

# JOB SEEKER STRATEGIES TO STAY AHEAD OF THE CAREER CURVE



# These 5 Job Search Trends Might Change Your Whole Strategy. Number 4 is a Game Changer.

Dawn Papandrea



It seems like it wasn't that long ago that people scoured the classified ads to try to find their dream job, but as you can imagine, that's not a very effective strategy anymore. To figure out the latest trends in job searching, the Career Thought Leaders Consortium conducted a Global Career Brainstorming Day with more than 150 of the top career professionals from the U.S. and five other countries. The Consortium's resulting white paper explores how the job search landscape is changing.

Here are five trends adapted from their report that you should consider if you're currently searching for a job...

### **1. Soft skills - like writing - count.**

Know that every email you write is being evaluated. In fact, don't be surprised if you're asked to provide writing samples. That's because no matter what role you'll play, from sales to marketing to customer service, how you communicate is a reflection of the brand/company you represent.

### **2. Don't wait for snail mail.**

While a hand-written thank-you note is a lovely gesture, be sure a thank you reaches your interviewers within 24 hours via email. Then, follow it up with a handwritten note that touches on something you spoke about.

### **3. Companies are marketing to you, as much as you are marketing to them.**

There's a big push for companies to brand their organizations as great workplaces that value its employees. That's why you'll be seeing a lot more emphasis on culture on company websites' career sections. The goal is to engage with potential hires and build a strong relationship and reputation, so that the best talent will seek employment there.

### **4. RIP to the traditional resume.**

OK, so you still should have a fresh, updated resume (especially in some industries), but remember - recruiters are only spending 30 seconds looking (probably less) at it, so your marketing efforts can't stop there. In essence, think of it as a bigger business card that lists links to your website, blog, social media profiles, and online bio. If you're sending your resume as a Word document or PDF, relevant hyperlinks will bring your resume to life.

### **5. Recruiters have too much information at their disposal.**

With all of the various social media options, job postings, and internal career sites, many recruiters are feeling overwhelmed, and are seeking ways to help narrow the playing field of candidates. Services like FindtheRightJob.com act as a "matchmaker" service of sorts, pairing qualified applicants with time-strapped recruiters.

By staying on top of job searching trends, you'll also stay ahead of the pack and find the best opportunities.

*If you're on the hunt, what are some job search trends you've noticed?*

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# Q&A: A Career Expert's Take on Personal Branding

Dawn Papandrea



You might have heard the term “personal branding” as a key element for advancing your career. But what exactly does it mean, and how can you do it effectively?

We caught up with career expert Vicki Salemi for her expert words of job search wisdom...

**What is personal branding and why is it important, even for those who aren't looking for a job?**



“Personal branding is incredibly important for your career and job searching, too. It’s your entire persona, everything you bring to the table, your skills, your experience and your soft skills, along with energy, enthusiasm and ambition. Your personal brand is your total package! Keep it polished and let it shine.”

**So how do you brand yourself? Give me your three best tips.**

“First, create a mission statement of who you are, your beliefs and how you want people to perceive you.

“Next, build your reputation. Speak at industry events, participate in Twitter chats, blog about topics, and become a respected expert in your field.

“Lastly, review and update your LinkedIn profile, website and abridged bio in Twitter to ensure they’re all pretty much identical. Then ensure your pitch of how you’re introducing yourself to people is identical as well. Online marketing should complement offline marketing.”

**What are some mistakes people make when beginning to look for a job?**

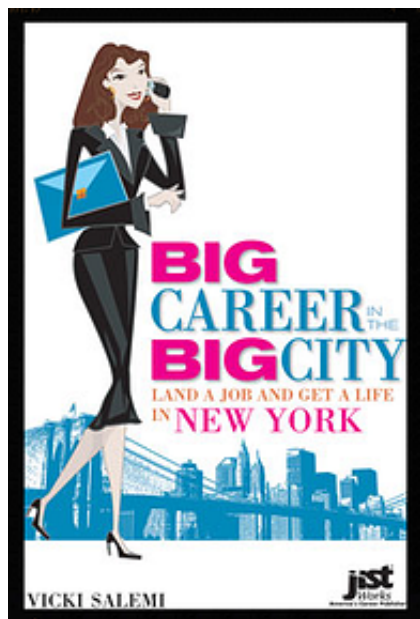
“They underestimate the time it takes. We live in an instant messaging society when in reality, it could take several weeks just to hear back to get that first interview. Job seekers also rely too much on applying online and expecting to hear back, and then feel disappointment when they don’t. Lastly, so many things go on behind the scenes. I’ve seen it all in corporate recruiting — jobs get put on

