

WELCOME!

Welcome to this issue of Career Communiqué!

We want this to be your newsletter, so please feel free to forward any suggestions on what you would like to see covered in this newsletter.

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CAREER *communiqué!*

Are you a Procrastinator?

What a great start to the year – 2004 February has certainly been a busy month for us, partnering with many new clients on their next career move while re-acquainting relationships with previous clients ready to take their next step up the career ladder. The start to a new year has obviously challenged many of you to re-evaluate your careers and aim for that next goal – which is great. Here is to a continued successful 2004!

I don't know about you, but it seems that the busier I am, the more I seem to get done during my day. With strict deadlines in force, and targets/objectives specified I seem to get so much more completed, than if I only have a few items on my to-do-list. Why is that? Does this ring true for you? If you only have a number of tasks to do with these tasks not governed by strict deadlines, do you tend to take your time in completing them, or even beginning them for that matter? An e-group that I am a member of had a number of interesting comments on this very subject labelling this as 'procrastination'

– tending to postpone or putting off the completion of a task. It was interesting to discover that many members of this group also tended to 'put things off' when the tasks did not have time limits or deadlines. It was almost as if we lost our sense of focus and determination to complete the project when that project did not have

a sense of urgency or time restriction on it.

Luckily this doesn't happen that often and I regularly set deadlines on my workload to ensure that I maintain a healthy work pace and an ongoing flow of completed projects. Setting yourself goals will ensure that you are not continually putting things off until a later stage. I wanted to discuss some strategies to prevent procrastination setting in, as if left to its own devices, procrastination can zap your energy and affect

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Don't put off until tomorrow, what you can do today.

SUGGESTIONS?

Do you have a suggestion for a topic that you would like covered in our upcoming newsletters. Please forward your suggestion to: communiqué@aresumewriter.net

**INTERESTING
FACTS!**

**What makes for
workplace excellence
may surprise**

Benchmarking HR - Page:
5 : 13-Feb-2004

New research on workplaces, conducted in Australia, has identified the most important factors leading to excellence at work. Researchers Daryll Hull and Vivienne Read, of the University of New South Wales, published their findings in a report titled "Simply the Best". The following factors are the most important: the quality of working relationships, workplace leadership, having a say, clear values, being safe, the built environment, recruitment, pay and conditions, getting feedback, autonomy, a sense of ownership, learning, passion, having fun and community connections.

[Source: My Business Daily 20 February 2004 – ABIX]

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Are you a Procrastinator? - con't

Continued from P1

your competence in other areas of your work with the potential of seriously affecting your overall work performance. Here are some clear strategies to prevent procrastination:

- ◆ Put deadlines on your projects in order to motivate action to complete these tasks. Make that commitment and stick to it.
- ◆ You may find it beneficial to write your goals in your diary so that you are constantly reminded of the commitments you have made, thus motivating you to continue striving towards completion.
- ◆ If faced with both difficult and easy tasks, aim to do the difficult projects first. Quite often we will complete the easier projects first and tend to drag them out trying to avoid having to face the more complex projects.
- ◆ Try breaking complex projects into stages so that you can feel a sense of accomplishment at the completion of

each stage.

- ◆ Do not let perfectionism or your desire for precision block you from beginning or completing your tasks. This

**The best way to
predict the future is
to create it.**

Peter Drucker

can be a huge problem for people within the creative fields, particularly

writers – who can often be found staring at a blank page waiting for inspiration and perfect prose to begin flowing. Give yourself a time block (say ½ hour or an hour) and just begin writing. The content is not expected to be perfect, however this is striving to get you over that hump of unproductiveness and get the creative thought processes flowing. With the major portion of task completed, tweaking it to perfection can be done later .

Don't be a victim of procrastination!

CHECK OUT OUR NEW FORUM!

We've just launched our new forum at www.aresumewriter.net/forum where you can drop us a line, share your comments, ask a question, or respond to other peoples' concerns. Feel free to stop by when you have a free moment and say hello—tell your friends! And remember to check back regularly as we will be adding hints, tips and other articles on career-related subjects.

