Job Search 6.0

Marie Zimenoff, Guest Editor

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Foreword

Looking Ahead with the Journal

We wish to thank the authors of this special issue of the Journal devoted to Job Search 6.0. Our Guest Editor, Marie Zimenoff, has organized a useful set of chapters covering the essentials of modern job search. Thank you Marie!

Here is what we have planned for future issues of the Journal:

Your Inner Hero's Journey and the **Kiersey temperament assesment system**, with Guest Editor **Carolyn Kalil** of southern California.

Book Reviews 2016-2017, with our Book Reviews Editor **Maggi Kirkbride** of San Diego, California.

Careers Related to the Internet, with Guest Editor and our Newsletter Columnist **Melissa A. Venable** of Beaufort, South Carolina.

A Life in the Military: Serving Worldwide Protecting our Nation. Guest Editor TBD.

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INTRODUCTION TO THIS ISSUE

As a resource for career practitioners across the field, the Career Planning and Adult Development Journal has shared trends and resources for more than 32 years. During this time, technology used during the process of job search and hiring has experienced rapid change, while maintaining the same basic goal – hiring managers seeking the best talent for their position in the most efficient way possible.

In this special issue on Job Search 6.0, career practitioners and recruiters share perspectives on how technology changes are influencing the search and hiring processes. As CEO of Career Thought Leaders Consortium and Resume Writing Academy, I've had the opportunity to interact with recruiters across the country to research and witness their hiring practices. While processes have changed with the increase in technology use, the basic challenge and solutions remain the same as they seek talent referred from a source they can trust and rely on their experience, process, and intuition to select the best candidate.

The ways in which candidates build their visibility and apparent credibility with hiring managers have also experienced rapid change while traditional job search strategies like networking maintain their effectiveness. This journal will address how technology has influenced the full spectrum of job search activities and new strategies for improving effectiveness of traditional search methods.

In **Today's Job Search: What's Changed? What Hasn't?, Jan Melnik** provides a comprehensive review of the differences and similarities in job search today and years past. The article shares data illustrating how technology has changed candidate sourcing, career communications, and job seeker branding. Jan also provides recommendations for job search in response to this data and specifically how candidates can use technology to improve their networking – including in-depth tips for using LinkedIn.

Camille Roberts, a federal job search expert, joins forces with **Lisa Becker** to provide a similar comprehensive review in **Today's Federal Job Search – What's Changed? What Hasn't?**. The article provides a detailed look at changes in USAJOBS and explores the impact of changing leadership, programs, demographics, legislation, and technology on the federal recruiting and hiring process. Lastly, it addresses myths about the federal screening and hiring practices.

The Influence of Social Media on Job Seekers in the Digital Age by Wendy Weiner provides a survey of the major social media used for job search – LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook – including demographics of users and their place in the new mobile job search. The article also shares data around social media use by recruiters and recommendations for job seekers in building their online image.

A detailed guide to LinkedIn, including screen shots, make **Kimberly Schneiderman's Using LinkedIn to Connect** a must-read for career professionals. Kimberly provides an in-depth understanding of LinkedIn's key features and practical methods for using the technology to build real connections. The article also provides direction in using the search function and scripts for connecting to other individuals for many different purposes.

In **Challenges Faced by Older Job Seekers, Steven Watson** shares insight into how rapidly changing technology impacts job search success of the aging workforce in a highly competitive market. The article shares data around the use of social media by recruiters, unemployment by age, and time to find employment by age to illustrate this impact. Lastly, Watson provides data around older people and the use of technology, training, and bridge employment with recommendations for addressing discrimination in job search.

Former recruiter **Damali Curry Edwards** shares the HR and recruiter perspective on job search in her article titled **People & Technology: A Winning Recruiting Combination.** The article outlines the different ways organizations hire – from networking to online applications – and how LinkedIn® is changing the recruiting landscape. Her detailed description of the type of hiring managers, recruiters, and other influencers in the hiring process is a wealth of information for career professionals in explaining the hiring landscape to their job seekers.

The gamification trend that has been apparent in learning and development for the past few years transitions into career development through the work of **Ronda Ansted** as described in her article **The Gold Star Effect: The Gamification of Career Decision-Making.** The article explains gamification and its benefits in learning and behavior change. Ronda then shares how the concept can be applied within a career development setting and strategies for effectiveness in using the approach, especially with under-served populations.

One of the most dramatic changes in technology over the past few years is the rise in use of mobile phones. In **Mobile Technology: Evolutions and Trends for Career Resources, Searches, and Networking, Ruth Pankratz** shares how mobile use is growing by organizations and job seekers during the hiring process. She also shares how job seekers are using mobile technology for networking and some of the challenges organizations face in keeping up with the changing technology in their recruiting process.

In **The Art and Science of Building Reciprocal Relationships for Career and Job Search Success, Millicent Simmelink** takes a deep dive into the transformation of the workplace and corresponding changes in career management strategies. The article provides an understanding of the importance of a "personal board of directors" in job search and career management, with a generational look at how professionals build reciprocal relationships and the impact of these relationships on career and job search success.