hold because they were never approved by finance in the first place, they get filled internally, they get filled by the boss's next door neighbor's niece. Learn to hone your interviewing skills, but don't take it personally if you don't get the job; it's not always about you."

**What advice do you have for someone who's applying like crazy, but not hearing back?**

"Stop applying like crazy. Your resume is getting submitted into the applicant tracking system only to sit among hundreds of other resumes. When I worked in recruiting it was common knowledge that we didn't have time to even open all of them let alone read their cover letters (so don't agonize over crafting the ideal cover letter either), sorry to say.

"You're pouring your energy into a dead-end street and not hearing back; it's time to do something different to yield tangible results. Focus on networking, setting up informational interviews, and getting your foot in the door through referrals."



*Vicki Salemi is a career coach and public speaker unleashing her knowledge based on more than 15 years of corporate recruiting and human resources experience. She is the author of "Big Career in the Big City" and the creator,*

*producer and host of “Score That Job” on MediabistroTV. Salemi appears on TV to comment on workplace trends such as Fox Business. She blogs for U.S. News & World Report, and writes a career column for Metro newspapers.*

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# Do You Have a Job Tool Kit? Create One and Get Hired

Dawn Papandrea



Whenever someone begins searching for a job, they know they must update their resume and write up a cover letter. But according to Ford R. Myers, Career Coach, Speaker and Author of “Get The Job You Want, Even When No One’s Hiring,” there’s a lot more you should be doing to ensure a successful job hunt. In fact, in his book, he recommends creating a “Job Tool Kit” to be the best prepared applicant you can be.

Here are a few tool kit items to have in your arsenal...

**Create a positioning statement.** You might have heard of an elevator pitch; this is along the same lines. Myers says to create and practice a sort of 15-second commercial about yourself and your accomplishments, so that you can rattle it off when you meet a potential employer.

**Make an employer wish list.** You may have specific companies in mind, but if



you don't, start a list of attributes that your ideal employer should have. What words describe its size, culture, and industry? Once you've established what's important to you, find companies that match your criteria. Tools like FTRJ's employer reviews or LinkedIn's company pages can help with your research.



**Ready, set, contact.** Networking results in more job offers than almost any other job search technique. That's why you need to make a list of everyone you know personally, from past jobs, former classmates, etc., and start reaching out.

**Have a script when contacting your network.** Once you decide with whom to connect, you should be put together a strong message asking them to network with you, let them know what your goals are, and offer your assistance to them.

**Get your references ready to go to bat for you.** Before you list former professors or colleagues on your reference list, get in touch and ask if it's alright to include them. That way, they'll be ready to vouch for you.

For more tips from Myers, check out his [blog](#).

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# Wacky Job Interview Questions and Answers

Robyn Tellefsen



As you prepare for your next job interview, you're probably expecting standard questions like "What are your strengths and weaknesses?" and "Where do you see yourself in 10 years?" Though questions like those will likely come up, it's also a good idea to be prepared for the unexpected.

You just never know when an interviewer is going to pose a wacky question like "Can you instruct someone how to make an origami cootie catcher with just words?" or "Have you ever been on a boat?" (Those were real job interview questions asked by LivingSocial and Applied Systems, respectively.)

To get a taste of some of the far-out questions being posed in today's job interviews, check out Glassdoor's Top 25 Oddball Interview Questions for 2014. We've posted some of the questions here, along with our favorite answers. Each featured answer demonstrates creativity, originality, and a sense of humor - desirable traits at any company.

