

CAREER *communiqué!*

WELCOME!

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Editor's Newz:

Welcome to February's edition of Career Communiqué.

We are well into the year already with March just around the corner. How are your New Year's resolutions holding up? It's usually around this time that well-intended goals and objectives, signed and sealed on New Year's Eve, can be under the strain of old behaviours creeping back. The saying 'Old habits die hard' is so true. If this sounds like you, drop me a line—a problem shared is a problem halved!

To all our past and current clients—thank you for sharing your success stories with us! We love hearing from you, so please drop us a line when you have a spare moment. Do you have a burning question? Send it through and we'll answer it in one of our upcoming Q&A segments.

In this month's issue:

- ◆ For people at the initial stages of their resume development—don't miss our article on 'Choosing the right resume format.' I have seen countless resumes developed using an incorrect format that does not position their skills in the best way possible. Learn the advantages and disadvantages of

three commonly-used resume formats to ensure you use the best format for your situation.

- ◆ Networking! Something many of us avoid doing, however, as networking is a crucial component in your career campaign, I've provided 10 hot tips to enhance your networking skills.
- ◆ Our resident 'Image expert', Imogen Lamport includes her article 'Is your handshake up to scratch?' Here's what not to do when offering your next handshake.

"Goals begin behaviours. Consequences maintain behaviours"

Kenneth Blanchard

- ◆ We've also included another great article from Robyn Pearce, 'Not Another Meeting!' on how to optimise your next workplace meeting.

I hope you enjoy the newsletter.
Continued success in your career!

Till next month.

Annemarie

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO READ ABOUT IN 2005?

We want to make sure that we are covering newsworthy topics to assist you in your job search and careers. If 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 SNIPPETS

Employers break the law as job interviews get personal

The Courier-Mail --- Page: 14 : 18 February 2005
Original article by Alex Murdoch

An employment agency has learned that Australian job applicants continue to be asked inappropriate questions. A Newspoll survey commissioned by CareerOne has found that 75% of the 462 respondents interviewed had been asked "unacceptable" questions during interviews on age, marital status, domicile or children. CareerOne editor Kate Southam says she suspects many employers are ignorant of the law. She urges them to visit the Human Rights & Equal Opportunity Commission web site or seek a copy of the regulations.

[Source: My Business Daily 18 February 2005-ABIX]

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10 TIPS TO ENHANCE YOUR NETWORKING SKILLS!

It is vital to remember that each person you interact with could be a future employer, or could offer an important lead to your next job opportunity. Below are 10 tips to enhance your networking skills:

- ◆ Remember that networking is a reciprocal relationship – a two way street, so ensure you continue to share information, ideas, resources and contacts with others in your network of contacts.
- ◆ Practice, and become comfortable with being able to approach and talk to strangers. Exploit opportunities to mingle with people you haven't been formally introduced to at meetings, concerts, sporting events etc. You never know who you may be conversing with, or the people that person has in their own networking contacts.
- ◆ Ensure you are aware of exactly what it is you need to obtain from others, and remember to be well equipped, polite, concise and thankful.
- ◆ Avoid having a pessimistic outlook but rather maintain a positive attitude that is clearly evident throughout all your networking activities. Negativity can be detrimental to your efforts.
- ◆ Ensure you follow up on leads provided by people you have networked with, and remember to mention your network contacts' name when introducing yourself to the lead.
- ◆ When interacting with your network contact, don't be tempted to ask for too much at one time but rather limit the amount of help or information that you seek.
- ◆ Trust is fundamental when networking, so don't abuse others' request for confidentiality by disclosing information they wanted to be kept private.
- ◆ Avoid monopolizing other people's time by keeping your meeting brief. If during your conversations you uncover other areas of vital interest, make arrangements to call or meet at another suitable time.
- ◆ Don't forget to thank your contact for their time and/or leads provided. Politeness and a 'thank you' card goes a long way in strengthening your relationships with your network of contacts.
- ◆ Networking should become a part of your every day life so continue your efforts to network after you have secured a position. You never know when you may need to call upon them.