Closing out the journal with a very important topic for career practitioners, **Louise Kursmark** shares the latest trends in **Writing and Formatting Resumes for Today's Job Search.** The article provides a background in how reading has changed with the growth of Internet and mobile technology and how this is changing the way employers read resumes. With concrete examples

for both the human eye and computer readers (applicant tracking systems), this article is a wealth of information on what is still a key tool in the job search process.

Thank you to all of these career practitioners for sharing their wisdom, research, and recommendations for approaching job search in today's dynamic workplace. The articles provide a wide variety of strategies, methods, and practical tools for career practitioners and job seekers struggling to navigate and increasingly complex system while still achieving the ultimate goal – determining good-fit career options, advancing and managing a fulfilling career, and building genuine relationships to uncover opportunities. May readers find practical solutions they can use to improve these results in their daily work with clients!

Marie Zimenoff, Guest Editor

About the Guest Editor

Marie Zimenoff is CEO of Career Thought Leaders and Resume Writing Academy. She is on a mission to change the world one career success story at a time. She develops content and training across multiple mediums to keep careerists and careers industry professionals ahead of trends. Using pioneering strengths-based coaching and marketing techniques, she consistently improves outcomes for job seekers, entrepreneurs, and organizations. As a thought leader in the career industry, she has mentored and trained career professionals in corporate, workforce development, community college, university, and community settings. Job seekers, company leaders, and career professionals know they can count on her to deliver content with valuable information and practical tools they can use today. She earned the master's degree in counseling and career development and the industry's top certifications in career coaching, leadership coaching, branding, and resume writing. She has served as president of The National Resume Writers' Association and the Colorado Career Development Association. She is also sought out as a speaker on leadership topics for Rotary International across the Rocky Mountain region. She is a contributor to career industry books and journals and serves as an expert source for BusinessNewsDaily, Yahoo! Education, major professional association publications, and newspaper and radio media nationwide. Contact her as follows:

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Chapter 1

TODAY'S JOB SEARCH: What's Changed? What Hasn't?
by Jan Melnik

The expression *"some things never change"* can be attributed to a number of writers as well as musical artists. As it relates to job search, however, this sentiment remains absolutely true with respect to networking. Coined as an expression in the 1980s, the textbook definition of networking at that time suggested that *"contacts can produce good job opportunities"* (Flippen, 2001).

By the 1990s, job-search networking had come into its own, fueled by the plethora of personal computers and the Internet. Richard Beatty reported in his best-selling book, ***Job Search Networking,*** that *"some 68 percent of all jobs are found through networking"* (Beatty, 1994). Some 20 years later, many consider networking to be more valuable than ever for job seekers. Adam Cobb, professor of management at the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania, was quoted by Chris Farrell in ***Bloomberg Businessweek*** as saying, *"The best way to get a job now is the same as in the '70s and the '80s—word of mouth"* (Farrell, 2012).

But the best connections do not always derive from where one might think. Barbara Kiviat (2013) reported on the work of Harvard- and Princeton-educated sociologist Mark Granovetter, also a professor at Stanford University, in a Glassdoor blog, **"Why Personal Connections Matter and Can Get You Hired."** Granovetter said that dating back to the late 1960s and early 1970s, *"people were much more likely to land jobs from information passed on by people they weren't particularly close to."* Granovetter further reported that in interviews, when candidates were asked *"whether a friend had told them about their current job, time and again people said 'not a friend, an acquaintance'"* (Kiviat, 2013). Granovetter's research revealed that the key referrals in networking most often derived from acquaintances seen *"occasionally"* (and not often) with the resulting takeaway: *"The people in your life who you don't know too well are the ones who often matter the most when it comes time to find a job"* (Kiviat, 2013).

Ted Mouw, a sociology professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, is quoted as saying from his research of large data sets that *"people with high-status networks do tend to get higher-paying and more prestigious positions… networks are important for getting jobs,"* but he states that because many people share networked connections with those similar to themselves, the results aren't necessarily causative (Kiviat, 2013).

Differences in Job Search: Then and Now
The biggest difference in job search and networking today as compared with decades past? The

impact of the Internet, technology, and social media. Most individuals above the age of 60 can recall when resumes were typed (literally), probably on a Smith-Corona portable typewriter on classic laid stationery—and usually an ivory color. Cover letters expressing interest were individually prepared and mailed in envelopes with postage applied—arriving frequently with hundreds of others on the desk of a hiring manager (or, more likely, the *"Personnel Department,"* as it was called then) following a large advertisement in the Sunday newspaper career pages for a coveted opportunity.