**If you could throw a parade of any caliber through the Zappos office, what**

**type of parade would it be? (Zappos)**

*One where employees would parade around in the ugliest pair of non-Zappos shoes they own. Everyone would vote by putting a shoelace necklace on the person they thought had the ugliest shoes. Winner would get a certificate for 50% off a pair of Zappos shoes. – Donna A.*

**How lucky are you and why? (Airbnb)**

*I don't believe in luck – I believe in effort! – mac*

**If you were a pizza deliveryman, how would you benefit from scissors? (Apple)**

*I'd cut the delivery time in half. – Alan Jay Weiner*

**Are you more of a hunter or a gatherer? (Dell)**

*I'm a gatherer of new ideas and a hunter of old obsolete ones. – Mike*

**If you were on an island and could only bring 3 things, what would you bring? (Yahoo)**

- 1. Iron Man Suit.*
- 2. Not necessary. I have an Iron Man Suit.*
- 3. Not necessary. I have an Iron Man Suit. – Murb*

**If you were a box of cereal, what would you be and why? (Bed Bath & Beyond)**

*I would be frosted shredded mini wheat cereal because it's sweetened with sugar but still filling and good for you! – Hillary*

**Do you believe in Big Foot? (Norwegian Cruise Line)**

*Not until the creature is interviewed by Letterman or Conan. – C magnus*

**Why is a tennis ball fuzzy? (Xerox)**

*To distinguish them from bowling balls. – gdspook*

**What is your least favorite thing about humanity? (ZocDoc)**

*The lack of it! – w3techie*

**How would you use Yelp to find the number of businesses in the U.S.? (Factual)**

*I would contact the Yelp PR department to help me track down that information. Most PR and Advertising departments have access to these statistics and use them to sell ad space and promote the business. – Andy*

**You're a new addition to the crayon box. What color would you be and why? (Urban Outfitters)**

*Gloss – I work with every color without changing them, only making them brighter. – Jim*

**How does the Internet work? (Akamai)**

*Hamster wheels. – Derek*

**What's the color of money? (American Heart Association)**

*Money is a concept. It has no color until it takes a form. – Sarah*

**Describe to me the process and benefits of wearing a seatbelt. (Active Network)**

*Process: take the buckle and securely lock it into place. Benefit: You won't look like the Crypt Keeper if you get into an accident. – Nick*

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# Workplace Manners Count More than You Think

Dawn Papandrea

No matter what type of work you do, it doesn't take much to annoy others with rude or inappropriate behavior. On the flipside, it doesn't take a whole lot of effort at all to generate good office karma, and be the kind of person who people enjoy working with. As mom would say, mind your manners.

Here are the most important office etiquette tips to follow...

## **Don't be an email annoyance.**

- For the love of all that is good, do not "reply all" to a whole staff of people if your response is only relevant to the sender. And if you have a giant attachment to send through, check with the recipient on the preferred way to do so.
- If someone sends you a lengthy email, take a moment to respond, even if it's: "I can't get to this today, but I wanted to let you know that it was received." He or she put time and effort into communicating with you, and therefore, is looking forward to your response.
- Use proper grammar and punctuation, and refrain from sending one giant run-on sentence with no capitalization or paragraph spaces. If it hurts someone's eyes, they will not read it.

## **Respect others' time and workspace.**

- For meetings, show up on time, and don't zone out or text during someone's presentation. The person up in front of the room can use your support and encouragement (as you would hope to receive if it were you speaking).
- Don't put your calls on speaker, or play loud music, or curse out your family members on personal calls. Cubicle walls aren't soundproof (or even really walls). Others can hear you!
- If you like to eat at your desk, make sure it's not something smelly or noisy. For those who eat in a break area, clean up after yourself, including microwave splatters.

## **Just be nice.**

- Hold the elevator and the door when you see a co-worker coming a few steps behind. (They can see you pretending not to see them!)
- Pay someone a compliment, introduce yourself to the new guy who's eating lunch by himself, and say please and thank you.
- If you're having a slow day, it won't kill you to offer some assistance to someone who's swamped. Along those lines, don't act as if some tasks are beneath you. It's your business to know how to work the copier, send out packages, set up voicemail, and other office procedures.

By working well with others, you'll develop a good reputation, be put on team projects, and become the kind of staffer that higher ups love to promote.

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# Should You Take Seasonal Work While You're Job Hunting?

