying gets messy.

That said, many job seekers have major hiccups in their professional life—employment gaps, lack of education and/or experience—and it is becoming increasingly difficult for most to write their own resumes without exaggerating or flat-out lying. Since resume fraud is on the rise, employers are taking much more

care in verifying information, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to mislead them. The good news, however, is that lying isn't necessary if the resume is well written and strategically organized.

The education and experience sections of a resume are the ones most job seekers are fixated on fabricating. They are under the impression that if they lack the educational requirements or the experience described in the job description, they won't be considered a serious candidate. That, however, is a myth.

Education doesn't top an employer's list.

Many people incorrectly believe hiring decisions are made based on the candidate's education, and they feel compelled to stretch the truth in order to compete with their degreed counterparts. The reality is that education, though important, isn't the driving force behind hiring decisions unless, of course, your profession requires a degree (e.g., doctors, lawyers, CPAs, etc.).

When a candidate lacks a college degree but has a solid work history, education quickly falls down the ladder of necessary requirements. Let's take a look at this point from an employer's perspective.

The situation: The job description reads, "Seeking an accounts payable specialist with comprehensive experience in processing expense reports, reconciling vendor accounts, and performing bank reconciliations. Successful candidate holds an associate's degree in accounting."

Candidate #1: Jose has worked in accounts payable for the last five years. During his career, he has set up new policies, cross-referenced purchase orders with invoices, and interacted with vendors to resolve invoice discrepancies. His experience comes from the school of hard knocks and he doesn't have a college education.

Candidate #2: Maria recently received a bachelor's degree in accounting. While earning her degree she worked as a front desk clerk for a Fortune 500 company where she was in charge of filing and answering a multi-line phone system.

Who would you rather hire, Jose or Maria? Chances are that you named Jose as the clear winner because his experience supercedes Maria's education. Jose will be able to jump into the position with little or no training because he has hands-on knowledge of the best accounting practices. Maria, on the other hand, is green. The hiring organization would have to spend time, money, and resources to train her, which they most likely won't have an interest in doing.

Show 'em what you've got.

Employers spend most of their time scrutinizing the experience section of the resume, and unfortunately, the homespun resume rarely tells the whole story. Most resume do-it-yourselfers fear their accomplishments won't fare well against the competition, and they decide to embellish facts in an effort to attract an employer's attention.

Again, fabricating information isn't necessary. Most likely the experience you have garnered throughout your work history is impressive. The challenge, however, is expressing your accomplishments in a way that entices the hiring organization to give you a call.

When dealing with hiring organizations you have to connect all the dots. For each position that you are applying for, there is an average of 500 applicants so you have to make it very easy for the reader to distinguish between you and every other qualified candidate. The only way to achieve that is by writing strong resume copy.

As a job seeker you are intimately involved in your own search, so much so that it is hard to take a step back and write a resume that is marketable. You are probably your own worst critic. If you have attempted to write your own resume, you know how difficult it is to write about yourself objectively.

To make the resume-writing process easier, answer the following questions:

- 1) What skill set do you bring to the table?
- 2) What are your competitive strengths?
- 3) For each position you held, list three to five achievements.
- 4) How is your company better off since you joined their team?
- 5) Have you been involved in designing and/or implementing new initiatives?

The point here is to start thinking about your career as a portrait of who you are professionally, and not just

as a job. When you make that mind shift, it will be easier to put words to paper. Lying isn't a necessary evil. The trick to obtaining the job you desire is making the most of what you have to offer.