Gerry Crispin, one of the founding principals of CareerXRoads, reported on the research of Gary Cluff of 4,000 Employment Management Association (now SHRM) members in 1998 about their sources of hire as compared to Crispin's own data developed in 2013. Print advertising in newspapers and trade journals as late as 1997 accounted for 42 per cent of new hire sources—as compared to a miniscule one per cent by 2013 from the same sources (Crispin, 2014). Many millennials in job search today have never read a newspaper, never mind consider the trusted *career classifieds* from decades ago as the top source for job leads. That same comparative study published by Crispin showed that employee referrals (certainly a top form of networking) accounted for 19 per cent of new hire sources, both in 1997 and in 2013. The Internet, however, accounting for just two per cent of new hire sources in 1997, exploded to more than 90 per cent by 2013; the numbers exceeded 100 per cent because of multiple responses (Crispin, 2014).

Today, job seekers spend hours mining information on the Internet, using Google to delve more deeply into company mission statements, challenges, and employment opportunities. Hopefully, they are leveraging the robust powers of LinkedIn, what many career experts consider to be today's holy grail with respect to the social media networking platform for job seekers and all professionals. No longer simply glued to a desktop computer in their homes (or, in days of old, at the publicly accessible computers in their community libraries), job seekers are using smart phones and mobile devices to access information—and expect to find results quickly.

Whereas customizing a resume and cover letter for a desirable job opening could take an hour or more in the 1970s and 1980s, followed by the trip to the post office, today's job seekers can readily apply to hundreds of positions—both through such site aggregators as **Indeed.com** or individually in rapid-fire order to companies of their choosing. There's no cost and minimal effort. So instead of a Personnel Department in 1980 being inundated with several hundred envelopes in the week following a Sunday classified ad, HR folks today are flooded with, often, thousands of electronic applications for a single position.

This has led to frustration for job seeker and hiring manager alike: applicants no longer can look forward to a thanks-but-no-thanks postcard that most companies would send to candidates 30 or more years ago. Instead, Applicant Tracking Systems with complex algorithms have been developed to screen out unlikely candidates from the teeming droves (including many unqualified individuals, those simply submitting their materials randomly). A postcard or letter thanking a candidate for interest? No one is getting those anymore from leaned-down, overworked HR departments.

The world of recruitment has changed over the last five years and the number of players has shrunk. Many organizations are finding their own success leveraging LinkedIn to source and then vet candidates for job searches, spending dollars formerly paid on a third of a new hire's first-year salary to a recruiter or on thousand-dollar Sunday newspaper ads on premium company accounts with LinkedIn to enable deep data dives. Search Engine Optimization becomes important as a tool in allowing candidates to be found. By the third quarter of 2015, LinkedIn reported more than 122 million registered LinkedIn users in the United States out of the 400 million registered members globally (LinkedIn, 2015). Clearly, hiring managers have a vast pool of candidates from which to create various searches, sorts, and cuts.

How do these technology- and societal-driven changes—as well as gold standard best practices in networking—affect today's job seekers? How can they optimize their successes? By combining the best of both worlds, savvy candidates can ideally position for visibility and results. To begin, every job seeker today must have, at a minimum, a carefully developed, authentically branded, and accomplishment-rich set of career collaterals: a precision-focused resume, a cover letter customized to each opportunity, and a cohesive, complementary, and personality-imbued LinkedIn profile. Many other tools can be developed to augment these core three—from one-page executive summary resume, professional bio, leadership brief, and project addendum to networking cards, post-interview thank-you letters, 30-60-90 day business plans, and the like. But beginning with a strong portfolio grounded in a resume, letter, and LinkedIn profile is the necessary first step.

Hallmarks of a Solid Career Portfolio
The resume must resonate with authenticity. It must be packed with transferable predictors of success. It must provide proof of performance, backing up claims of achievement with facts. Challenge-action-result (CAR) stories must advance value of a candidate. Key differentiators must highlight what the candidate will do that no one else can. The letter must make the connection between candidate and opportunity, tell the *why,* and provide a quick call-to-action for the reader.

And the LinkedIn profile must be fully amplified—featuring highly branded, personalized, and compelling content that is not duplicated in the resume. It must expand and add value beyond what can be done on, typically, a two-page resume. A professional headshot must be included—strong facial shot, good eye contact, engaging smile, stellar outfit, updated eyeglasses—along with a powerful headline. Video, print, and media clips/URLs should be incorporated throughout and recommendations (several per position is ideal) should also be reflected. A candidate's LinkedIn URL should be customized and this branded link should be included on all career documents (resume, letter, networking card, etc).

Delving in to all that LinkedIn offers is one of the most strategic methods a job seeker can use to optimize networking. After building out a well-developed site on LinkedIn, job seekers should work to connect with appropriate contacts in and outside of their industries (keeping in mind the previously mentioned research showing that, often times, the best connections are from acquaintances, not close contacts). In other words, using LinkedIn language, second-degree connections, which are the first-degree connections of one's first-degree connections, are ideal places to mine

contacts and introductions. Most career experts will agree that a minimum of 125 connections will provide the base critical mass necessary to begin to leverage those connections; obviously, more quality connections than that are desirable and above 500 provides significant benefits in networking.