Dawn Papandrea



If you're looking for a job for a while, it's a tough decision as to whether it's worth taking a part-time job offer. Will it lead to anything more? Is it going to take away from your job search? Is it too out of your field of interest to offer any valid experience? Would an income boost really help you at this point, even if it isn't a full salary?

Those are just some of the consideration you might have if part-time opportunities arise. And now that summer is approaching, you'll have another option: seasonal work. Unfortunately, it probably doesn't mean you get to sit on the beach with your laptop. Seasonal jobs are those that you know will only last for a short period of time, but for some, it could be a good way to get back into work mode while you continue to search a more permanent gig.

We spoke with Ryan Naylor, president of LocalWork.com, for his thoughts on

seasonal work and what you need to know before you take on a summer job...

**Pro: Getting out there again.**

One of the best things about temp or seasonal jobs is the networking. You're able to get back in the industry and start proving your worth. By keeping your focus on relationships, the temp job could lead to full-time employment.

**Con: No health insurance.**

Be aware that most seasonal or part-time gigs will not be able to offer you benefits, says Naylor. "If you are on a Cobra policy from a previous employer, you may want to double check your requirements to maintain that same benefit package. If there is a clause which causes you to lose your package if your start full-time work again, make sure you are not taking a temp job that could cause long-term problems," he advises.

**Pro: Staying on.**

Many companies will use seasonal staff to filter out good employees to keep for full-time roles, says Naylor. "It is always best when in the interview to ask if they are considering keeping any candidates on for full-time. If they mention an intent to do this, be sure to follow-up with questions about factors they will look at when determining who to keep on board," he suggests.

**Con: The work is not really your thing.**

Usually companies that hire seasonally for summer are in industries like travel, tourism, or retail. If those aren't your fields of interest, than you have to look at the experience as simply a job to tide you over, not necessarily a career advancing move. Then again, there's something to be learned from every experience, so make the most of it and see how you can apply your newfound skills to your resume (i.e. customer service experience).

**Pro: Closing up unemployment gaps.**

Being out of work a long time can hurt your resume as it can sometimes raise questions, says Naylor. "I highly recommend filling those gaps with work. Whether that is temp/season or volunteer work, it's best to keep your resume relevant," he says.

**Con: Coming across as unemployable.**

Of course, loaded up with too many temp jobs in a row isn't ideal since it could imply that you're not able to retain a job, so pick and choose seasonal/temp work wisely.



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# Inside the Mind of a Hiring Manager

Dawn Papandrea



Ever wonder what a top executive is really looking for among the pile of resumes on their desk, or queued up in their in box? What about what they're really thinking when they fire certain questions at you in the interview room?

FTRJ spoke with **Erika Kauffman, Executive Vice President & Group Director of 5W Public Relations**, one of the nation's largest public relations firms to get her to share some surprising insights into her hiring process. For her position, she oversees a department of 50 employees and is a top mentor at the agency. As such, she plays a large role in the recruitment/interview/hiring process

for her division at the firm. Here's what she had to say...

***Can you name a surprising skill/attribute or two that you look for in a potential hire?***

While direct experience is a must, with junior candidates **I especially like to see if they have had some sort of customer service experience (for example, waiting tables through college)**. While not required, this type of experience can actually give you an edge in the public relations arena. Customer service or sales experience tells me that the candidate knows how to treat people and has received an early lesson on respect for others and putting a smile on even while under pressure.

***What is an example of something that a job candidate has done to mess up his/her chances for getting hired?***

Getting caught in a lie/fabrication of the truth regarding their level of experience is one that definitely stands out. Other turn-offs during the interview process are **candidates who just do not talk a lot, and thus do not seem enthused**. Flow of conversation is an important factor in the interviews I conduct.

***Do you have a go-to interview question or technique that you like to use?***

Yes, "Tell me why I might *not* hire you?"

