

How to Market Yourself – Part Two

By Ron McGowan

In Part One you defined exactly what skills and experience you have to offer employers or clients and why they would be interested in them. Like a salesperson who is being trained on a new product or service, you should now know your product (i.e. you) inside out. The next step is:

Where are you going to sell it?

As part of analyzing the skills and experience you've picked up in the past you may have identified some characteristics of the companies where you've had success. Or you may have identified certain types of projects that you really enjoyed working on. If not, go back over Part One and look for the types of companies you've worked for and projects you've worked on that you really enjoyed and that brought out the best in you. Then look for similar companies or projects where you can duplicate this success.

Employment seekers sometimes overlook this. They get so focused on finding their next gig that they don't pay enough attention to finding opportunities that are a good fit for them. You also want to be looking for opportunities where you can build on the experience and success you've had. For example, if you did a project for a legal firm that was successful and that you enjoyed, why wouldn't you try to build on that experience and success by marketing yourself to other legal firms?

Most commentators on the workplace will tell you that at least 80 per cent of the employment opportunities are never advertised. This is why so many people who are looking for work are struggling. They approach finding work in essentially the same way as their parents did. They scour the mainstream media and popular Internet job sites and when they can't find work, they give up or settle for low paying service jobs. They simply don't know how to tap into those hidden employment opportunities.

You need to take your connectivity to what is going on in the economy and in your field to a much higher level than the average person. You need to become a news hound and sniff out those hidden opportunities. You can test yourself on how well you are doing this by your reaction to news about your field that appears in the mainstream media. If it is news to you, you're not as connected as you need to be. You should already be aware of it through the database of news sites and other sources that you monitor regularly. Talk to successful employment seekers and you will find that they are very well informed about what is going on in the economy and in their field. Market research is one of those areas, like getting regular exercise and eating sensibly and so on that everybody agrees is important. Talk to those who are struggling in today's workplace and you will consistently see that they approach market research passively or simply don't understand how important it is. They've probably heard that most employment opportunities are hidden but they have no idea about how to find them.

Can you identify the fastest growing sectors in the region that you want to work in? What are the key trends in the areas you want to work in? Can you identify some significant projects that are underway or will soon be started that might provide employment opportunities for you? Are you right on top of what is going on in your field? What skills are most in demand in your field? Do you have them? If not, how can you acquire them? If you were asked to take on the "program chair" position for the professional association

that you belong to, how easy would it be for you to identify topics that you know would be of interest to the members as you put together the program for the year?

Name the best media sources; web sites, blogs, newsletters, journals, etc, for keeping you connected to what is going on in your field. How creatively and diligently do you monitor these sources? Which companies have recently landed significant contracts that might provide an opportunity for you? Can you identify some key players in your field who have recently been promoted or taken on new assignments? Could your skills and experience be of interest to them?

Recruiters, headhunters and H/R managers are increasingly turning to the Internet to fill jobs or find staff for projects, which is one of the reasons why many employment opportunities are never advertised. How easy would it be for these people to find you on the Internet? Have you ever thought about what a search on the Internet would reveal about you? Do you realize that it's becoming common practice for managers and business owners to do an Internet search on candidates as part of the hiring/screening process?

Are you doing any Cybernetworking? Do you know about web sites like LinkedIn, Visible Path, Zoodango, ZoomInfo, Ryze and Xing? Have you ever used these sites? Do you know that employers are increasingly using them to find candidates?

Which blogs do you subscribe to? Have you thought about creating your own blog? Are you aware that recruiters often monitor blogs that are related to the field they're searching for to find experts? They find candidates by looking for postings from people who obviously have the background they're looking for and who communicate well.

Finally, a potential byproduct of being well informed about what is going on in the economy and in your field is that you may spot unmet needs. Maybe you can create your own work opportunity by going directly to an employer with an idea whose time has come.

Ron McGowan has helped thousands of college/university grads and experienced people to find work for over ten years. His book "How to Find Work in the 21st Century" <http://www.trafford.com/00-0131> is currently in use at over 200 colleges, universities and secondary schools.