A Brief Practicum in Leveraging LinkedIn Connections
These are some of the best ways to use LinkedIn to advance networking for strategic job search:

Jobs
Candidates should use the Jobs tab and, through the advanced feature selection, choose keywords and proximity (entering zip code and selecting within 10 miles to up to 100 miles), honing in on those that produce optimal results.
a) For instance, customer service engineer within 50 miles of my locale produces more than 200 possible jobs on a given date.
b) Wrapped in quotation marks ("customer service engineer"), using Boolean search strategy, confines this to jobs with all three words included in the listing, resulting in a very manageable three jobs for further exploration.
c) One of those three jobs includes the notation from LinkedIn: "two connections to the poster." Both are 1st degree connections, which means I can reach out to either/both asking for further insights, an introduction to the hiring manager, details about the company, etc., using LinkedIn's messaging feature.
d) LinkedIn also shares the identity of the job poster (in this case, an internal recruiter); I can search through LinkedIn, the company's website, and Google to learn more about her prior to my introduction.
e) I can also plumb details as posted in the job description about the company itself, the requirements for this position, the fact that the position was posted only two days ago (making it a prime opportunity as opposed to one that might have been posted months ago), and learn that there have been just six applicants so far (through LinkedIn); if there had been hundreds of applicants already, I might not spend as much time on this lead.
f) I can also see other positions open within this company.
g) LinkedIn provides two other good sources of data on these same pages (when reviewing the actual position): *"Similar Jobs"* and *"People Also Viewed,"* potentially opening doors to opportunities and/or companies that I might not have otherwise discovered in my search.
h) Generally, the last thing a candidate should do is simply *apply* from the LinkedIn site to a particular opportunity; that should always be a last resort after exhausting all possible side door avenues of approach. Foremost for candidates to do is network with 1st degree connections, look at company connections to identify others with whom contact can be made, Google for decision makers within appropriate department, etc.

Groups
Candidates are also advised to use the *"Groups"* tab and, through the advanced feature selection, choose keywords of interest to potentially identify organizations/groups to which membership could be advantageous (up to 100 groups can be joined on LinkedIn; there is a range of opinion as to the best strategy—from joining only a handful of key groups in which true thought leadership can be demonstrated to joining all 100 possible groups for greater visibility but being lim-

ited in terms of time to interact regularly and actively in that many groups).

a) Candidates should try to find groups of interest in which LinkedIn shows some or a number of "shared connections."

b) Also to be explored are the groups to which people in a candidate's network already belong—and those of interest among the tier of 2nd degree connections.

c) Candidates should assess the size and level of activity of a group before joining (one with millions of members isn't likely to be a place to gain visibility—but one with a handful of members won't likely propel candidacy either). As with Goldilocks' pursuit of the perfect chair, candidates should look for that sweet spot between too large and unwieldy and too small and unproductive for the group size that is *just right*.

d) Candidates should always lurk before jumping into a group with their own posting. Of course, any posting contemplated would be one that adds value to a discussion, demonstrating subject matter expertise, and not one *asking for a job*.

Companies and Alumni

Using both the *"Companies"* tab and the *"Alumni"* tab, connections can be made, furthered, and deepened, all from the standpoint of linking to opportunities of interest and cultivating possible paths to introduction to hiring managers.

Networking Techniques for the Present Day

Tapping all of these rich sources of contact can be fundamental to a more expeditious job search. On Harvard Business School's career resources website, it is suggested that "*networking … [can] help you gain insight into an industry, a company, or a career path. Given that 65 to 85 per cent of jobs are found through networking, it should be the focus of about 80 per cent of your allotted search time*" (Harvard, 2015).

The Career Center at Willamette University quotes research from Harvard stating, *"almost 80 percent of all jobs in the last 10 years were the result of networking—35 per cent of those jobs didn't exist 10 years ago"* (Willamette, 2015). This underlies the importance of using networking to not only connect to decision makers over posted job opportunities but to forge connections and learn about career paths and career transition as well as to conduct research and acquire inside information.

Through the Office of Career Strategy at Yale University, networking is discussed, recommended *"particularly in challenging economic times"* and as a means by which someone *"can uncover job opportunities that might not yet—or never—be posted on job-sites"* or to perhaps develop a need or opportunity that had not existed previously (Yale, 2015).

Susan Adams, writing for **Forbes**, recommends combining *"online tools with an old-school personal approach"* (Adams, 2011). She suggests using LinkedIn and Facebook to *"locate friends and contacts who are connected to the company where you want to work. Reach out to those contacts through personalized emails and phone calls. Ask if you can mention them in an email or call to your target. If your connection is willing to put in a word for you with the target, all the better"* (Adams, 2011).