About the author: **Linda Matias** <<http://www.thegladiator.info/authors.phtml#matias>>

3. Boomer Corner: The merits of hiring older workers

From North Carolina Journal:

The concept of the "older worker" is no longer the stereotype of an individual who is nearing retirement. Today's older workers are vibrant, talented individuals whose years of expertise are highly valued and are being looked upon by employers as respected and knowledgeable individuals in the prime of working life. This week, September 18-24, is National Employ The Older Worker Week. The North Carolina Employment Security Commission encourages employers to recognize the attributes that older workers can bring to their businesses. *These include loyalty and dedication to the company; commitment to doing quality work; dependability; solid performance record and experience in a job or industry; and the ability to get along well with co-workers.*

"There are so many false assumptions about older workers and their ability to perform well on the job," said ESC Chairman Harry E. Payne Jr. "The fact is, *older workers provide stability. They have a lower turnover rate than younger employees do. And, as the population ages, it will be a strong advantage to have older employees who can relate to older customers.*"

Just take a closer look in your own community, ESC officials say. The new business owner down the street, the consultant hired by your firm-chances is they are older workers. Eighty-four percent of baby boomers (ages 37 to 55) currently participate in the labor market, and baby boomers make up nearly 50 percent of the workforce. As the baby boomer population ages, the growth rate of the workforce between ages 55 to 64 will be the highest in the United States, labor officials say.

By 2008, one in six workers will be over 55. By 2030, more Americans will be over the age of 65 than under 18. Most of these individuals will still be working-some out of necessity and some by choice. Consequently, as North Carolina's workforce becomes older and more experienced, employers in the state will benefit from hiring older workers whose skills, work ethic and leadership will be reaching an aging customer base.

4. Success Story

During the blackout of 2003, the electricity went out along much of the East Coast, but the light bulb over my head clicked on.

I had been unhappy for most of that summer. I was frustrated by a lack of progress in my reporting job at the Wall Street Journal Online, wanted to be nearer to my family in Minnesota and disappointed that the last two guys I'd been interested in lived in the Twin Cities.

When the power went out that Aug. 14, I left my office to report what was happening. Out on the streets, I did what reporters are supposed to do -- I talked to people, "real" people, as we call them in the news business. That wasn't something I got to do every day from my desk at the Online Journal, writing about stock-market movements or spam technology.

I loved every minute of it.

I'm lucky to remember that light-bulb moment, the second when I knew it was time to take control and make my life what I wanted it to be.

I wanted to be closer to my family, so returning to the Midwest was a must. I wanted to own a home within a few years, and finding a place with a more reasonable cost of living than New York City made sense. I wanted to marry and be a parent someday, but needed a change of dating scenery. And I wanted to live in a place where people didn't need a blackout just to glimpse a starry night.

When it came to finding a new job, I made three lists: one for places I'd be willing to move, another for topics I'd like to report on, and a third for newspapers where I'd like to work.

I ran each job opening I found through that screen. Covering manufacturing in St. Louis? Good paper, but not my beat and probably not my city. Covering health in the North Carolina Research Triangle? Great beat, good news town, but too far from Minnesota. I sent out resumes, but got not even a nibble.

Then, at the end of October, it appeared -- the posting that cleared all my hurdles: A job in Madison, Wis., covering state government and politics for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel. Nothing could have been a better fit -- I'm a political nut, I'd heard only good things about the Journal Sentinel, and it was just next door to Minnesota.

To my surprise, I soon heard back from the Journal Sentinel's recruiting manager. The paper was looking for something a little different, too. The paper wanted a reporter in the Capitol bureau with a fresh perspective on the day-in, day-out dealings in Madison.

As I talked to editors at the paper and prepared to visit for an interview, I tapped some of my long-time mentors: Was it smart for me to leave for the dead-tree medium of a newspaper, when I was doing something new and inventive at the Online Journal?

Their guidance: If I stayed at my job, both the risk and the reward might be higher, but the experience I would get in Wisconsin would be a better base for my long-term journalism career.

But what they didn't know was that a move to Wisconsin was high risk for me personally. Although it was closer to my family, I still would be more than four hours away from Minneapolis by car. And I didn't know a soul in Madison.

What I stood to gain was a fresh start.

I got it on New Year's Eve, when the Journal Sentinel called to offer me the job. I grabbed it.