OPTIMISING YOUR COMMUNICATION:

Don't blame problems at work on your colleagues, clients or supervisor, but rather analyse the way in which you are relating to each other, as more often than not, difficulties in the workplace can arise from poor communication.

Improved communication can do wonders for raising morale, collaboration and overall performance, due to the messages we are trying to deliver, being understood by people we are communicating with.

Here are some typical warning signs that may indicate that you are experiencing difficulties in communication:

- ◆ Tension between colleagues or your boss, with every conversation ending in disparity, rather than agreement or compromise.

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CAREER *communiqué!*

10 Tips for communicating your career brand.

What talents and strengths do you want to be known for in your career? What kind of employer will be drawn to, connect with, and pay a premium for that?

These two questions capture the essence of what career branding is all about. Image and connection. Think of your brand as a uniquely individual image with a magnet attached to it. Many of the dynamics behind corporate branding--why a consumer chooses Crest over Colgate--also apply in hiring. These 10 tips will help guide you in creating and communicating a brand that will help employers choose you!

“Create a Benefit-Driven Target Statement to keep your search focused.”

1. Job search is marketing. You are the product and the employer is the consumer. A clear and compelling career brand helps employers perceive the benefits of your product, giving you an advantage in the job market.
2. Successful career brands weave together three A's: Authentic image, Advantages, and Awareness. Project an image of your authentic self, focus on the advantages you offer in getting the job done, and make employers aware of those advantages.

3. Branding can be accomplished through verbal and visual means. Verbal branding includes your sound bites and success stories, while visual branding is accomplished through your actions, attitude, and attire.

4. Hone your product benefits into a 3-Point Marketing Message that conveys your unique strengths. This is a critical sound bite in your branding campaign. Here's a short and succinct example: I excel at the 3 R's of sales: research, relationships, and revenue--I exhaustively research client needs, build relationships based on serving those needs, and have a track record of driving record revenue as a result.

5. Create a Benefit-Driven Target Statement to keep you focused in your search, help networking contacts know how to help you, and explain your value to interviewers. Align your statement with employer buying motivators, such as generating revenue, saving money, or solving a problem.

Continued P3

QUESTIONS?

Do you have a question that you would like to ask our Résumé Writers or Interview Coach? Please forward them to discover@aresumewriter.net. Your question may be selected for inclusion in our next Career Communiqué! Issue.

**OPTIMISING YOUR
COMMUNICATION—**

CON'T:

- ◆ You feel exhausted each morning and become anxious at the thought of going to work.
- ◆ You often need to repeat yourself as others are not comprehending your instructions—and even after reiteration, confusion is still apparent.
- ◆ Feedback/performance appraisals highlights and commends your technical abilities however pinpoints areas lacking in overall team collaboration, communication or even performance.
- ◆ You often speak before contemplating just what you are going to say, before you say it. (I think we can all relate to this.) What did our teachers always tell us—“Think before you speak!!”

Let's review some strategies that will enable you to polish your communication skills:

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CAREER *communiqué!*

10 Tips for communicating your career brand—con't

6. Mix-and-match your success stories and sound bites to create a comfortable yet compelling 2-Minute Introduction. Consider using a tagline that helps people remember you in a unique and favorable light. Perhaps you can dub yourself “Mr. FedEx” because you always deliver projects on time!
7. Practice. You must be able to deliver your sound bites naturally, without appearing as though you're reading a telemarketing script.
8. Visual branding means you must look the part. Ask for wardrobe advice from someone who is successful and has a good sense of style. If uncertain about how to dress for a networking event or interview, ere on the side of formality.
9. Visual branding also means you must act the part. Candidly evaluate your mindset, beliefs, behaviours, and attitudes. Are these consistent with others in your field who have attained notable success?
10. Find a person or two who will respectfully and selflessly support you in **y o u r** commitment to shaping and enhancing your ideal image. A coach can be an ideal support person.