One of the best amplified definitions for networking related to job search was expressed by Lou

Adler when he stated in **The Essential Guide for Hiring and Getting Hired,** *"Networking is about meeting people you know who can vouch for your past performance and connect you with people you don't know"* (Adler, 2013). Some of Adler's top strategies include spending 60 per cent of job-search time on networking, with no more than 20 per cent of one's time devoted to applying directly for a job and 20 per cent of one's time customizing the resume, managing recruiter contacts, etc. (Adler, 2013).

Career expert Susan Joyce, a Visiting Scholar at the MIT Sloan School of Management and editor/publisher of Job-Hunt.org, states in her online guide to job-search networking that *"networking is the dominant method used by successful job seekers—more than 75 per cent of the time! Not a job site. Not an e-mailed resume. Networking!"* (Joyce, 2015).

At the core of successful job search today are an individual's ability to tap into all the resources available—both electronic and real-life—positioning for success using appropriate social media platforms and strategies, having in place highly branded and targeted career collaterals, and being able to articulate key differentiator's in one's candidacy, one's true value proposition. To this I always suggest that any job seeker employ persistent, professional perseverance in the quest to get before the right people to make introductions, advance candidacy, and forge a connection with a decision maker.

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About the author

Jan Melnik is President and Chief Career Strategist of Absolute Advantage. *"Be inspired. It's your career. It's your life."* She helps C-suite executives, rising professionals, and college interns/new graduates with career strategies, resumes, and coaching services. The author of eight career/business books (including "Executive's Pocket Guide to ROI Resumes and Job Search," "One-Hour College Application Essay," and her forthcoming title, "Resume, LinkedIn & Job-Search Strategies for New Graduates: What Works to Launch a Millennial's Career") and a newly released novel, "Telling Tales: On Merlin's Island," she founded her private practice, Absolute Advantage, in 1983. She is a Master Resume Writer, Credentialed Career Manager, and Certified Professional Resume Writer. She has been featured in numerous publications, is NBC's career expert, and speaks frequently at universities, conferences, and libraries nationwide. She is a charter board member with Career Thought Leaders and the CMO coach working with sales and marketing executives through C-Suite Career Catalysts. An adjunct professor of business at Bay Path University, she earned two undergraduate degrees in business and a master's degree at Wesleyan University. Her passion is working with clients coast-to-coast to achieve their career dreams. Contact her as follows:

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Chapter 2

TODAY'S FEDERAL JOB SEARCH:
What's Changed? What Hasn't
by **Camille Roberts** and **Lisa Becker**

Today's federal job search is as competitive as ever with 70 percent of open federal jobs filled by employees who are already in government service, which leaves 30 percent open to opportunities for the public (Rein, 2015). It is important to make certain that federal job seekers learn how to take advantage of every available opportunity to claim a top spot on the Best Qualified lists.

This means ensuring that all T's are crossed and all I's are dotted for every step of the process. Job seekers must pay close attention to every detail required by vacancy announcements in order to be successful. This can be accomplished by reading the job announcement thoroughly and meticulously following every single instruction.

It might sound too difficult, time-consuming, or confusing, but it really is not with the right education. The job announcement is an excellent guide for the overall career marketing a job seeker needs to be successful in landing a federal job—cover letter, federal resume, narratives, and social media. Federal job announcements provide background on the agency and department to give the federal job seeker an idea of the mission of the agency. It also lists the Duties, Qualifications and Evaluations, Benefits and Other Information, and How to Apply. Most job announcements also have listed a Human Resources point of contact.

What's Changed?
Following the disappointing launch of the highly anticipated "new and improved" USAJOBS 3.0 in October of 2011, the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) realigned USAJOBS under its Office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO) and established the USAJOBS Executive Steering Committee. This committee was created to provide strategic direction, oversight, and resolve systemic problems in federal hiring.

The fall-out from the 2011 launch taught OPM a valuable lesson. Instead of creating a monumental buildup of public expectation, the government personnel agency is taking it slower and fixing back-end problems without fanfare and advertising new releases only after testing, use, and fine tuning.

Between October 2011 and October 2015, there have been many improvements and reconfigurations to the USAJOBS website based on user experiences and information submitted through the Usability Committee.

In 2014, USAJOBS served 187 million people conducting 1 billion job searches (Katz, 2015). OPM is responsible for ensuring that the Federal Government, the largest employer in the United States, is staffed with the best, brightest, and most qualified skilled candidates and leaders from diverse public and private-sector backgrounds. This immense responsibility lands squarely on the shoulders of OPM, the Administration, and Congress. This article will explore the progress toward improving the federal hiring process, the lofty goals OPM has for 2016 and beyond, and tips and strategies for succeeding in the federal job search.

Recruitment, Engagement, Diversity, and Inclusion (REDI)
Upon becoming OPM's Senior Executive leader in 2013, former OPM Director Katherine Archuleta set out to *untie the knots* in federal hiring by visiting college campuses and federal offices nationally to gain insight into what her customers, both federal and non-federal, wanted and needed from OPM (Rein, 2015).

