



Randy's Work *and You*

September Edition

Dear clients and colleagues,

Our feature article is “To Risk or not To Risk. Sometimes it is the only way to go”. Hiring managers more and more are looking for those willing to risk failure. I look the number one mistake candidates make in an interview in Interview Tips. In Boomer Corner, we show why the over fifty workers are the best workers.

RESEARCH SHOWS SEEKERS ONLINE 50 HOURS A MONTH

A faltering economy and corporate layoffs mean that more Americans are turning to the Internet to find a new job - and they're finding that online job searches are a job in themselves. A recent survey by Kelton Research, commissioned by RiseSmart, shows that a majority of online jobseekers are spending an average of 50 hours per month searching the Web for work.

* Among jobseekers who use the Internet in their job search, 58 percent of respondents searched online at least an hour per day.

* Of those respondents who searched online at least an hour per day, the average time reported searching online is 2.5 hours per day.

* Among jobseekers under 35, nearly 40 percent spend 2+ hours per day searching online.

* Nearly 1 in 3 workers (32 percent) who are currently employed are spending at least an hour a day online in job searches.

* 1 in 10 online jobseekers search for 4+ hours per day.

Full article at <http://www.prweb.com/releases/executive/jobs/prweb1241144.htm>

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This month's topics:

- 1. Featured Article: To risk or not to risk: Sometimes it's the only way to go.**
- 2. Interview Tips: The number one mistake made during an interview.**
- 3. Boomer Corner: Why people over 50 should be hired.**
- 4. Success Story**

5. **Humor Department : The top 10 tricks to liven up a meeting.**
6. **Words that Inspire**

1. To risk or not to risk: Sometimes it's the only way to go.

Sometimes along the path in one's career, the question of risk in taking on a new project. Concern centers around the fear of losing one's job if the project fails or if the company decides not to produce the product, what are the pros and cons of taking the risk, and are there any safeguards one can negotiate.

Some important considerations for taking the risk include career advancement and recognition as a self-starter.

Dr. Michael Silverman says, "Executives want employees who are willing to take risks, because they need people in leadership positions who are willing and able to grow along with the organization."

The case of Swayne Hill illustrates what can happen. He wrestled with questions about whether or not to take a project opportunity. His excitement about the project won out over his fears. The outcome of the project, even with a great team and significant interest, was the launch failed.

Instead of losing his job, he learned the value the company placed on people willing to "put themselves out there and share the risk." He moved straight into a regional managerial position, and later into higher positions, finally into a vice presidency.

While not all "failures" end so positively, in today's tight job market it is critically important to distinguish yourself from your coworkers. The best way to do that is by showing management you are willing to take risks, not by blending in or trying to secure guarantees. Dr. Silverman states, "There is empirical evidence suggesting attempting to negotiate safeguards could be counterproductive to future placements as well as future performance evaluations."

Source:

<http://online.wsj.com/article/SB121962237366567659.html?mod=djempersonal>

2. Interview Tips— The number one mistake made during an interview.

The number one mistake candidates make in the interview process is talking too much. As a screener, I will allow one "too much information" response to a question. If I receive any more, however, I then draw one of two conclusions: (1) the candidate just likes to talk. If my hiring manager likes to talk as well, then this might be OK. Most of my managers don't however; (2), the candidate comes off as lacking confidence or has low self-esteem.

Let's just say being verbose in an interview is a big red flag. Here are some tips to help you be concise in your answers:

1. Rehearse your answers. If you go to my website ,(<http://www.randyblock.com>), click on interview coaching. Download "The Most Difficult Interview Questions" (pdf format). With the job description in hand, write out the answers fully (be verbose here.. stories, etc.). After you have done that, now write out the answers in "bullet form with only the highlights that minimally answer the question. Have your spouse or a friend then ask you the questions. Keep in mind that your answers are meant to be verbal and not read off of a sheet of paper.
2. If you find yourself on the fourth or fifth sentence in answering a question in an interview, you are probably "running on." Stop and sum up.
3. As I have stated before in this space, don't volunteer anything in an interview. Just give the interviewer a good concise answer. If they want an illustration or additional information, they will drill down.

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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.

3. Boomer Corner: Older Workers are the Best Workers

A common stereotype in the work world is that in most ways young workers are better than the old. They are more motivated, more energetic, more dedicated, and learn more rapidly. The elder worker, according to this stereotype, loses energy and dedication, becomes disinterested, and more or less just put in the time. To explore these possibilities further, a survey was conducted in health care agencies and nursing homes regarding how workers of various ages performed at their jobs. These employers compared workers over 55 with those who were younger.