***Can you tell me a little bit about your role as a mentor at the company?***

***Why do you think mentorship is important?***

In my role at 5WPR, I have the opportunity of working with many different types of people; different ages, experience levels, backgrounds, roles played at the agency, etc. This keeps me on my toes and reminds me that everyone is different, and different people are motivated by different things. But at the end of the day, everyone has certain needs in the workplace – freedom, interaction, recognition, and so on. **It's important to keep human needs in mind, especially as a manager, and remember that people are people, not work drones.**

Mentorship is important because you can really motivate and propel people, and it benefits both mentor and mentee – mentee is put on a path to success/career growth, while mentor gains greater productivity in the workplace while improving the quality of the company's employee makeup.

***In terms of recruiting, what are some ways in which you seek out top talent? Social media? Career fairs? Etc.?***

Recruiting is a marketing effort, so it's necessary to reach different platforms

(such as career fairs, networking events, social media outlets, etc.) and market open positions creatively to really be competitive and to catch the attention of quality people.

***Any advice for prospective job seekers on how to stand out in a good way?***

Market yourself and be confident in what you know to be your best attributes and strengths. Furthermore, **your traditional resume still means a lot; use quality paper and make sure it's pristine and comprehensive.** Finally, a handwritten thank-you letter to the decision maker following an interview can help to get you to the top of the stack.

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# Behind Every Success is a Career Curveball

Dawn Papandrea



If you're having trouble finding work, were recently laid off, or simply feel unhappy at your current job, take heart knowing that even the most successful professionals have taken a few to the chin. For those down-in-the-dumps kind of days, take a look through LinkedIn's inspirational "Career Curveballs" series, in which Influencers share some of the setbacks that ended up changing the trajectory of their careers for the better.

Here are a few of our favorites...

### **Bullied No More**

After being bullied by an awful manager, Linda Descano, who is now the managing director and head of content and social at Citi, was basically pushed into quitting.

"I wasn't going to put my personal, professional, and emotional well-being at further risk to prove a point or teach anyone a lesson. And, as importantly, I did not want to work for a leadership team that tacitly condoned and facilitated such behavior," she writes. At the time, she felt like she was facing a major setback, but leaving helped put her on a path to where she is today.

### **The Project That Almost-Wasn't**

Did you know the hit show "Project Runway" started its run at Bravo as a complete flop? Lauren Zalaznick, the new president of Bravo at the time, shares her story of how perseverance and belief in the show's premise is what eventually turned it into a success, despite awful ratings in the early months of the program.

"We didn't know it at the time, but we had created a franchise. *Runway* was the first competitive reality show from a cable network to be Emmy-nominated in its category along with four broadcast competitors. It ushered in an era of prime time shows about creativity. It legitimized 'reality television,'" she writes.

Although the network ended up losing Project Runway altogether during its peak (another curveball!), the show and the lessons learned from it helped launch Bravo into the Top 10 networks on cable.

### **When One Door (Sign) Closes..**

Before Peter Greenburg was the travel editor at CBS News, he was fired from a job for which he left his home in New York and relocated to the West Coast. Essentially, his boss felt he spent too much money on a door sign for the West

Coast office, and copies of the magazine that he needed to market the publication.

“I got a new door sign with MY name on it, and decided to keep the office. And just when I was about to feel sorry for myself, came the turning point. My phone rang. It was CBS calling,” he says.

Check out the series and let us know which one inspires you the most. More important, keep your head up – you just might knock the next pitch out of the park!

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# 5 Job Search Lessons Inspired by Mom

Dawn Papandrea



As we get ready to say thank you to mom this Mother's Day, let's take a moment to reflect on all of the wise advice she's given over the years. In fact, a lot of it is applicable in our adult lives, even when it comes to our job search.

Here are some mom-isms to keep in mind as you search for your next gig, or begin a new career...

## ***Mom says... Mind your manners.***

Of course, she was talking about using those "magic words," please and thank you, which can go a long way toward giving a great first impression on a job interview. However, you can take her advice to the next level as a reminder to maintain a sense of professionalism even if you're in an industry that seems to be more laid back. Consider this stat: According to a survey of recruiters by JobVite.com, 65 percent said they react negatively to profanity, and 61 percent said the same about grammar and punctuation errors (a nod to all of the times mom's corrected your grammar).