A constant, underlying problem she heard about from those she interviewed was *"communication"*—or the lack thereof. She heard time and time again about applicants who never heard back from Human Resources regarding their applications. She listened to recurring complaints from Human Resource staff members about repetitive, obstructive hiring procedures and poor training.

Armed with that information, as well as the knowledge that the government needed to attract highly tech-savvy *twenty-somethings* looking to make a difference, she unveiled her new flagship program in the spring of 2015. The program is called REDI—Recruitment, Engagement, Diversity, and Inclusion. She and her team developed a roadmap to closing skills gaps, building future leaders, and committing their dedication to easing federal employment challenges. *Data* became the OPM watchword for changing the Federal Government's recruiting strategy.

"REDI is a data-driven, forward-looking human capital management strategy that reflects our work on behalf of the 'People and Culture' pillar of the President's Management Agenda. A major function of REDI will help agencies become more self-sufficient in recruiting and hiring employees and turning to OPM as a resource. The roadmap will help agencies drive other key presidential initiatives in areas such as diversity and inclusion, closing skills gaps, building the Federal leaders of tomorrow, and fulfilling our commitment to our Veterans and people with disabilities. Underlying all of REDI's initiatives to enhance recruitment and engagement is the importance of diversity and inclusion" (Archuleta, 2015).

Perhaps most important to Archuleta was that REDI would make OPM accountable to its customers, partners, and stakeholders by transforming the way the Federal Government recruits, hires, engages, and develops its workforce. It would debunk long-standing myths about the hiring process and help managers to fast-track applicants through noncompetitive authority hiring.

In 2010, the President of the United States issued an Executive Order that mandated *time to hire* be reduced to 80 days from the average (at that time) of 120 days. Time to hire was indeed brought down to an average of 105 days by the end of 2010 and 93 days by the end of 2011 (Moore, 2014). Fast forward to 2014, and federal agencies were no longer mandated to meet

that 80-day deadline in an effort to increase the quality of hiring. However, in order keep up the energy in the sluggish federal hiring process, REDI introduced somewhat shorter, easier-to-read vacancy announcements and emphasized better training for human resources staff.

In the REDI Kickoff Event webcast on March 9, 2015, former OPM Director Archuleta reported that four in ten federal employees will be eligible for retirement in the next five years (Archuleta, 2015). Currently, those under age 33 constitute 16 per cent of the workforce, which makes it critical to attract millennials and diverse groups of candidates.

A critical part of this recruiting effort is to improve the job seekers' online application experience from beginning to end by providing them with tools, but also providing Human Resources professionals and hiring managers with what they needed to make better data-driven decisions. USAJOBS has been a repository of data for many years, but not much has been done with the data. It is now being analyzed and shared to help with better decision making.

According to Archuleta in the REDI Kickoff Event webcast (2015), the proposed tools will work in three ways to examine the applicant pool as a whole and merge data sets. Applicant demographics will be displayed in a user-friendly dashboard for human resources professionals, managers, recruiters, and job seekers:

1. USAJOBS data will be given to hiring officials to provide them with an overall view of the applicant pool. The initial view will represent all applicants, by individual occupations, demographic information, and geography. These fields can be filtered to focus on applications for a certain occupation and combined with other filters to pinpoint where the hotspots are for individual occupations. This will be valuable to human resources to target their recruiting campaigns.

2. The reasons why some applicants quit the application process will be examined and distributed. This information is extremely valuable because it comes directly from jobseekers.

3. Detailed information about applicant demographics at each phase of the hiring process will be available by filtering key metrics. This is helpful to the public because it displays federal employment data on a map that is color coded with a legend. The workforce is detailed by state and county, agency, occupations, and demographics.

Recruitment and hiring were cited by OPM's Inspector General as its top management challenge in 2015. Beth Cobert, Acting OPM Director, indicated that she will make them part of her top priorities in 2016, along with helping agencies become more self-sufficient. To do this, OPM has released a Hiring Toolkit that presents organized access to authorities, assessments, and data that hiring managers already have, but might not have utilized in proactively recruiting new talent "outside of the beltway" (Ogrysko, 2015).

OPM is also encouraging agencies to focus on recruiting new cybersecurity and information technology experts. OPM is working to develop the government-speak job announcements into more reader-friendly, clear descriptions and making the hiring process easier and faster so that talented individuals don't quit the application process.

Federal Government Will Continue to Need Talent as the Baby Boomers Retire
As more and more Baby Boomers retire, Federal Government faces the challenge of engaging and retaining top talent. Baby Boomers are reaching retirement and taking their skills and knowledge as they leave. Some agencies have acknowledged this and are pairing Baby Boomers with Millennials to transfer knowledge. Federal Government is realizing that the culture and environment are important factors to attract Millennials and some agencies are making changes to allow more telecommuting, flexibility, nonmonetary compensation, improving the culture, and professional development to attract, engage, and retain employees.