The results were dramatic: Older workers were judged as more loyal, independent, knowledgeable, understanding, patient, cooperative, and motivated to do a good job than the younger. They also enjoyed more fully the challenges of caring for the sick, gaining trust of the clients, and communicating well with clients. They were less likely to leave within ten days of training, have background check problems, have problems with outside family responsibilities, or be absent.

The only significant way in which the older workers were judged negatively was in the fact they were less willing to use the computer!

From: Older workers: An opportunity to expand the long-term care/direct care labor force by Melanie Hwalek, Victoria Straub, & Karen Kosniewski. *The Gerontologist*, 2008, 48, special Issue 1, 90-10

4. Success Story

Good old Southern hospitality is Cathy Whalen's specialty, and nowadays she has plenty of opportunities to let her graciousness shine. Most weekends she can be found at various locations around Atlanta—from four-star hotels to the Georgia World Congress Center—meeting and greeting visitors, registering attendees, and staffing trade-show booths for the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau.

The bureau plays host to scores of conventions, meetings, and trade shows annually, and Cathy enjoys ensuring that events run smoothly. She also enjoys getting the chance to learn about everything from pet products to woodworking. But what she appreciates most—aside from a paycheck—is her flexible part-time schedule. She works as little or as much as she wants. Some days she puts in 10 hours, others as little as two. "It's great to feel in better control of your life," she says.

Until recently, Cathy wasn't so much in control as she was overwhelmed. Sixty-hour weeks weren't unusual for her at Delta Air Lines, where she'd worked for 25 years, most recently as the manager of corporate identity in consumer marketing. When the airline, like many others, downsized after 9/11, Cathy, then 52, took a retirement package. At first she used her newfound free time to clean out closets, do house renovations, and generally catch up on the things she had neglected while working long hours.

But Cathy never envisioned a permanent retirement. "I had no intention of never working postretirement," she explains. "I wanted a short time to be jobless." So, after several satisfying months spent far from the punch clock, she began looking for work. She had two requirements: less stress and more flexibility. She sounded out former associates and sent her résumé to major Atlanta-area employers. She went on job interviews. Then, through friends, she learned that the convention bureau was looking for temp employees to help host out-of-town visitors. For a people person like Cathy the job was perfect, as were the hours.

By the spring of 2002 Cathy had "unretired." And in doing so she became part of a rapidly growing movement: retirees easing out of full-time careers and into part-time and flexible jobs that suit both their wallets and lifestyles. And with more and more workers postponing full retirement, an unprecedented aging of the American work force is underway. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, between 2002 and 2012 the number of people in the labor force ages 55 and older will increase by 51 percent, and those ages 65 and older by 43 percent.

5. Humor Department: The top 10 tricks to liven up a meeting.

1. Stand up and act indignant. Demand that the boss tell you the 'real' reason this meeting has been called.
2. Spill coffee on the conference table. Produce a little paper boat and sail it down the table.
3. During a meeting, each time the boss makes an important point, (or at least one he/she seems to consider important), make a little noise like you are building up to an orgasm.
4. Stay behind as everyone else, including the boss, leaves. Thank them for coming.
5. Give a broad wink to someone else at the table. In time, wink at everyone. Sometimes shake your head just a little, as if to indicate that the speaker is slightly crazy and everybody knows it.
6. Arrange to have a poorly-dressed young woman with an infant quietly enter the meeting, stare directly at the (male) speaker for a while, burst into tears, then leave the room.
7. Bring a hand puppet, preferably an animal. Ask it to clarify difficult points.
8. When there is a call for questions, lean back in your chair, prop your feet up on the table, smile contentedly, and say, "Well, here's the way I see it, J.B..." (or any other impressive-sounding initials that are not actually your boss's.)
9. Complain loudly that your neighbor won't stop touching you. Demand that the boss make him/her stop doing it.
10. Bring a small mountain of computer printouts to the meeting. If possible, include some old-fashioned fanfold paper for dramatic effect. Every time the speaker makes a point, pretend to check it in one of the printouts. Pretend to find substantiating evidence there. Nod vigorously, and say "uh-huh, uh-huh!"

6. Words that Inspire

"Adventure is worthwhile."

--- Amelia Earhart, aviator

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