

CREATING LUCRATIVE WORK OPPORTUNITIES... WHEN JOBS ARE GOING AWAY

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- **JOBS**, that are specific functions, located in defined departments, positioned in relatively unchanging organizational charts and typically held by one person for a long period of time, are going away. It has become a truism in recent years. The trend was best described by William Bridges in his seminal work, published in 1994, *Job Shift: How to Prosper in a Workplace without Jobs*.
- **WORK**, on the other hand, is abundant. It is simply carried out in new and innovative ways. Recall all of the patches on the patchwork quilt. More often, rather than “jobs,” * they represent opportunities to move products and services to the customer. So, even if you hold something that looks like and is described as a “job,” and is embedded in a formal structure, it is wise to keep an eye on the continuous changes, improvements and advances that unfold in the arena of “future customer needs.” According to Bridges, all “jobs” are temporary, whether they last 6 months or 4 to 5 years (the national average tenure).
- **YOUR SEARCH CAMPAIGN** is a marketing campaign that addresses the many ways in which you already have and will continue to introduce new ideas, design, define and move products, generate revenue and profit, while minimizing operational costs. These activities are of central importance whether they occur in organizational structures or with temporary project teams.
- **CONNECTIONS TO THE WORKPLACE** come in all shapes and size. It is smart at the front end of your search to familiarize yourself with all types of forms that hold opportunity for you and to create a tactical plan that fits the reality of the market and suits your particular needs.

Next, we present traditional ways to pursue your next opportunity, as well as emerging, innovative ways to make your unique contribution while producing an income to support your lifestyle.

*Throughout our training materials, when we refer to “jobs” and “job seekers” we are referring to this transformed concept of work opportunities and career transition campaigns.

- **Cover Letter:** On scratch paper, write out the top 5-8 job requirements in the same order as presented in the advertisement. Next to each one, write out your qualifications that most precisely reflect those in the ad. Set aside.
 1. Begin your cover letter by stating exactly what position you are responding to, including the source of the advertisement (website, newspaper, internet job board).
 2. The second paragraph of the letter should address “**why you are particularly attracted to the position and/or the company.**” Next present the above prioritized bullet points in the body of the letter.
 3. Close by stating how and when you will follow up.

NAVIGATING THE HIDDEN JOB MARKET

KEY POINTS:

- If 80% of your work options are present “under the surface,” then it makes sense for you to spend 80% of your time, or 4 days per week, exploring, uncovering, and pro-actively connecting with the people sitting on these opportunities.
- While there are obviously no exact parameters concerning the size of two main categories of hidden jobs, both are substantial enough to warrant close attention. First is the category of “**articulated, but not advertised**” openings. These refer to corporate needs that are being discussed and defined by internal managers or teams, but have not reached the formal process of “going public” through advertising or use of an internal or external recruiter. Next there are “**changes that are occurring that present opportunities in the near future.**” The latter might include corporate plans to open a new facility in a particular region, the decision to offer a product line, the re-location of a business or part of a business to a new geographical location.
- Be mindful of the drastic difference between the way in which advertised and unadvertised positions are filled. The former may put you in a pool of one or two hundred competitors, while the latter could put you in a pool of one, perhaps two or three competitors. Be confident that hiring managers want to hear from top candidates prior to going forward with a costly search. Take advantage of this reality!
- As you scan the multi-faceted job market, described in detail in the worksheet, “Understanding the Topsy-Turvy Job Market” and make a list of ten active possibilities – “Ten Top Company List” - make a commitment to uncover

everything that holds potential in your chosen geographical area. Always have a back-up reserve list to replace possibilities that do not pan out. Making this list is the direct result of market research and networking with informed people either in person or via the social media. (For specific techniques, refer to the sections on “Market Research,” and “Job Search and the Social Media.”)

TACTICS:

- Your immediate challenge in investigating various options is to start a meaningful conversation with people “in the know” – including employees of companies of interest, and especially, hiring managers who have a vested interest and authority to hire someone with your background and skills.
- Blogs have emerged as a popular spot to converse on topics of interest and, along with Twitter, are reaching an ever expanding audience. (See “Job Search and the Social Media”).
- More direct, targeted communications are achieved by contacting key people inside of companies (or who are leading a project or who are looking for specific consulting support). The most effective way to commence the process is to send a marketing letter directly to this person and to follow this piece up with a telephone call with an invitation to schedule a brief “get acquainted” meeting in the very near future.
- Since few people are comfortable with making cold calls, the “marketing letter with telephone follow-up” warms up the process a bit. Wait for two or three days from the estimated time the letter arrives to follow up with a pre-planned telephone script. Be prepared to deliver your script to voicemail as precious few busy managers seem to pick up the phone on the first try. When you do not receive a call back, be prepared to call again. Use the opportunity, if it is offered, to press a number and speak to an assistant. Let this person know that you are calling to follow up on a communication with said manager and ask when a good time would be to reach him/her directly. You might hear “Jane is always in her office from about 8 AM to 9:30 AM” and then follow up accordingly. There is an art to being persistent “without becoming a pest.” Use your judgment. It is always helpful if you have an issue or small piece of information that distinguishes “call three” from “call two,” such as “I read in the newspaper yesterday that your product launch is scheduled for the end of the month. I look forward to the chance to talk soon about the follow on support you will be using to expand the new market. I am happy to meet you at your office for a 15 to 20 minute meeting at a time convenient for you.”
- Make a commitment to a certain number of networking calls and networking meetings each week. My clients find that the more calls they make the easier it becomes. Using a script and speaking from a few “talking points,” especially at

the front end of the conversation, is a great way to lessen discomfort and polish your skills.

