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Personal Market Planning: Just what IS a *right work opportunity* for YOU?

Just as the competent sailor must select their destination in order to have a successful voyage, so must the productive and efficient job seeker know what is a *right work opportunity* to identify, proceed toward...and secure! While this seems like an incredible over-simplification, mere 'common sense,' it is knowledge that eludes most unemployed people. You see, when you're employed you tend to assume that your employer will help you to navigate those 'next steps' in your career.

Ah, but when you've lost your job, your fellow employees, and your employer... WHOA... the rules seem to have changed!

While the sailor's journey could be defined by its destination, his success is determined by the course he selects, and, most significantly, having an appropriate ship to make the passage as smooth as possible.

In Steps #1 and #2 of our 12-step process we learn to assess (know the features of our ship) and set our objective (select our destination and course) so that we can develop a GREAT Resume, one that allows our future employer to help navigate our journey, thus we embrace the OTHER job market!

'PRODUCT' ANALYSIS

You are now the product that must be marketed. In order to market yourself, you must first know yourself. The job search process is essentially a highly personalized marketing process. The process starts with your candid self-assessment, which allows you to gain a thorough and workable understanding of who you are in product marketing terms.

When a Company looks for qualified employees, they seek functional evidence that demonstrates a job seeker's ability to perform to expectations... JOB REQUIREMENTS represent the HR screening process!

Especially if you are starting a resume "from scratch", or if you are truly unsettled on next steps along your career path, this becomes a necessary first step in the process.

What YOU Do Best, and are motivated to do for a future employer...

What do you do best? What are your strongest transferable skills? Think broadly in terms of managerial and technical/ *functional strengths* involved in what you have to offer. Discovering your "pattern of success and satisfaction" is your goal, here.

Your ability to express the collection of your functional strengths will measure your marketability. This collection of keywords and their supportive evidence creates your *communication strategy*, the basis of your value proposition.

The old "round peg in a round role" theory of career planning is dysfunctional. In the typical professional environment today, job descriptions are changing faster than ever before to keep up with the challenges of an economy in transition.

In the traditional job market, job seekers are the sellers and their potential employers are the buyers. The commodity is JOBS and the competition is fierce.

In **The OTHER Job Market**, buyers and sellers hold equal responsibility for the recruitment process. The commodity is available, productive WORK... When employers have a need for someone to fulfill a specific role, often the most desired candidates are employed individuals with the credentials they seek. Thus the employer must sell their Company to potential employees in the marketplace in order to attract the best of the lot. Once identified, they simply select their choice and buy their services.

Seize control of such challenges. Understand the nature of FIT.

To achieve a good "fit" between you and any future opportunity, you have to ask yourself some basic questions about yourself and your prospective employers. The fit depends on how well the jobs meets your needs and how well your skills and abilities meet the employer's needs.

The employer will make a decision and extend an offer to you: now it is time for you to make your decision. Write out the factors that are important to you in a job... actually write out your list. During your career transition, learn the value of setting your offer criteria, a key element of your Personal Market Plan:

- Creates an objective target for your efforts ahead;
- Gives you a meaningful set of questions to ask during research (factual information) and networking (more subjective information);
- Provides an objective way to analyze and react to offers as they occur.

OFFER CRITERIA

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3. Provides an objective way to analyze and react to offers as they occur.

To manage your career wisely has you extending the same concept.

- Keep your "offer criteria" in that dynamic state of change that allows you to adapt to market conditions.
- If your current goal is to find a new position, then you should prepare your search as a "business model", manage it accordingly, be flexible, and be ready for the unexpected.

You understand that managing your own career involves three key ingredients:

- **Confidence** in knowing that your career is on the right path;
- **Continuous research and networking** leading to awareness of potential "next steps..." to keep your career moving forward;
- **Competency** with job-changing skills.

To manage your career wisely has you extending the same concept.

Right Resources for An Effective Search

In Steps #3 through #7 we assemble supportive 'tools and resources' for the job search ahead (a competent sailor 'provisions' his ship for the journey)... the most important of which is having a plan, a Personal Marketing Plan (our charted course to get us to our destination)...which is Step#8.