***Mom says... Stop it with the sibling rivalry already!***

If you put a workplace spin on that mom logic, you'll realize that it's very easy to get caught up in job seeker envy. Try not to focus on who's offered what, or who only got a job because he dated the hiring manager's sister. Instead, focus on improving how you're perceived by showing initiative, highlighting your achievements, and tapping into your personal and professional networks for guidance and assistance. Once you stop seeing your fellow job hunters as competition, you can form connections, and might even get your next job lead as a result.

***Mom says... Don't track your muddy shoes in the house.*** You can probably recall rolling your eyes about mom's obsession with clean floors, but the fact is, maintaining a squeaky clean and polished appearance takes effort. Job candidates often forget about taking care of their footprints - in this case, the digital ones - and end up leaving a trail of grime for recruiters to discover. And lest you think your mom was overreacting, the JobVite survey points out that 42 percent of recruiters have reconsidered a candidate based on the content in their social profiles. Some of those reconsiderations were positive ones, though, which goes to show that a clean digital footprint can work to your advantage.

***Mom says... If everyone jumped off the Brooklyn Bridge, would you do it, too?***

In a tight job market, employers are really most interested in the stand out candidates. You shouldn't try to look and sound like everyone else, or tell employers what you think they want to hear. Show some confidence by taking a stance or sharing an opinion that might be "out of the box," and you won't suffer the same fate as those who are plunging into the cold job search ocean.

***Mom says... No whining.***

It wasn't cute when you were six, and it's certainly not appealing now. If you're asked about a past employer on a job interview, even if you had a maniacal boss, refrain from trash talking. The same goes with complaining or moping if you have to do something that's not necessarily in your job description. There's something to be said about paying your dues and learning from your past, so learn to cope with challenges and seek out the teachable moments of a bad experience without complaint.

By applying some of these childhood rules to your job search, you'll realize that

mom is always right.

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# Have You Considered a Portfolio Career?

Dawn Papandrea



Finding a full-time salaried position that offers a chance for growth, learning, and advancement would probably be the number one wish of most job seekers.

However, **more and more people are taking on temporary contract work or multiple freelance projects** – often simultaneously in different career areas — to gain experience and bring in income.

If nothing else, by wearing many career hats, you can help expand your portfolio and meet new connections in your industry while you continue to look for the right job. And, you can position yourself as a go-getter who used his or her unemployment period to seek new business ventures and develop new skills when you're on job interviews.

The career advice portal, Careerealism.com called portfolio careers a top trend for 2014. "Many employers are laying off full-time staff and rehiring key talent in consulting roles. In fact, by 2020 more than 50% of employees will work on a project basis," predicted the site.

In other words, if you've only been looking for full-time work and coming up short, there's nothing wrong with seeking opportunities that are related to your skill set that could help you strengthen your personal brand while you continue your search. For instance, someone with a journalism background might teach a class or two as an adjunct professor while freelance writing and offering tutoring services on the side.

You might even find that you enjoy the flexibility that multiple, short-term projects allow, provided you can deal with the unsteady, and sometimes unpredictable income stream. If you do want to give this type of career path a whirl, or use it to discover where your true passions lie, here are some guidelines to keep in mind:

Treat each project and client with the attention it requires.

If you take on too much or things that overlap, you could end up spreading yourself too thin, or have a conflict of interest situation on your hands.

### **Line things up.**

Secure enough steady income so that you can stay afloat financially while you try your hand at different types of work.

### **Broadcast your goals.**

Let your connections know that you're available for part- or full-time employment if an opening should become available. Many independent contractors end up being offered a salaried position if they make a good impression with the company. If they like the way you work, you could go to the top of the hiring consideration list. But that will only happen if you make your availability and interest known.

### **Push Brand "You."**

Continue to market yourself, keep your resume and portfolio up to date, and actively seek jobs that match your qualifications.

*If you're interested in learning more about the concept of portfolio careers, check out the PortfolioCareers.net blog.*

# 3 Annoying Things People Say to Job Seekers

Dawn Papandrea



Whether you just finished school, decided to leave your old job, or were laid off, you'll find that people have a lot of advice, opinions, and commentary to offer once you're out of work.

Take a look at some comments that may irk you, and learn how to spin them into some positive vibes for your job hunt...

