



Randy's Work *and You*

October Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

I ran across a helpful job search website: **ResumeSpider.com**: This new resume distribution site has some amazing features like sending out to a targeted mailing list, providing access to over 124,000 prescreened recruiters, employers, and corporate hiring managers. You can "spider" or target your job search based on industry, job function, and geographic preferences. You can also see who is viewing, evaluating, and ranking your resume based on their recruiting priorities.

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.

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

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This month's topics:

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1. The Odyssey Of A Salary Offer

By Randy Block

You've made it through several rounds of interviews. You have been notified that the company has made their choice. Congratulations! You have been chosen.

Now it's time to negotiate an offer that will make you feel good about working for the new company.

You will be in good shape if you made the right moves from the beginning of **The Odyssey Of The Salary Offer**.

The Screening Process

Much of the groundwork is laid here. There are several websites such as salary.com, which can be helpful in determining compensation for the position.

As a candidate (especially if you are unemployed), it is very important to defer talking about compensation until the entire screening process is completed. It's been my observation that those companies insisting that you give a salary history and a salary desired on the front end are shopping on price as a major qualification.

My advice here is asking yourself: "Is this the kind of company you want to work for?" If you specify a salary desired, the chances are over 65% that you will be wrong (too high or too low).

One caveat... Most government and other non-profit groups such as public schools etc. do not "negotiate" as outlined above. Instead, they adhere to strict compensation guidelines.

Know Yourself

Understanding your career values, what you love to do and the definition of your value proposition are imperative. Without a clear awareness of these, decision-making is very difficult. Clearly, a critical part of the preparation is to discern whether the position you are applying for is a really good fit:

1. It has to benefit your career and the goals you have set.
2. You must believe in the company, products and markets.
3. You be *genuinely* excited about becoming part of the team!

The Initial Screen and The Compensation Question

Whether initial screening is by telephone or in person, when asked about salary history and a salary desired:

1. Even *before* this question is asked, turn the tables early in the screening and ask *them* what the salary range is for the position they are trying to fill. Most will answer the question before they ask you.
2. State: I will be happy to have a discussion of compensation after we have completed the screening process. If it is a good fit for both of us, I am confident we can reach a mutual agreement.
3. If they continue to press, give them a number. You can prepare for this by adding up your "bare bones" living expenses. You will come up with a number (monthly or annually—don't forget taxes). Your response then would be: "The minimum offer I would *consider* would be \$_____." Note that you said, "consider" not accept. This leaves the door wide open. Let's face it; if they are going to make you an offer below your minimum, then you can then reject them!

During and after the interview process, these responses can help you deflect the compensation question, should anyone ask.

NOTE: When you are working through a third party such as an independent recruiter, it is very important that you share compensation information. They want to make a placement and they need as much information as they can get to help put the transaction together.

When The Offer Is Made

Now is the time to hear what they have in mind. You receive the call.

Some suggestions:

1. Listen carefully
2. Ask good questions for clarification
3. Thank them graciously (even it's high or low)

4. Never accept or reject their verbal offer
5. Always ask for the offer in writing (even if it is from your best friend!)

You typically have five working days to get back to them after you have received a written offer. This will give you a chance to contact other firms that you are *interviewing*. Tell the other companies that you have a written offer but refrain from any details.

Be wary if the company making the offer wants an answer immediately. This could be a sign of desperation on their part.

If you are 100% delighted with the offer, then accept it and give a reasonable starting date.

If you are unhappy with the offer, there are definite steps to explore with the company. Keep in mind that a job must be a good fit for you, as well as for them.

Find Out The Adjustment Possibilities

Tell the hiring manager or HR person that you are really excited about coming on board. However, you need a little help (most companies want the person to “feel good” about coming to work).

CareerBuilder.com 's survey of 875 hiring managers disclosed that about 60% leave room in the first offer for negotiations, 30% say their first offer is final, and 10% say it depends on the candidate. And, four out of five corporate recruiters said they are willing to negotiate compensation, according to a study conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management.

It's important that you want to know about their flexibility.
Ask them:

1. Is there any “wobble room” on the base salary?
2. Do they offer signing bonuses (if so, what is the range for this position)?
3. Can they give an early performance review?
4. Is stock available?
5. Can they increase the profit sharing?
6. Are they able to offer more vacation days and other perks?

Remember, you are only asking them if they can help you in the ways in which you will be helping them consummate the agreement. Most will give you data.

The Counter-Offer

The most important concept to remember about a counter offer is that it negates their original offer. Put another way, they are under no obligation to reinstate the offer they made initially.