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CHOOSING THE RIGHT RESUME FORMAT

REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL

This format presents a historical timeline of your experience in reverse chronological order, beginning with your most recent position first and working backwards. This resume provides the reader with relevant contact details and your employment history, generally followed by other

education, professional membership, computer technologies, and

community involvement etc. This format is widely accepted by recruiters and employers and is best suited for job seekers who have a solid career history spanning 5+ years.

Advantages:

- ◆ Enables you to portray a steady progression through positions of increasing responsibility;
- ◆ Validates your readiness in being able to take the next step up the career ladder;
- ◆ Recruiters and employers tend to prefer this format as it is easily scanned and allows easy

detection of employment gaps.

Disadvantages:

- ◆ Exposes unemployment or career breaks that you may well not wish to disclose at the initial application stage;
- ◆ Reveals situations of position side tracking or demotions, particularly if

“Don’t jeopardise your career by using an incorrect resume format”

your most recent role holds less responsibility than the position being applied for;

- ◆ Limited in its creativity component in comparison to other resume formats (i.e. combination format)

FUNCTIONAL

This format groups key skills and achievements within separate categories in order to highlight and qualify a job seeker’s experience and credentials against a specific position. Following this skills-based approach will allow a candidate to emphasize strengths and achievements while de-emphasizing periods of unemployment, career transitions from one industry or career to another, or limited experience.

Continued P4

Before putting pen to paper, a very important factor to consider before you begin developing your resume is which format would be the most favorable for your current professional position and factors surrounding your job search. While many job seekers tend to use the reverse chronological format, this may not suit your unique circumstances nor be the best option in terms of presentation, so using this approach could jeopardize your current campaign.

There are three main resume formats commonly being used:

1. Reverse chronological
2. Functional
3. Combination



Need some clarification or direction in your career?

Do you know anyone who is not happy in their current role or is struggling with doubt over whether they are even in the right position? Or perhaps they have been meaning to make a move, but fearful and unsure of those first steps? Contact AEC and ask about our career counselling/awareness programme to assist them in discovering their authentic self.

Continued from P3

Recruiters do not particularly welcome this format as it tends to raise suspicion that the job seeker is trying to hide something (which is probably correct), so consider carefully before using this format as to whether this is the best option. If it is absolutely crucial to use this format, present the skills-based component (experience/achievements relevant to the position) on page 1, followed by a snapshot of your employment including employer name, dates, positions and an overview of your job scope and how you contributed to the organization's ongoing success through achievements.

Advantages:

- ◆ De-emphasizes periods of unemployment and other blemishes in your career that you do not wish to disclose at this initial stage;



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CHOOSING THE RIGHT RESUME FORMAT-con't

- ◆ Allows the job seeker to highlight relevant skills and expertise, even in situations of limited experience or experience performed within another industry;
- ◆ Suitable for job seekers returning to the workforce after a career break.

Disadvantages:

- ◆ Tends to raise recruiters'/employers' suspicion if employer names, dates and titles are omitted;
- ◆ Can confuse the reader who is trying to establish where experience/accountabilities were performed and accomplishments were secured if these are only grouped under skills categories rather than under your employment history.

COMBINATION

This approach harnesses and combines the best from both the Functional and Reverse Chronological formats, hence the name, Combination. This format can also be referred to as a hybrid resume. A powerfully written

qualifications/professional profile is often portrayed first to demonstrate expertise and qualifications. Other relevant sections also portrayed at the forefront of your resume (following your profile) include selected accomplishments, relevant skills, followed by employment history presented in reverse chronological order.

Advantages:

This format is well-received by recruiters and employers;

- ◆ Allows a job seeker to create a dynamic and aesthetically pleasing marketing document;
- ◆ At first glance, showcases outstanding achievements and marketable skills garnered from several positions;
- ◆ Allows a job seeker to condense many years of employment for the seasoned professional.

Disadvantages:

- ◆ If cleverly crafted this format does not have any real disadvantages to the job seeker.

Continued success with your career!