**"I heard so-and-so had companies offering him jobs left and right."**

Way to rub it in, right? While people with an elite skill set or tons of relevant job experience are sometime sought out by recruiters, that's not a common occurrence for the majority of job seekers. Being compared to those who've found career success can feel pretty crummy.

**A better spin:** Don't take that comment as a dig, but instead, think about what Mr. So-and-So was able to offer employers that you might not be highlighting. In

fact, if you're friends with people who are working in your intended industry, ask them out for coffee to learn more about the hiring landscape, and how to make a good impression.

**"I told you not to major in \_\_\_\_!"**

Liberal arts majors especially can attest to hearing this one. While there is something to be said about choosing a "practical" major that focuses on career skills versus one that's centered on humanities or social sciences, just having a degree shows that you can think critically and solve problems. Those soft skills are in great demand in all types of jobs, and oftentimes, hiring managers are desperate to find candidates that communicate well.

**A better spin:** Do some soul searching. If there are skills that can help boost your marketability, take a class or do some self-learning while you're out of work. Also, when looking for a job, think about how the skills you learned can translate into different industries so that you're not limiting your job search. Lastly, make sure to play up your accomplishments on your resume and your interviews so that potential employers know what an asset you are beyond just what your diploma says.

**"You can always go beg for your old job back if you get desperate."**

This sort of statement indicates that your unemployment must be your own fault, whether you screwed up at your last gig and were let go, or used poor judgment and left. Either way, it can sting to have someone imply that no other employer will want you.

**A better spin:** While going back to your old job might be the last thing you'd ever do, there's no reason why you shouldn't reconnect with former colleagues that might be able to help with your job search. Oftentimes, referrals or job leads come from people who enjoyed working with you, regardless of what other circumstances led you to leave.

Job searching can be a challenge to say the least, which is why you might be extra sensitive to others who try to chime in about your situation. By assuming that everyone has your best interest at heart, and finding the underlying message hidden in their comment, you can transform negativity into job search power.

***If you're a job seeker, tells us what annoying things people have said to you....***

# Good News for College Graduates: Job Outlook is Looking Up

Dawn Papandrea



If you recently graduated college, you've put yourself in a pretty good position to land a job this year. That's because employers say they will be hiring 8.6 percent more college grads this year than last year, indicating that the job market is opening up a bit. That statistic comes from the Job Outlook 2014 Spring Survey from the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE).

Here's what else you need to know about navigating the post-college employment playing field...

## **Employers are most interested in specific skill sets.**

Namely, those who graduated with a bachelor's degree in accounting or other business fields, engineering, and/or computer sciences will have an edge on their fellow Class of 2014 members. In fact, nearly 70 percent of those who took part in the survey said they planned to hire business majors. What's more is according to

research reported by PewStates.org, each new four-year graduate in STEM fields (science, technology, engineering, and math) has access to 2.5 entry-level job postings, compared to 1.1 postings for each bachelor's degree graduate not in math or science.

### **Another hot field is healthcare.**

While starting salaries for new graduate hires are up across the board as compared to the Class of 2013, in the health sciences, students are expected to earn an average salary of \$51,541, up 3.7% from last year, says NACE. The competition for these fields will be fierce, however, since there aren't as many openings for bachelor-level health jobs as in other industries.

### **There's still time to apply.**

Nearly all of the respondents in the NACE survey said they will continue to recruit and hire graduates throughout the spring, including full-time positions. In other words, just because you struck out at the job fair on your campus last semester doesn't mean that recruiters aren't interested in you. The key is to be proactive about applying and networking with recruiters and hiring managers.

### **Beyond the degree, you can sell your soft skills.**

If you were a liberal arts or social science major, not all hope is lost for you. Employers surveyed by NACE listed the ability to make decisions and solve problems; verbally communications; and the ability to obtain and process information as the top three desired skills they look for in new hires. In other words, it's wise to play up those attributes – which are mainly cultivated in liberal arts courses — when applying for a position.

Overall, anytime the hiring outlook improves, it's a sign that the job market is getting better, especially for those with a college degree. By finding ways to set yourself apart from your fellow graduates, and seeking out job opportunities that might not be widely publicized, you can gain an edge and score some offers.

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