Two interviews at the paper had sealed the deal for me. Over a meal of tacos and nacho chips with two of the paper's reporters, one gushed, "I just love my job!"

The next day I had lunch at a Red Lobster with Steve Walters, a reporter who eventually would become my bureau chief in Madison. The more he talked about life in the state Capitol building -- how wacky it could be and how fun it is to keep the lawmakers on their toes -- the more I wanted to be part of it.

Steve often reminds me of that lunch. He turns to me at our cramped desks in the Capitol, as press releases fly at us, legislators stop by to plead their cases, and the phone rings off the hook, and says, "Remember at the Red Lobster when I told you I couldn't truly explain this place. This is what I meant!"

And he's right -- some days we almost feel guilty about getting paid for having so much fun.

It also didn't take long to find the personal bliss to go along with the rewards I've found at work. One of the first people I met in the Capitol pressroom was Colin Benedict, a reporter from a Madison TV station. Steve told me Colin was one of TV's smartest reporters in town. I guessed he also was the cutest.

At the Capitol late one night, while waiting for the state Legislature to take a vote -- this sometimes can take hours -- we started talking. About baseball, travel, what made me leave New York, one conversation led to another.

We made a date for a sushi dinner, which happened to fall on St. Patrick's Day. I got to know him better over edamame and octopus, and by the time we hit a bar for a pint of Guinness, I was head over heels.

Like my professional life, the personal life I was looking for wasn't in New York. It was in Madison. Colin and I are getting married in March and looking for a home to buy.

It hasn't all been idyllic. There are times when I do miss life -- and my friends -- in New York. And a schedule centered around lawmakers' long days rather than stock-market trading hours can sometimes get tiring. But overall, Madison has made me happy.

A few weeks ago, almost two years to the day since I decided to change my life, I was in northern Wisconsin at a cabin with my new fiancé and some friends. During our stay, we went for a late-night boat ride to watch a meteor shower.

I rested my head on Colin's shoulder and remembered the night of the blackout in New York. As the stars fell, I smiled to myself as I realized that all it took to discover such happiness was to simply do something about finding it.

-- Ms. Forster is a reporter for the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel.

5. Humor Department

Whether you are a student looking for that first time or summer job or a long time veteran looking for a change of pace, this JOB SEARCH JARGON should help you get on your way...

COMPETITIVE SALARY: We remain competitive by paying less than our competitors.

FLEXIBLE HOURS: Work 55 hours; get paid for 37.5.

GOOD COMMUNICATION SKILLS: Management communicates, you listen, figure out what they want you to do.

ABILITY TO HANDLE A HEAVY WORKLOAD: You whine, you're fired.

CAREER-MINDED: We expect that you will want to flip hamburgers until you are 70.

SELF-MOTIVATED: Management won't answer questions

SOME OVERTIME Required: Some time each night and some time each weekend

DUTIES WILL VARY: Anyone in the office can boss you around.

COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT: We have a lot of turnover.

SALES POSITION REQUIRING MOTIVATED SELF-Starter: We're not going to supply you with leads; there's no base salary; you'll wait 30 days for your first commission check.

CASUAL WORK ATMOSPHERE: We don't pay enough to expect that you'll dress up; well, a couple of the real daring guys wear earrings.

SOME PUBLIC RELATIONS REQUIRED: If we're in trouble, you'll go on TV and get us out of it.

SEEKING CANDIDATES WITH A WIDE VARIETY OF EXPERIENCE: You'll need it to replace three people who just left.

PROBLEM-SOLVING SKILLS A MUST: You're walking into a company in perpetual chaos.

From Comedy-zone.net

6. Words that Inspire

"Failure should be our teacher, not our undertaker. Failure is delay. Not defeat. It is a temporary detour, not a dead end.

-- Denis Waitley, writer and teacher

Your comments and feedback on this E-zine are welcome!

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