Know someone who is coming out of the military?

We have updated our products and services now offering a package that caters specifically for military staff transitioning into civilian employment. Visit our website at www.aresumewriter.net/military.htm

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As I write, the tree outside my window is laden with a flock of multi-coloured rainbow lorikeets. They're having a meeting - is it to discuss the quality of their breakfast, to show off their beautiful orange waistcoats, have a chat about the wet weekend, or because the boss lorikeet said 'Every Monday morning we have to have a meeting'?

Do they have an agenda? Do they know why they're there? Are they meeting for the sake of it? As I watch, a late one flies in. Is someone spending 5 minutes bringing him up to speed, or had they been waiting to start until he got there? One bossy one seems to be making most of the noise. Is she pushing her own barrow, dominating the conversation, being verbose, talking without good reason?

Does any of this sound like your workplace? A huge amount of money and time is wasted with unproductive and poorly run meetings, and yet they fill a vital role in modern communication.

NOT ANOTHER MEETING!

by Robyn Pearce

Key Points for Effective Meetings

- ◆ Do you need a meeting at all? Is there some other more efficient way to reach the decision needed; a more efficient way to pass on the information you're there to share?
- ◆ Even if some of you need to be there, do you all need to be? Have you ever counted up the salary cost of a roomful of senior executives?
- ◆ Have an agenda, which everyone should be able to contribute to - circulated at least a few days before the meeting. Benefit - No hidden surprises, no sudden dumping of issues.
- ◆ Stick to the agenda. If other issues are thrown in, and are relevant, ask for them to be held until General Business.
- ◆ Place the most important items at the top of the agenda. Benefit - if someone has to leave early, the critical items have been discussed.
- ◆ Where possible, get closure on each item. What's the point of having another meeting if agreement can be reached now? At the very least, make sure there is SOME progress.
- ◆ Distribute minutes straight after the meeting - saves confusion over who is doing what.
- ◆ If meetings you attend are not well run, what are you doing about it? Don't moan about it - bring it up as an agenda item.

Chairperson:

Functions:

- ◆ The agenda
- ◆ Control and atmosphere of the meeting
- ◆ 'The buck stops here'
- ◆ Making sure that everyone contributes
- ◆ Ensuring that the tasks are evenly shared out, and the willing horses don't end up with all the work (conditional on individuals' time constraints, of course)
- ◆ Impartiality
- ◆ If you need training, get it. An effective chairperson can make or break the effectiveness of any meeting.
- ◆ Be structured. Don't dodge all around the agenda. Stay focused on one issue at a time, finish, and then move on.
- ◆ Give trivia the time it deserves. If something is urgent, but relatively unimportant, put a time limit on discussion.

Continued P6



Continued from P5

- ◆ Watch the quiet people, and involve them. It is very easy for these folk to be dominated and talked over, and yet, because they are quieter, and not in such a hurry to air their opinions, they usually have very valid things to say.
- ◆ Ensure that the vocal members don't dominate the meeting. If someone wanders, a chairperson has to kindly but firmly thank the garrulous one, saying something like, "Let's hear from ...", or "I think we need to keep on the topic."



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NOT ANOTHER MEETING!-CON'T

by Robyn Pearce

- ◆ Side conversations. These can be huge time-wasters, and the chairperson must nip them in the bud immediately, or the precedent will be set. They may have to stop the meeting and INSIST on only one person speaking at a time. If the pattern has already been set in an existing group, put it at the top of your next agenda for discussion, and get agreement. The rest of the group can then help the chairperson enforce it. Anyone who wants to chat socially can carry on after the meeting.

this should be very rare.

Don't waste the time of the whole group on something which can be easily handled by a sub-committee of 2 or 3. If 10 people each speak for 2 minutes, 20 minutes has gone for ever!

How about a stand-up meeting? When we get comfortable we'll usually take longer. A number of companies regularly have morning stand-up meetings, and get through their agenda very quickly and efficiently.