- As you go deeper into the research, investigation and interactive mode, you will automatically branch out into submitting your resume, networking with more people, interviewing, writing proposals and contracts, evaluating opportunities and negotiating employment partnership or new client agreements. All of these are dealt with in other sections. The key is to keep up a level of activity each week, to assess your results and to make course corrections as you go along.
- Remember the most important skill of a sales professional (because in this aspect of your life, you are one!) and that is “Do not be afraid of rejection because it is part of the process and each one gets you closer to your ideal acceptance.” If you cannot handle striking out, you will never have a shot at a homerun.

EXPLORING TEMPORARY ASSIGNMENTS

(As an interim or long term strategy)

KEY POINTS:

- The temporary employment industry is a robust and growing part of the U.S. economy. While temporary firms comprise 2% of total U.S. jobs, they have grown by 45% and added more jobs to their payrolls— 786,000 – more than any other single industry since 2009.
- These staffing firms hire contractors to fill temporary openings by requesting companies that can last for weeks, months or even years.
- The industry has expanded and diversified in the last 20 years to include technical, financial, computer operations, healthcare, human resources, education, library and social services in addition to administrative and managerial opportunities.
- Unlike “independent contracting” where an individual works on a project basis and is paid directly by the company on a 1099 tax form as a self-employed contractor, a “temp” employee is placed on the staffing firm’s payroll, paid an hourly rate and typically accrues some benefits from the firm. Pay rates are often greater than the company counterpart’s pay rate, while benefits, if offered, are significantly less.
- Many contractors who work with temporary staffing firms choose this mode of employment as a preferred lifestyle. The technical, engineering and

manufacturing industries are filled with project workers who have no interest in “going captive” with a company.

- People who ultimately prefer direct employment with a company may enjoy enormous benefits from temporary assignments during a career transition, including:
 1. Low risk “try before you buy” period for both company and employee. Typically the company has option to go “temp-to-perm” if desired and employee can accept or (gracefully) reject such an offer.
 2. Great way to explore the market, in general, yielding far greater information than can be obtained in interviews.
 3. May reveal unadvertised openings and opportunities.
 4. Adds variety of current experiences to resume.
 5. Buys time while continuing search or taking steps to start a business.
 6. Contributes financially.

TACTICS:

- **Interview** staffing firms that make placements in your function and industry. Ensure that all fees are paid by requesting company and that “temp-to-perm” options are available if this is something you may be interested in.
- **Resume:** When you sign on with a firm, inquire about how they would like you to present your qualifications. In contract work, the requesting company and the staffing firm are looking for “round pegs for round holes.” These very specific areas of expertise need to be prominent, either on your resume or on forms that are provided by the staffing firm. Seek and follow the directions set by the firm.
- **Commit:** While there is typically no legal contract to guarantee the performance or length of the engagement (work is supervised by requesting company management and the duration of the project is estimated), it is wise to commit to your staffing firm that you intend to stay for the duration of the project. Building this trust and credibility will optimize your chances for future work and good references.
- **Integrate with Integrity:** While on the assignment, make an effort to jump on board with the team or the partner from the company. Do not be tempted, however, to disclose data about your contracting arrangements, especially your pay rate. Contractors often make a higher hourly wage and such information can cause unnecessary tension.

FREELANCING: A POPULAR FORM OF SELF EMPLOYMENT

KEY POINTS:

- A freelancer is a person, typically in a creative field, such as writing or graphic arts, who works on a per-project basis for multiple clients. Freelancers deliver specific, tangible products or services for an hourly or project-based fee within an agreed upon timeframe.
- Unlike the temporary “contract employee” described above (who works for a staffing firm that handles taxes and provides job assignments) freelancers are self-employed; they are paid on IRS 1099 tax forms, rather than on W2 forms, and find project opportunities on their own.
- Freelancing is attractive to people with very specific skills that thrive in a “boss-free” environment, setting their own hours, picking and choosing the types of clients and projects that are most desirable.
- While freelancers enjoy the freedom and flexibility of their chosen career and lifestyle, they offer enormous benefits to their corporate clients. The latter receive top notch assistance in areas, such as creating a marketing brochure or redecorating their office space, without the need to hire full-time employees.
- The downside of pursuing this type of work has always been the trade-off between freedom and flexibility and “secure employment “with a regular pay check. However, as we have already discussed, there is really no such animal in today’s market that could be characterized as secure. In fact, many experts in the area of career consulting contend that it is the “skill set that can be taken on the road” that is now the essence of true security. After all, the logic goes, “all of your independent clients are not going to gather together at the same time and decide to end your employment”. Multiple clients and multiple sources of income are today’s hallmarks of long-term security.

