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Introduction

Job Seeking as a Start-Up Business

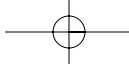
Question: What difference is there between a start-up small business entrepreneur and a job seeker?

Answer: A job seeker is looking for only one customer.

Otherwise, the processes are almost identical.

I realized this when I was simultaneously providing consulting services to both an entrepreneur and a job seeker. I was going through the same steps with each of them in their different contexts. The only difference seemed to be the vocabulary:

Outplacement Counseling	Business Planning
Job hunting plan	Business strategy
Self-assessment	Catalog of products or services
Changing career	Reinventing business model
Resumes and cover letters	Advertising
Networking and referrals	Lead generation
Executive recruiters	Middlemen
Researching companies	Market research
Targeting employers	Marketing strategy
Interviewing	Sales calls
Compensation	Pricing
Negotiating the terms	Making the deal
Starting on and keeping the new job	Customer relations



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There Is No One Right Way

Most job hunting articles and books tell you that the only way is the way the author advocates. They are filled with words like “always . . . never . . . only . . . secret. . .” This may be good for marketing books, but it is poor job hunting advice.

There are simply too many variables for any one formula to work. Each country, geographic region, industry, company, business unit, division, office, interviewer, manager, and coworker is different. In fact, the culture, the incumbent, or the mood of the interviewer can change, whether imperceptibly or dramatically, from time to time. Similarly, each job seeker’s work experience is different and cannot be made to fit a mold.

The Legend of the Bed of Procrustes

There is a Greek legend about a giant named Procrustes who lived in a remote area beside a road between two cities. According to custom, he welcomed any traveler who came to his house at nightfall to stay overnight. When the traveler had fallen asleep, Procrustes went into his room to see how well the traveler fit the bed. If he was too short, Procrustes stretched him until he was long enough and, of course, killed him. If he was too long, Procrustes cut off part of his body until he was short enough and, of course, killed him.

The message for you in this legend is that if you try to make your methods fit arbitrary rules, you may kill your chances of getting the job that is right for you.

The alternative is to find out what is needed and what the job, place, and person you hope to work for are like, and to be sure there is a fit. If you do your homework, you have a better chance of succeeding. However, because things will change, be prepared to be flexible enough to change with them, or astute enough to recognize that you may need to move on.

Job Getting Is an Art, Not a Science

Job getting is an art, just like playing the piano. When you start taking piano lessons, you learn techniques such as scales, arpeggios, fingering,

reading music, and so on. You gradually become proficient by practicing the techniques . . . and practicing . . . and practicing.

However, to become a musician, you go beyond the techniques. You interpret the music and make the performance your own. You become a master.

This book gives you the tools to become proficient as a job hunter. It is up to you to become a master. Practice the methods in it and practice some more. Then use your good judgment based on facts and hunches to be as good as or better than the employer in the employment process. Both of you will win.

The Style Used in This Book

Even though I have written this book in a way that implies imperatives, I use action verbs as a style that is short and punchy. Interpret the advice based on your own situation and adapt or discard what is written according to your own research.

To repeat what paradoxically does amount to a rule:

THERE IS NO ONE RIGHT WAY

Ten Ideas to Get Jump Started

1. Visualize the accomplishment.
2. Move into action—do it now.
3. Identify obstacles and worst-case scenarios; figure out how to deal with them.
4. Surround yourself with supportive people.
5. Identify your skills and the skills needed.
6. Set a goal consistent with motivating vision.
7. Prepare a thorough action plan.
8. Write a goals and action plan timetable.
9. Stay flexible; adjust action plan as needed.
10. Define benefits to employer.