Time

Start on time. Benefit - why should the organised people be made to suffer for the slackness of others. If someone comes late, don't stop and recap - it is their responsibility to catch up later, or from the minutes. By their tardiness they are expressing total disregard for the importance of other people's time. If the chairperson is regularly late, one of the other participants can begin (they'll soon cotton on!).

Set a finish time, and stick to it. Benefit - People can plan their next appointment with confidence. Sometimes vital items may cause an over-run, but if they've been placed at the top of the agenda,



Article by Robyn Pearce.

Robyn Pearce has helped 1000's of folks in 'Getting a grip on their time' - Visit:

<http://www.gettingagripontime.com> for FREE registration on their monthly e-zine, "how-to" practical time management assistance, books, tapes, products, and more.

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The handshake is still used daily in business and even socially – and if yours is not up to scratch you're doing yourself a disservice – and sometimes putting people off you completely. A bad handshake can undo all the good you've done in a meeting, interview or with your first impression.

A nice firm grip, palm to palm, no posturing (that is trying to turn the other person's hand downwards to give yourself the "power"), and one or two pumps all done with a nice clean, dry hand is all that is required to make people think you're an honest, reliable, professional person.

Imogen Lamport is a Melbourne based Image Consultant and member of the Association of Image Consultants International who runs her own Image Consultancy Bespoke Image which provides tailored image solutions.

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Is your handshake up to scratch? by Imogen Lamport

And remember to smile and to meet the eyes of the person whose hand it is your shaking at the same time, to ensure they see that you're an honest, upfront person. Now, there are a variety of handshakes I've been on the recipient end of that I wouldn't recommend at all.

The Finger Tipper

Where you only grasp the fingertips of the person you're supposed to be shaking hands with. This is a handshake often given to women by men – it's actually quite offensive to women as it indicates to us that you don't take us seriously in a business environment.



The Sweaty Palm

You're nervous, your hands are sweaty, surreptitiously wipe them with a tissue or hanky before you shake. This handshake is a dead giveaway about your state of mind, and it's pretty unpleasant being on its receiving end. If you find your palms sweat even when you're not nervous, wash and dry your hands regularly, and make sure you're not balling your hands into a fist, as this will make your palms sweaty.

The Super Soft

Another handshake often received from men by women – you're not grasping the other person's hand tightly enough,

and it indicates a lack of personal strength, power and authority. With this handshake, you won't be taken seriously, by women or men. I'm not saying squeeze til the blood runs out of their fingers, but a firm grasp is what is needed.

The Squeeze

Ok, this is the opposite of the super soft handshake, but where you squeeze any life out of the other person's hand. It indicates to them that you're overly aggressive and have a massive ego. Try easing up a bit so that they're not grimacing in pain, you're certainly not winning friends or influencing people (in a positive way) with this handshake.

Your handshake speaks volumes about you - practice with a friend or colleague if you're not sure if yours is up to scratch. Make sure you don't alter your handshake style between men and women, and remember, always look the other person in the eye when shaking to indicate that you mean what you say.

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Q & A

Q: I am looking at re-entering the job market, however have been told that I may be overqualified for the jobs I am targeting. How can I overcome this problem?

Even though extensive experience, impressive qualifications and exceptional contributions would seem to be an asset for potential employers, being overqualified can often sound alarm bells for a recruiter or potential employer. Overqualified employees could:

- ◆ quickly get bored with the position and quit;
- ◆ terminate employment the moment another better opportunity is presented to them;
- ◆ have far higher salary demands than is being offered;
- ◆ position themselves for a management role (possibly the person interviewing you!).

As you mentioned, you don't want to lie on your resume as you are almost guaranteed to get caught out either when you attend an employment interview meeting or during the reference checking process. Also, developing a relationship that is founded on untruths has a real possibility of becoming unpleasant down the track.

Here are some strategies on how to repackage and market your skills (without resorting to lies) to position your experience and keep you in the running:

Focus on the skills that are relevant to the position rather than highlighting your management (or higher-level) accountabilities. Develop a combination format resume (otherwise known as the hybrid resume) to allow you to position relevant skills at the forefront of the document without specifying job titles or status within the organization. This format will also allow you to condense many years of experience without having to list dates and companies for whom you worked.