After you have collected data and have a pretty good idea of what they can do, contact them. You simply say: “These are the terms of an offer I will accept” and give them your terms. Your willingness to “walk away” from the original offer gives you a very strong negotiating position.

The risk should be balanced on both sides. You have to live with the agreement. It's your career. You are in charge.

Randy brings expertise in executive search as a certified career coach. He has guided all levels of professionals in the areas of career transition: changing careers, choosing a career direction, evaluating/negotiating offers, executive career marketing, finding jobs, getting organized, as well as finding opportunities for self-employment, freelancing and consulting. He holds an **IJCTC** certificate from the Career Planning and Adult Development, a **CCMC** (Certified Career Management Coach) from Career Coach Academy, a **PCRC** (Professional Certified Retirement Coach) from the Retirement Coach Institute and certified coach for **Now What? Life Blueprint™ Training**.

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2. What Is Success, Anyway? An Essay on Money and Happiness

By George Anders

From *The Wall Street Journal* 9/22/06

Bill and Sara knew what they wanted, with an ambition they took no pains to hide. They were college friends of mine who joined little Florida newspapers in 1980, right after graduation. But they had no intention of staying put for very long.

Less than a year later, they showed up on my doorstep in Brooklyn, N.Y., wearing beach clothes on a chilly day and needing a place to stay. They had lined up job interviews in the Big Apple with more prestige, more responsibility -- and lots more money. Goodbye, flip-flops. Hello, Brooks Brothers!

Back then; job-hopping was the obvious ticket to success -- and happiness. The goal was clear and simple: a bigger paycheck. More money proved you were on the right track.

Now it's a little more complicated.

Unreliable Guideposts

Lots of us still go job prospecting every now and then. Sometimes we even make the leap to something new. But there's a lot more agonizing over which switches make sense -- and which ones ultimately just aren't wise. As we get further along in life, the size of the next pay stub isn't nearly as reliable a guidepost as it used to be.

For one thing, we're a lot shrewder in spotting the hidden ugly side of some high-paying positions. Some jobs, for instance, sound alluring, until you take a hard look at the travel involved. Oversee a bigger territory - - and your Thursday evening routine is likely to involve a barstool, a Personal Pizza and the Denver airport.

We also ponder whether our new colleagues and bosses will pass the "good people" test. No matter how fancy the title or how big the paycheck; we soon learn that it isn't worth joining an organization full of jerks, morons or crooks. In recent years, I've seen two friends shake hands on high-paying job switches and then back out within a matter of days because they suddenly realized there was something toxic about the new workplace.

In other cases, money doesn't define our ambitions as much. Extra cash is nice, but as we enter our 40s and 50s, intangibles like autonomy and personal expression start making a bigger difference, too. I've turned down a couple of high-paying offers to write books because the editors in charge seemed too controlling, with strategic visions that just didn't make sense to me. Instead, it was a lower-paying offer that brought the most freedom and fulfillment.

In fact, sorting out such trade-offs becomes the defining struggle of midcareer life. We have grown used to the chase for success, and sometimes it can be hard to step off that track. We also hate to retrench so much that upstarts and plodders overtake us. Yet we have families and hobbies that clamor for time, too. None of us wants to job hop our way to ruin, becoming the pitiable workaholic with the busted marriage and the empty mansion.

Then Again...

Of course, some high-paying jobs really do turn out to be passports to a better life. One of the happiest people I know is a former Wall Street salesman who quit his job in the mid-1990s to set up his own investment fund. He is making easily five times what he did before. That has translated into lots of wonderful toys as well as a chance to become a major civic leader.

Equally important, the everyday pace of work has become cheerier, too. Those 6:40 a.m. flights to see clients are just distant memories; in his new job, people travel to see him instead. He now gets to choose his

office team and decide whether to work in jeans, chinos or a suit. If something annoys him, he doesn't need anyone else's permission to change it.

For most of us, such wonderful alignments of money and freedom never quite happen. In professions that charge by the project -- such as advertising, law, accounting or medicine -- the highest-paying opportunities are likely to gouge deepest into people's hopes of enjoying a balanced life.

I see this with physician friends all the time. Doctors in solo practice can earn the most, but they risk being run ragged by on-call hours that never stop. By joining big group practices, they gain help with evening and weekend coverage. Yet they surrender some income and autonomy in return, and that's never easy to do.