Visual branding means you must look the part...

Branding will either contribute to or take away from the chemistry you want to create with employers. Enjoy creating and communicating your brand!

Source: Career Coach Academy



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**OPTIMISING YOUR
COMMUNICATION—
CON'T:**

- ◆ Be accountable for your own communication rather than resting the blame on others should they find it difficult to understand your messages. Rather than pointing the finger at your colleagues' listening skills consider how you might communicate your instructions in a better way.
- ◆ Get feedback from your colleagues, supervisors or clients to ensure your message was clear and understandable. They may be able to point out how your message may have been better communicated or uncover various issues that are currently blocking your communications.
- ◆ Endeavour to make your communication planned, clear, concise and considerate of others.

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CAREER *communiqué!*

Guest– Writer Spotlight: Business Casual Relaxed and Fabulously Formal

Business casual dressing is a very confusing issue for today's corporate men and women. Knowing what to wear and what image you are portraying is very important. Trying to decide whether your style is too dressy or is it too casual; this alone can bring you out in a sweat on your way to work. Over the last couple of months I have been helping you to wade through the confusion that is business casual dressing. This article will close this chapter as I describe for the pros and cons of wearing denim in Business Casual – Relaxed.

Add to that the other confusing issue of what exactly does formal dressing on an invitation mean. What are the true formal dress codes as stated on an invitation and what do I really write on my invitation to describe exactly how I would like my guests to dress for my party or function. Finally I want to introduce to you my exciting and informative new Make-up courses. If you want to discover how to save time and money buy applying the latest looks, with a minimum of fuss then you will love this program I am offering.

Business Casual – Relaxed:

Before I begin on the hows and wheres of relaxed business casual I would like

to relate a conversation I had with a new acquaintance the other night. The conversation began after I mentioned that I was an Image Consultant and they stated how they wished they could get their boss to wear jeans more often. I commented how jeans are considered the lowest common denominator in business and by wearing them he would be displaying a lack of respect for his staff. Trousers are a much safer alternative. The comment was

“Wearing jeans displays a lack of respect for his staff...”

followed by the point being made that they are very comfortable and by that token then everyone is more relaxed to be around. I wish that this were true, the unfortunate truth in wearing jeans in the corporate environment, except to the company picnic, result in a general downturn in company loyalty and job performance. If you can slacken off in what you wear and approach the day with a more carefree air then why not your job requirements. Is it really that important to dot the i's and follow the set standards and protocols of the company. Well yes it is and that is why, in many businesses, jeans are saved for the most relaxed of situations and circumstances.

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Do you have a horror interview story that you would like to share with our subscribers? Or perhaps you would like to share with others, some tips and strategies that has worked in your career? Please send them through to: communiqué@aresumewriter.net

Continued from P4

Relaxed casual
* Denim

Female style:

Skirts-Short, long or full in denim, corduroy, leather or suede.

Tops-Long or short sleeved or sleeveless. T-shirts may also be worn as line as they do not display an inappropriate logo.

Pants - Denim, corduroy or cotton jeans or trousers.

Jumpers-Crew neck, turtleneck, V-neck. Windcheater or thicker chunkier knits.

Shoes-Medium to thick leather or rubber soles with a stacked heel. Sandals or runners providing they are clean and in good condition.

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Business Casual Relaxed and Fabulously Formal—con't

Hosiery-Trouser socks in either solid colours or patterns. Sheer or opaque tights coloured to match the hemline or shoe.

Scarves-Bright and bold -woollen or cotton. Belts-Woven, leather or canvas Watches-Gold or silver face; leather or plastic band as in a sports or diving watch.

Brooches/Necklaces-Of a medium-size in a matt finish gold or silver, craft designs of ceramic, beads or ethnic motif. Earrings-Hoops, short, dangle or drop in a gold or silver matt finish.

Male Style:

Shirts-long or short sleeved; collared, collarless or banded; knitted cotton or plain. Denim shirts, T shirts including white as long as they do not display any inappropriate messages. Pants - Denim, corduroy, khaki or cotton jeans or trousers. Jumpers-Crew neck, turtleneck, V-neck. Windcheater or thicker chunkier knits.