The Innovation Lab
REDI will rely heavily upon data and technology to give users easy-to-access information. OPM knows that USAJOBS needs fine-tuning, and that it didn't in 2011—and doesn't now—meet all the needs of those who are seeking to land a government job or federal employees who are applying for promotions.

A major part of REDI is a human-centered redesign of USAJOBS based upon actual, not perceived, user needs. To establish a baseline of information, OPM conducted focus groups, interviews, and surveys with thousands of USAJOBS users—both federal employees and non-federal employees. OPM learned from those qualitative user interviews with applicants and Human Resource Specialists, and gave that information to its new Innovation Lab—the Federal Government's first foray into Silicon Valley's high-tech attempt at creating a 21st century work culture by building a bridge between old and new ways of working—to find a solution to federal hiring obstacles and problems.

OPM says, "One key aspect of the Innovation Lab is experimenting with human-centered design methods to promote more productive and cross-functional collaboration, generate better ideas, and focus on the users of the things we make in government, from regulations to websites, from service experiences to internal processes" (Grinberg, 2014).

The Innovation Lab is working to make the USAJOBS website easier to navigate and use. Instead of holding all of the integrations, redesigns, and changes for one grand launch, updates designed to constantly improve the user experience throughout the hiring process have been launched every 12 weeks since May 2015. Most of the first changes were made on the back-end, with a more publically noticeable release scheduled for January 2016.

Legislative Changes
In the spirit of the REDI Roadmap, the current administration has contributed to diversifying the federal workforce and making it accessible to more people. On November 3, 2015, President Obama directed OPM to modify its process when background investigations are conducted. In the article *"Obama Announces 'ban-the-box' Directive for Federal Job Applications"* (Federal Soup Staff, 2015), the *"box"* refers to the checkbox that an applicant must address to indicate whether or not that person has a criminal background.

As it stands, by checking that box without the opportunity to explain, many applicants are immediately disqualified from employment. By delaying background investigations, it allows people

who would normally be routinely eliminated from consideration to have a chance to explain and possibly be integrated into the workforce in non-sensitive positions. This change has already been successfully implemented into many Fortune 500 companies, including Walmart, Target, Koch Industries, and Home Depot (Federal Soup Staff, 2015).

Temporary, seasonal employees learned in August 2015 that their struggle to get retirement benefits and career advancement opportunities was over when the Senate passed the Land Management Workforce Flexibility Act. Finally, nearly 10,000 employees on temporary appointment at the Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, National Park Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, Indian Affairs Bureau, and Reclamation Bureau are now eligible for internal merit promotions that had previously been available only to permanent workers.

"Ensuring that our nation's hard working temporary seasonal employees may compete to serve the American people on a permanent basis will not only improve government efficiency and effectiveness, but it is simply the right thing to do on behalf of this dedicated workforce," said Rep. Gerry Connolly, D-VA, adding *"it will save money by reducing employee turnover and the associated training costs"* (Katz, 2015).

Most recently, a federal hiring reform measure passed on October 9, 2015—the Competitive Service Act—will streamline the federal hiring process by allowing agencies to share applicant information. The Act will allow agencies to partner on competitive service certificates when hiring for the same occupational services and similar grade. This basically creates one list of pre-approved, vetted candidates for similar jobs, which in the end saves taxpayer money and resources while reducing duplicative effort on the part of Human Resources staff in separate agencies.

This new allowance will increase federal hiring efficiency by allowing staff to mine the database for those candidates who may have been *close but no cigar* for one agency, but perfect for another. Patricia Niehaus, president of the Federal Managers Association, said *"the measure would improve federal recruiting efforts"* (Katz, 2015).

USAJOBS Improves the User Experience
According to a post on the USAJOBS Facebook page March 4, 2014, USAJOBS was enhanced to make the Resume Builder and Profile easier to navigate and enter necessary information for a complete application. The account lockout and password reset processes were changed to help users get easier access to their accounts and the Contact Us page was updated to be more user friendly. The Advanced Search functionality was improved to include the option to search on job title only and improve navigation; and the Saved Search function was improved.

As discussed previously, many of the changes made to USAJOBS in 2015 were *back-end* fixes that weren't noticeable to the end user. However, there have been a few changes to enhance the job seekers' experiences (Rein, 2014). This will help USAJOBS become the career discovery tool it was destined to be, including:
–   Reconfiguration of the site's search engine capabilities.
–   A new iOS and Android platform.
–   Continued improvements to the advanced search, resume builder, and profile pages.

–Updates to HELP menu.
–A new option for inactive account holders on the Contact Us page.
–Updated Share Job feature to require login.
–Updated URLs on the Student and Recent Graduate pages.
–A mapping tool to give job seekers a bird's eye view of where the current job vacancies are located.
–Improved security enhancements.