3. Develop Personal Marketing collateral materials (Resume, etc.)
4. Test Market with References
5. Branding via social media (LinkedIn 'footprint')
6. Basic market research to determine trends and targets
7. Determine potential marketplace (your initial contact list)
8. Develop your PMP (chart your course)

Eight out of your 12 Steps and you haven't even left the harbor yet!

Ultimately, your goal is to secure the *right employment* for yourself... that must start with your identification of what right is. THAT requires some exploration, identification of key elements of your **Career FIT**, and planning to pull it all together, create focus... make it happen.

Yes.... FIT Happens! Creating an *action* plan, your **Personal Market Plan**, during career transition, will reap rewards during your implementation campaign. Success in career management confers rewards not unlike those in the workplace:

- A sense of accomplishment;
- Pushing oneself beyond expectation, often acquiring new skills or knowledge;
- Identifying developmental goals to assure continued career success;
- Gaining the respect of those around you, colleagues and customers;
- Being requested for future challenging opportunities!

But, let's not get ahead of ourselves. To achieve a good "careerFIT" between you and any future opportunity, you have to ask yourself some basic questions about yourself and your prospective employers.

The FIT depends on how well the jobs meets your needs and how well your skills and abilities meet the employer's needs. This is your *value proposition* and is reflected in your **QUALIFICATION SUMMARY**.

The WAVES of PMP Implementation

The concept, here, is to keep a pulse of activity going consistently and regularly into the job market. When you let up, if you take time away from the marketplace, they will tend to forget you...the job market has no memory. It's up to you to achieve top-of-mind awareness.

Use The A.I.R. Approach in Your 'first wave' of Networking... Your purpose in this 'first wave' of networking is to gain **A**dvice, **I**nformation, and most importantly names of other individuals you can call, or **R**eferrals. The lifeline of networking is to always get more names. Be sure to ask each person if they have a minute to talk to you, and when finished talking thank them for their time.

Make networking calls in a block of time. Each call is more comfortable than the one before. Do not call people and ask them if they have any openings at their company... This is almost always totally non-productive. **THE PRINCIPLES BEHIND A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH ARE ALWAYS THE SAME:** the search process itself is time consuming work, and the more productive time you spend on your job search the more interviews and job offers you will generate.

So the question at this point is "Where do you find out about job openings and on which avenues of job search should you spend the most time?"

THE BEST (And Worst) OF BOTH WORLDS

Technology has done a terrific job of consolidating posted job leads. Web crawling software can reach out and consolidate classified ads, recruitment posts and company posted job opportunities. We know these consolidated sites as Internet Job Banks... and some of them contain a huge amount of postings.

Unfortunately, their very size makes it challenging to stay current and eliminate redundancy. Also unfortunate is the fact that these very same job banks have consolidated your competition and rejection from Corporate America.

Solution? Use the Job Banks to generate your most attractive leads, then network your way into those targeted organizations.



ABOUT DFWCareerpilot... A FREE, WEEKLY WORKSHOP event with a regular rotation of topical material covering a 12-Step Process **M.A.P. (MAHER Associates Process)** that will accelerate your job search success. Bob's presentation style is highly engaging and interactive, so never be shy with questions and/or supportive anecdotes.

BE PREPARED for Bob's two philosophies: Learn to Embrace The OTHER Job Market... and, fully optimize your efforts with a high tech/high touch approach!

1. His public Group on LinkedIn: **DFWCareerpilot**
2. **GO TO:** www.dfwcareerpilot.com and **FOLLOW** (register for) it to receive regular updates
3. Follow **DFWCareerpilot** on Twitter!



Bob Maher created his online presence, www.careerpilot.com, in 1994. He has over thirty years of successful experience in Corporate Recruitment, performance management and Career Management Services. He is an entrepreneur and innovator in the use of information technology in the recruitment and employment process.

On the Founder's Council of the Association of Career Professionals - International and quite active in their Professional Development, Technology and Chapter Growth initiatives--a frequent speaker at industry conferences and seminars. The Institute of Career Certification-International has him reviewing the portfolios of incoming applicants. Bob was presented with the prestigious LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT award by The Association in 2006.