Shoes-Medium to thick leather or rubber soles. Sandals or runners providing they are clean and in good condition. Be wary of looking like Jerry Seinfeld. Socks-Coloured, bold or Argyle.

Ties-Woollen or cotton. Belts-Woven, leather or canvas Watches-Gold or silver face; leather or plastic band i.e. sports or diving watch.

Making it work - All clothing must be clean and wrinkle-free.

Your clothes must not be too tight or too baggy. Avoid at all costs inappropriate logos.

Overall impression- Creative,

accessible, friendly, relaxed, innovative.

When it works best-The most informal and relaxed work environment. If working by yourself and not meeting with clients or the public.

OK for casual training sessions, off-site retreats and, of course, the company picnic.

About the Writer:

Melbourne born and based, Clare Maxfield is an inspiring and entertaining image consultant and speaker who has dedicated her life to the all importance of image and achieving personal goals. Visit Clare's website at:

www.corporateconfidence.com.au

All clothing must be clean and wrinkle-free.

PASS US ON!

We hope you are able to use some of the information in our newsletter to enhance your career! Do you know anyone who may benefit from our newsletter. If so, please feel free to send them a copy, or send us through an email with their details to: communiqué@aresumewriter.net We will gladly add them to our subscribers list.

OPTIMISING YOUR
COMMUNICATION—

CON'T:

- ◆ Think about what you are going to say before you speak to avoid miscommunication. If you become renowned for your inability to communicate proficiently may cause people to automatically disregard your communication out of habit.
- ◆ Don't blurt out comments in passing, as the person to whom you are speaking may misunderstand your instructions. Ensure the person has opportune time to listen and concentrate on your instructions; perhaps ask for feedback to ensure your instructions were understood.

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Q & A:

Q: I am returning to work after a six-month break however my background is diverse. From management, to customer service to restaurant to teaching preschool. With such diversity, how would you suggest I market myself for customer service/management?

A: As you have identified your desire to target a customer service/management role I would recommend that your initial step be to research and collate all of your relevant experience, accountabilities and contributions within your career that pertain directly to this target.

Some points to keep in mind while you perform your research: don't discredit positions that you feel do not directly relate to your target as these positions can certainly include gems, with great relevant transferable skills as well. For instance, the restaurant business is very much customer service oriented so you may want to highlight any interactions you may have had with customers i.e. resolution of complaints, retention, customer base growth etc? What about leadership of any new staff members within the restaurant that could confirm relevant management and coordination competencies? Staff training, support and mentoring; problem-solving, multi-tasking without compromise to quality; deadline achievement through sound time- and resource-management – these would certainly also be great skills pertinent to a management role.

Your teaching position may have required you to spearhead coordination and management of special functions or projects; leading and directing a group of boisterous preschoolers is certainly not a task for the faint-hearted

– can you demonstrate various 'soft skills' perhaps, working under pressure and remaining calm and focused in a hectic work environment; ability to trouble-shoot and problem solve in challenging situations and so on. Were you responsible for any initiatives that increased the preschool's operational efficiency? Did you go beyond what was expected of you, and deliver exceptional results that surpassed goals and objectives?

Once you have collated all of this information perhaps consider incorporating a 'qualifications statement' at the forefront of your resume, which is a paragraph that delivers a succinct overview of your transferable competencies and overall expertise (focused on your goal), with perhaps a bulleted list of 'core competencies' (again, directly related to your target.)

You may wish to include a section on "Milestones and Benchmarks" or "Relevant Achievements" and include your (quantified) achievements in bulleted statements that directly relate to management and customer service. Again, this allows the reader to view your contributions in the workplace and for the overall operational success of your employer within your specific career target.

This could then be followed by your employment history, which again highlights relevant experience and contributions within the workplace.

I hope this has provided you with various strategies to begin the development of your resume. All the best with your career.