

December 13, 2005



Happy Holidays. Paul Bush here—resume writer—offering some holiday inspiration for job seekers on how to make the most of your search and resume. The first edition of my quarterly newsletter elicited some excellent feedback, which I will share in a moment.

As you may recall, my purpose in writing this e-newsletter is to share my insight and perceptions on job search, resumes and the Rochester market. With your approval, I am passing along information of value in managing your career. If you would prefer not to receive this publication, e-mail me at paul@rochesterresume.com with the word “Delete” in the subject line and I will remove your name.

The Rochester market...it's still tight out there. And in my opinion it's likely to be this way for the indefinite future. Rochester, by comparison to other metropolitan areas, has not seen the kind of job growth we'd like. The challenge and opportunity is in how each jobseeker responds to the situation and the market. Typically, I see clients who fall into one of three buckets. Allow me to explain.

➤ **Bucket 1: Looking for the Holy Grail.** These candidates have been long-term jobholders in established companies, with established products, in established markets. Unfortunately, something has changed leaving the candidate feeling not quite so “established” as they used to be. As a result, these candidates are searching diligently for the next Kodak, the next high-paying programming job or the next corporate position. The reality is that the position and/or company for which they long may (or probably) does not exist. *Translation: Houston, we have a problem.*

➤ **Bucket 2: Career changers in chaos.** Their common refrain is I don't know what to do, what I could be or what the world wants today—a tough situation for even the most seasoned jobseeker. As a result, these folks who no longer stand for something fall for anything. There are many people “in transition” today who are doing financial sales, insurance sales, home improvement sales, home parties and Mary Kay® who didn't start out to be what they've become. Only a fraction is successful and a smaller fraction contented. *The solution: A little career planning and skills assessment; without it be prepared to add months to your search.*

➤ **Bucket 3: The capable and in control.** These candidates recognized at some point that “their cheese was moved” and are prepared to *reinvent*. These savvy jobseekers understand that the only thing constant in career management is change and are adept at applying the core competencies they have to new products, services, markets, customers and companies. They recognize that just because they've been in customer service, they may be marketable in sales or operations. *Translation: To the victor go the spoils.*

A neighbor of mine from 15 years ago used to lean over the fence and talk to me about his day at Kodak. He'd wax on with particular eloquence after a couple of beers about how he would tell his workers that “the Big Yellow Mother isn't going to be there forever to take care of them.” Ironically, a client I worked with recently acknowledged that he always knew the middle-level operations job he'd always held would come to an end one day, and that he'd worry about it then. Guess what? He's still unemployed, lacking in marketable skills and the skills to conduct a search, and frustrated.

Perhaps you or someone you know falls into one of these buckets. The best service you can do yourself or someone else is to tell them to get help; don't go it alone. My associates and I can help with resume/cover letter writing, skills testing, coaching and interview practice to smooth your transition.

Working with recruiters. Recruiters are *not* the solution for every candidate in transition. But when a recruiter has a posting for which you think you're perfect, here are a few tips from Eric Truelson of Cochran, Cochran & Yale in Rochester on how best to present your qualifications.

1. **There's no such thing as a perfect fit based on a job posting alone.** Don't oversell yourself or present yourself as the "perfect candidate" for the job because employers are equally concerned about fit and other intangibles important to success in the job.
2. **Just the facts.** Recruiters need information to match employer requirements with candidate skills and having relevant information makes the recruiter's job easier. So, be sure to address how your skills and abilities meet the employer's needs.
3. **Candidate expectations.** Say what's important to you. Recruiters can only be effective in representing employers and candidates if they understand your expectations relative to culture, salary, industry, etc.

Personal marketing...what it really means. The most successful professionals I work with understand the power of effective personal marketing. It begins with your resume and how you deliver your message. The following is a little scenario you should run through at least once.

Picture this: You're on your way to a meeting and the elevator door opens and out steps the VP of your company. He says, "Jones, I've been hearing some very good things about the work your team is doing in accounting. You know, our Southeast Asia operation is growing by leaps and bounds and we need help. Tell me *what* you've been up to and *what* you can do for us." What would you say? If you're not good at delivering in words or on paper your pitch you may be sabotaging your career! The same applies in job interview situations. **Today, it's all about personal marketing, key messaging, core competencies, unique abilities and your skill in delivering a succinct message about YOU!**

In short, if you're not confident of your personal presentation, then you should be coming to us. Remember that the amount of time you invest in personal marketing is proportional to the amount of time you're likely to spend in transition. *Translation: Invest a little effort on personal marketing (resume, cover letter, coaching, interview practice, etc.) and you'll likely spend less time in transition.*

The resume "acid test." Gene Voss, a veteran HR professional and a colleague of mine, offered some helpful, common-sense advice from his side of the desk on file formats and e-mail.

- **Name your document properly.** In sending your resume digitally to a recruiter or prospective employer, be sure to label the file with your name, not "resume.doc." A file named "Steven Jones Resume.doc" is far more likely to be remembered and stored correctly.
- **Use Microsoft Word.** Do not create your resume in a little-used program. Microsoft® Word is the name of the game today, *not* MS Works or Corel WordPerfect®. I would add that if you have the ability to turn your resume into a PDF, please do so. It's the only guarantee senders have that the file they created on their computer will look perfect on the recipient's computer. Just to be safe, it would not hurt to send the file simultaneously in Word as well as PDF.
- **No zip files.** No employer or recruiter with a shred of computer savvy is going to open a zip file from a cold prospect. So, skip the zip.
- **State your business.** When sending your resume by e-mail, be sure to state in the subject line the title of the job for which you are applying. It's thoughtful to the recipient and less likely to be confused with junk mail.

Closing thought. Career transition is stressful. You're only as good as you feel. Take care of yourself, but don't let the joy of the season keep you from doing the right things now. With the New Year come new budgets and companies still write job offers during the Holidays.

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