

## CHANGING BUSINESS CLIMATE

From senior management to the average employee, rejection lurks as the #1 enemy to reentering the job market.

The changing business climate has brought an additional fear of rejection not just to the employee trying to get in the company but to the employee on-the-job dreading those encroaching pink slips. Once inside the corporate walls, a good employee could count on years of steady employment. This no longer is the case.

Remember the gold watch? Gone. Instead of employee longevity, the focus is on the bottom-line. A utility company in the Midwest was proud to say that their product was really their employees. That same organization downsized hundreds of employees with exemplary records, and currently points with pride to their leaner managerial style of today.

Mergers and acquisitions are the trend. For every company name-change, you can count eliminating personnel in the shift.

Unlike past generations, good employees not bad employees get that pink slip. Today, it is the employee with the nicest paycheck that is part of downsizing, rightsizing, or most currently workforce reduction.

Very often what happens is that employees over 55 years-or-more are eliminated and sent reeling to find new employment. The gold watch a thing of the past.

Job changes involve a lot more than just money. They involve entire lifestyle changes.

In the mid-nineties, I was writing résumés for senior executives of the Capital Life Insurance Company in San Diego, California. Writing for the Vice President of Underwriting, I learned that he had a job opportunity in Hawaii.

I casually said that he probably didn't even need my services, since he had a good position waiting, and only had to move from one paradise to another.

He set me straight in a hurry saying that he knew nothing of Hawaii. He added that he had lived for twenty years in San Diego, knew where to get his haircut, go to the drugstore, shop, and do all of those personal things that we take for granted..

Remember the bank mergers in mid-nineties? Large banks gobbled up little banks. Personnel, who had been a solid part of the establishment, were suddenly without a position. Some of them received severance, but some did not.

Helping write a résumé to change an image of trusted bank personnel to fit other industry challenges was a real challenge. I drew from my experience writing military conversion résumés and knew that I could not rely on just the information the person was giving me. I had to sort through and find what matched other industry needs to get the phone to ring for my client.

As I spoke with a few of banking personnel, I realized they were all highly customer oriented. The line between customer service and sales is very narrow.

Good, I thought! I have a direction. But when I would question someone about going into sales, they would look at me quite astonished, as if I had said a dirty word.

Going over their history, I could easily see that many were the first-point-of-contact, or the branch manager that met with an advised bank patrons. They sold bank products daily, but at that time (mid-nineties) opening new checking accounts, advising customers on CD investments, transferring money from another bank to theirs, was thought of as customer service for bank business — not sales.

Getting a grasp on this, I restated my question to include, “If you could represent a product that you were very proud of, would you enjoy sales?”

The answer was a dramatic “YES,” and this gave me the breakthrough that I needed to write a résumé that added, not just customer service, but customer service and sales.

I repeatedly tried this line of questioning and found that most of the people who were very proud of their longevity and service to small, prestigious banks in southern California could easily transition from banks to sales.

Also, even though San Diego, California has an expensive lifestyle, salaries for bank personnel are traditional low. What my clientele found to their amazement were higher salaries, sometimes-huge jumps in income. One woman, employed ten years with a bank, went from a customer service representative with a salary in the low-thirties to selling cellular phones with a jump close to a six-figure income.

*Often what looks to be the grimmest day of one's life, is really an opportunity to make a more lucrative and fulfilling life change.*

During the last decade, corporate decision-makers have come to view employees as expendable. Only the bottom-line became their monitor of business success. Employees could receive bonuses one day and be out the door the next. The rapid succession of terms such as downsizing, rightsizing to workforce reduction (terminology of the new millennium) served to dehumanize more emotional phrase of getting fired from one's job.

A manager over a pool of stenographers at TriCity Hospital in southern California was asked to downsize forty-three employees in a three-day period. Wrung out at the end of the last exhausting day, her immediate supervisor, downsized her. The manager talked to me in terms of downsizing all those employees; she referred to herself as being fired.

After the recession of the early nineties was over, good times came back as they always do. What didn't have a comeback was employee loyalty. I continually see clients having a résumé prepared just out of uneasiness, or wanting to see what else is out there. There is overriding fear that "it could happen to me."

If the bad news of corporate change has brought a huge negative and is especially hard on midlife careers, the rapid pace of corporate change has produced some good news too.

The trend to think of unemployment as a stigma is gone. Once, if there was a termination date on a résumé it spelled trouble. Now, there are too many professional-level unemployed among us to make that judgment call.

Job Clubs sponsored by churches in southern California sprung up during the ninety's recession. Now, there isn't an area of the country that doesn't offer a similar type support to the professional –level employee.

California's Employment Development Division (EDD) took a lead in forming a professional division for job seekers that offered a specialized service the professional-level unemployed personnel. EDD recognized that these people were use to working with a desk and telephone. They set up an area office that gave each attendee just that! A Desk and Telephone. It was an astonishingly well-received benefit.

The goal was to pass as many people through this more professional approach than have them waiting in the lines just outside this makeshift office. There was a waiting list to be a participant and those who gained admission to this cloistered group worked hard to meet the interviewing requirements to stay.

The attendees had an advantage of advertising to companies through a profile listing describing the pertinent facts to entice a new employer. There were weekly speakers, video training for interviews, and more.

The result of the overall help provided by EDD was that the attendees regained a little self-esteem back to support their search.

As we have turned the page into a new millennium, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century has produced the best news of all to enhance job search opportunity:

THE INTERNET.

Do you know how real estate brokers find new houses to sell? They cast out the largest net they can, and in fact never stop fishing for new leads. It is constant with them and they never say die!

As we faced job loss, even a few years ago, our solution to the job search, we were limited to friends, the newspaper, and trade journals, periodicals. . Now we have the Internet. In the past few years the Internet has become the leading source of job change representing over 90% of the job market.

The Internet allows, with the minimum of effort, a job search that can extend nationwide. You no longer need to go to one recruiter in your area, but can contact hundreds of recruiters in a given specialty. Instant recognition is a powerful tool.

What is exciting to me is that my clients can search in any area of the country and reach recruiters for a specific job niche really almost overnight. Just as the realtor knows his success is based on daily numbers of calls to homeowners— so are yours!

I can hear you saying to me that the Internet is great for your son or daughter, but that you are too old. Right?

Wrong. I have drug people kicking and screaming to place their résumés on the Internet or send e-mail campaigns to recruiters. Only to find, that **SOMEONE CONTACTED THEM**. Imagine that!

In 2001, I received a call from an All State Manager in northern California. He was downsized, along with several others. His employment history with All State began in 1974. He contacted me from my web site. Could I help?

I wrote a résumé targeting marketing, operations, and administrative management and geared the résumé and his cover letter to send to other industries. I also advised him to use an e-mail campaign to contact recruiters and post it on the web at various sites. He said, “No” to all with the reasoning of being too old to be noticed.

I believed this would help him so much that I put his résumé on [www.Monster.com](http://www.Monster.com), with his permission of course, but without charge. Results? In three days he had ten calls.

So, if you believe you are too old to be of interest to anyone on the Internet — You Are Wrong! It offers you an immediate support to use new thinking and get out of a stuck place in your life.

So, you might ask, how do I do this?

Let's get busy in a **two-part process**: (1) developing the interior landscape to get you back in touch with yourself and your professional growth (my coaching services), and (2) writing the résumé and cover letter (my résumé services) with a powerful communication approach that get the phone ringing and a voice on your computer announcing, "you've got mail!"

**Let me show you how.**

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