Up and Away

The gutsiest people simply walk away from career tracks they don't like, sacrificing pay if necessary for a new job that connects with their greatest passions. My wife and I met one of those people this summer when we went ballooning in Utah. Our adventure leader, Will, turned out to be a former photocopier salesman -- and by his account, a pretty successful one.

Success, however, came at a moral price. "I learned all the tricks," Will told us. "I knew how to walk into an office and jam up the paper in their existing copier. Then I would tell them that their copier was broken and would keep breaking. I got a lot of sales that way. And I hated it."

I didn't have the nerve to ask Will what his new line of work pays, but it can't be nearly as good. His gross annual income from 100 days of ballooning is about \$100,000. Against that, he has expenses for fuel, supplies, assistants' labor, drive time, marketing and insurance. I would be surprised if he nets more than \$40,000 a year.

All the same, there was no forgetting his ebullient grin as we got airborne. Ballooning was his greatest joy. If he could scratch out even a modest income doing what he loved, that was perfect.

Now, Will also had a financial advantage many of us don't have: He was a single man with no children. He could enjoy his new career without worrying about tuition or feeding and clothing an entire family, week after week.

Most of us don't enjoy that much freedom. To some extent, we can pick jobs we like and eschew ones we don't if the pay gap is modest. But as much as we may enjoy an occasional balloon ride, we aren't throwing away our laptops and our business cards so we can buy propane, wicker baskets and rainbow-colored canopies.

In 2002, I watched two ambitious executives in their early 50s -- both idled during the tech slump -- wrestle with all these issues during their own job hunts. One of them wanted to get back to work fast, proving to the world that he was still CEO material. He got a job quickly, but it turned out to be a quagmire. The other took his time. He turned down a lot of opportunities that paid well but didn't pass his nonfinancial tests. And when he finally accepted a new job, it turned out to be an ideal blend of prestige, opportunity and excitement.

Strikingly, even my old go-getter friends from Florida have widened their horizons, too. After they went their separate ways, Bill job-hopped all through the 1990s. He soared up some organization charts; he also made some missteps. Now he chooses jobs more carefully. Sara opted for stability, picking one steady employer and settling into a Sunbelt community that she loves.

Bill lasted longer in the nonstop sprint for traditional success. But I think Sara figured out faster how to put all the pieces together and enjoy a happy life.

4. Boomer Corner: UK's message to older workers-- stay home

That appears to be the message employers in the U.K. are sending to retirement-age workers. According to Management Issues Ltd., an online site devoted to management and leadership, 70 percent of bosses say in a survey that they see no value in employing experienced older workers. This no doubt comes as a stunning revelation to U.S.-based companies that are scrambling to hire (or retain) retirement-eligible baby boomers, especially in light of a potential workforce shortage looming within the next few years. More than half said that employing those 65 or older will trigger health-related issues. And although nearly three-quarters of

employees have expressed a desire to work beyond retirement, only 17 percent of U.K. firms are actively seeking older workers. In another twist, Management Issues reports that some age-discrimination experts contend that some U.K. companies are firing older workers in anticipation of new anti-age-discrimination laws that take effect October 1.

4. Success Story

From Po Bronson's book "*What Should I Do With My Life?*" (Highly recommended)

Stephen Lyons

Stephen was a trained electrician. He made a good living but always wondered if he should have gone to college. Then the 1990's recession hit. Unable to make mortgage payments, he sold his house and moved to a tiny apartment in Marin City, Marin County. He heard that Dominican College had a cranky HVAC air-conditioning system that wads prone to breaking down. He went to the school and offered to work for free for a month. They agreed. He went on the payroll in a month. It wasn't his dream job but he took it.

He found out that college employees could attend classes for free. He learned that most other people were not any smarter than he was—a good lesson. For his final paper for his business degree, he submitted a business plan for a solar energy company.

He kept his day job and started his own company. The power crisis struck. He put his business development into high gear. He now has more work than he can handle.

5. Humor Department: The client said what?

An actual client incident:

Working for a software company as a programmer. Client required a custom patch to our software. Being on a deadline she asked if I could overnight it. My boss refused to overnight it as it was not a problem with a software, but a custom requirement she had. I asked if she had e-mail. She said she did but wouldn't be able to figure out how to get it from the e-mail computer to the computer with our software on it. In final desperation, she asked me to fax her the diskette.

For more tales of humorous client situations click on:

<http://www.clientcopia.com/top.php>

6. Words that Inspire

"I haven't failed. I've found 10,000 ways that won't work"

Benjamin Franklin, printer, writer, scientist and statesman

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