TACTICS:

- As with all transitions from working for someone else to self-employment, pre-planning is critical. Putting aside at least six months’ salary, enough to cover basics such as mortgage, health insurance and other essentials, as well as enough up-front capital to gain traction and secure your first paying client is advised.
- Ideally you will have prepared the essential product or service that you intend to market before leaving your day job. Your first six months in business for yourself should primarily be devoted to marketing and sales.

- Use discernment combined with feedback from selected individuals to distinguish between “what you are able to do” and what meets a genuine, and hopefully widespread, need in the market. A common mistake on the front end (and, yes, I made it myself!), is to create too large a menu of offerings (“one person offering the Denny’s menu”) as opposed to a clearly defined product or service offered to a specific niche in the market (“French cuisine for a specific clientele”).
- Create a website to serve as your “electronic brochure.” How elaborate and extensive a website depends on the nature of your business. If you are an attorney, this is not as important a method for building a clientele as referrals. The best attorney I know in his field of specialty has a burgeoning practice and presents a simple one-page professional profile on his website. If, however, you are selling a product that needs to be distinguished from competitive products, or if you are selling a service like public speaking, you will benefit from a more elaborate presentation. Promotions, videos, and other attention-getting displays work well in addition to easy “click to buy” options.
- Learning the basics of contracting and pricing for your line of work is another front-end task. Any small business person who has graduated from the “school of hard knocks” will bemoan the consequences of loose expectations around delivery schedules, change orders and, above all method and timeframe for getting paid. A full pipeline of incoming business does not automatically guarantee the cash flow requirement to propel your business through inevitable up and down cycles.
- A solid portion of your up-front capital is wisely spent on an attorney and an accountant who specialize in small businesses. They will get you on solid footing when it comes to such necessities as copyright/patent issues, viable contracts that protect your business and accounting practices that maximize the potential for appropriate and workable billing and collection cycles.
- If you have employees (even one!) you will need to learn and fulfill various legal, structural and tax requirements, including your preferred organizational form (partnership, sub-S corporation, LLC, etc.) and such essentials as payroll taxes, unemployment compensation, workers compensation and health insurance, if applicable.
- Finally, before launching your new enterprise, ask yourself if you have the temperament and personality that are suited to self-employment. Most important, do you see yourself as emotionally stable enough to ride out the ups and downs of the cycles of business? Here I am reminded of Rudyard Kipling’s classic poem, “If.” The entire poem is worth contemplating. Simply modify the last sentence to read “You’ll be an Entrepreneur, My Friend!”
- Strive for **excellence**, rather than perfection, for the latter will only set you up for failure. Do a “workman-like” job at covering the above bases and set sail!

CONSULTING:

KEY POINTS:

- The difference between a freelancer and a self-employed consultant is that the latter is primarily giving professional advice, based on in-depth knowledge of a given subject area, to the client – typically the management of a company. Consultants often have protracted engagements with a firm that can involve “transfers of knowledge,” and on-going professional support, as opposed to one-time completions of a specific project.

A client company that wants a new marketing brochure or a set of photographs taken of the firm staff might use a freelancer. There is no need to bring these skills into the firm on a long-term basis. A firm that needs on-going support in developing strategic plans may hire a business consultant.

- All of the criteria for setting up a successful freelancing business apply to consulting with emphasis on a few important tactical steps.

TACTICS:

- Because the hallmarks of a good consultant are “professional expertise in a given field” and the ability to build strong relationships, there are distinctive marketing techniques that are most effective in generating new business. All can be time-consuming so it is best to pick a couple and do them regularly.
- Public speaking to business groups, professional associations and volunteer organizations establishes both expertise on relevant topics and the ability to connect with your audience.
- Writing on “hot topics” in your field in a company newsletter, a blog on your website and professional journals are great options. Again, pick one or two and do it well!
- Contracting and pricing are similar to the freelancing model with a few additional guidelines. We highly recommend pricing by the project and/or phases of the project as opposed to charging by the hour. Because consulting is often a protracted engagement with specific phases, it is recommended that the charges be attached to successful outcomes associated with each phase. For example, Phase I might be the “Needs Assessment” (developing an understanding of the client’s overall situation and specific needs for intervention). Phase II is the “Proposed Intervention” (including interactive feedback from the company’s project managers). Phases III is “Implementation.” Phase IV is the final

“Debriefing and Outline of Next Steps.” Each of these phases is priced individually and often the second, third and fourth phases are simply estimates that will be solidified after the Phase I Needs Assessment is complete. The information derived from Phase I will determine the nature and scope of the project and, therefore, appropriate pricing.

- Consulting brings with it complexities that are not associated with freelancing. Perhaps one of the greatest challenges for the new consultant is understanding the difference between consulting and managing and exercising the discipline to avoid stepping over this line. Since new consultants often come from management backgrounds, it is easy for this distinction to be blurred. For an excellent discussion of this issue, see Peter Block’s, *Flawless Consulting: A Guide to Getting Your Expertise Used*. Another gem in this field is Geoffrey M. Bellman’s, *The Consultant’s Calling: Bringing Who You Are to What You Do*.