Your qualifications/professional profile should de-emphasize senior management (or higher-level) capabilities, and demonstrate enthusiasm and competency in the tasks relevant to the position.

Incorporate a section beneath your qualifications profile to showcase achievements and contributions that illustrate advantageous skills and experience important to the role.

If you have an extensive career list only the last 10-15 years of employment within your employment history section.

When developing your employment history section (preferably beginning on the second page of your resume) in your job scope, stress the skills and aptitudes that you used within your role, rather than highlighting your senior level leadership (or skills).

Also, within your cover letter:

Address the reasoning behind why you are seeking this new position, not forgetting to highlight your enthusiasm for this new challenge, as well as your commitment to their organization. [Perhaps you want a more rewarding and 'hands-on' role or you don't want as much high pressure or responsibility any more.]

Portray how your experience can save their organization training time and costs and that you would integrate far more quickly and produce results much faster than someone who is less qualified or experienced.

When attending an interview it is best that you directly address this issue rather than waiting until the interviewer brings the subject up, in order to minimize any apprehensions he or she may have.

Ensure you provide sound explanations as to why you are changing industry or seeking a less senior role. Re-emphasize your enthusiasm and commitment to their organization and the fact that they will not be required to put a lot of time and cost into training you due to your outstanding qualifications and experience.

Wishing you continued success in your career!



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Job loss...

By Annemarie Cross—Career Coaching Expert, Propulsion Business Network

The world of work as we once knew it is rapidly changing. The one-job-for-life principle is practically a thing of the past, with workers today being told to expect at least 3 to 4 career changes throughout their working lives. Employees need to become more resilient in their careers and will experience job transitions either through their own choice (voluntary), or through job loss (caused by involuntary redundancy/corporate downsizing).

People who have been thrust unexpectedly into unemployment can quite often find moving forward extremely difficult, and the added pressure to “just get out there and find another job” from close friends and family, can make the entire situation seem almost unbearable.



Job loss brings about significant change and can be a traumatic and debilitating experience, with arising emotions acknowledged as being similar to people who have experienced a death in the family or other devastating loss. Their job defined who they were, being linked closely to their self-esteem and with no job their self-worth can plummet dramatically.

If you have recently experienced job loss, are faced with some difficult career decisions, and can recognise any of the emotions listed below, know that you are not alone, and that these have also been experienced by other people that have lost their jobs.



Denial (and Isolation): back when they realised that they were not needed by their organisation, just you wait and see.”

Anger: “It’s all the manager’s/company’s fault.” “I gave them 10 years of my life and for what – I am furious at them.” “They owe me. I’ll show them, just you wait and see.”

“They’re going to call me just how much I contributed.” “They can’t do without me.”

“I’m angry at the manager’s/company’s fault.” “I gave them 10 years of my life and for what – I am furious at them.” “They owe me. I’ll show them, just you wait and see.”

Depression/Low self-esteem: where people say, “If only...” “It’s all my fault, I should have seen it coming.” “I’m never going to be able to find another job.” “I don’t know what else to do besides that job. I don’t have any other skills.” “I’m worthless; I really don’t feel like getting out of bed.” “At my age, how am I going to get another position with all those younger job seekers in the job market?”

Bargaining: where people may try to bargain with God to intervene to prevent the job loss. In addition, the person may make incredible (often unachievable) promises to God in return for a new job.

Acceptance (New Hope): “What can I learn from this experience?” “I am ready to accept the facts as they really are and am ready to move forward.” “My old position is not there. However I have excellent skills, competencies and talents that can add value to an employer. I’ll find an opportunity that may be even better than my last position.”

If you can relate to any of the above stages and emotions and feel that they are preventing you from moving forward in your career in a positive way, whether towards new employment or business start-up opportunities, then take the opportunity to talk to someone about them before making any hasty decisions.

All the best!

[Read more of our articles on the [Propulsion Business Network site](#)]