A few things to look forward to include:
–Improved, user-friendly vacancy announcements clearly stating qualifications.
–Information on promotion trends and common career paths in government.
–Ability for the applicant to know whether or not he/she is eligible earlier in the process.
–A skills aggregator specifically for current federal employees or anyone with government experience that will track federal job experience and certifications for use in finding another job within another agency or to suggest career paths.

Introducing a New Method of Writing Resumes, Accomplishments, or Narratives
For decades we have been told to write in the Context/Content, Challenge, Action, Result (CCAR) or the Challenge, Action, Result (CAR) method. While this is a good foundation for telling a story, recruiters and hiring officials need to know quickly what the candidate can do for them. The CCAR method of writing doesn't always convey the true reach and impact of the situation.

Instead, CC Career Services created a new method—**Situation, Task, Challenge, Action, Result, Impact (STCARI)**. This method has proved to help countless numbers of its job seekers tell their stories on their career marketing documents—and at the interview! STCARI allows the situation to be explained, the task(s) given, the challenge(s), the result(s), and most important—the impact it had, which gives the hiring officials a better perspective of what they can expect from the candidate.

What Hasn't Changed?
The Myths.

Myth: *Wired* **Jobs**
There are still many people who believe that all federal jobs are *wired* for internal applicants or friends.

Fact: While this can happen, it is not always the case. There are thousands of cases of people hired for federal employment who did not have the benefit of someone *on the inside* making it happen. They landed federal jobs on their own merits. There are many cases where people have missed great career opportunities because they were too comfortable with having a *sure thing* only to miss important details on the résumé and application which resulted in being rated ineligible to compete for the interview.

Myth: KSAs are No Longer Required
When KSAs are listed on the job announcement as statements of required qualifications, many

people dismiss including KSA examples within the résumé even though they are not required to be written in a separate document.

Fact: While it is true that there may not be a requirement to write KSAs for the initial application, KSAs are still the very foundation of eligibility qualifications. It is not uncommon for applicants to be asked at the interview to write KSAs on the spot. Others are given a few days to a weeks' notice after an interview to submit narrative answers to KSAs. The moral of the story is: **be prepared** for all situations.

Myth: It's Okay to Submit a Private Sector Resume
Some people have misinterpreted this statement on some job announcements: *"You may upload your résumé in Word"* to mean that one of the Word resume templates can be used.

Fact: This is a huge mistake for many reasons. If you follow a private sector resume format, it doesn't allow for the details that are required of a federal resume. With that said, if the Word resume includes all the details required, then it is appropriate to upload it according to the instructions on the job announcement.

Myth: No Need to Answer the Online Questionnaire
Some job seekers consider the online questionnaire to be optional and assume the Human Resources Specialist will assume their eligibility and qualification by the content of the resume. They may even think they can answer the questions in the interview, or never.

Fact: This is another big mistake. In most cases, the questionnaire is automatically scored before the resume is scored. Failing to complete or dismissing the questionnaire could result in an application submission rated ineligible. Human Resource Specialists are aware that some applicants are *gaming* the system and are actively seeking a change to the questionnaire requirement as it increases the burden of qualifying applicants accurately.

Myth: No Need to Submit Transcripts or Other Forms
Some job seekers think they can bring these additional documents to the interview, or submit them later in the process.

Fact: Additional documentation required as part of the application is clearly listed in the How to Apply section of the job announcement. Required documents can include transcripts, DD-214, SF-50, Veterans letter, and other forms. These must be uploaded to the Saved Documents area of the applicants' profiles. If candidates don't have official transcripts in their possession, unofficial transcripts can be uploaded and submitted. However, at some point in the hiring process, candidates must provide official transcripts from the institution. It is important to order them early in the process. When applying, applicants will be given the opportunity to select the files to submit with the application.

Myth: Apply to as Many Jobs as Possible
Some job seekers believe that applying to anything and everything is the best approach then *hope and pray* for a phone call from Human Resources.

Fact: This is a poor strategy and will waste valuable time and resources for everyone. Such a broad and unfocused job search can only lead to a frustrating and unsuccessful job search that could result in underemployment or long-term unemployment. This can have a long-term negative effect on a job seeker's transition to a federal job or promotion.

A better strategy is to pre-qualify for the position by thoroughly reading each requirement, specialized experience, and the questionnaire and ensuring that the candidate has at least two or three quantifiable accomplishments for each. It is important to demonstrate accomplishments rather than to list duties from previous positions. Accomplishments paint a clear picture in the potential employer's mind of how the candidate can add value and contribute in the position.

Myth: Be the *First* to Apply
Many job seekers think that the early bird gets the worm.

Fact: For most job announcements, this will not matter. When the job closes, all applications are in the queue and ready for next steps. The Human Resources Specialist doesn't score résumés by the date submitted, nor will early submissions score more points. Take the time to submit a quality application rather than hastily apply. However, if the job announcements states a limited number of applications will be accepted, it is important to be prepared and ready to submit a quality application as early as possible.

Myth: No Need for a Professional Social Media Presence
Some federal job seekers believe that social media doesn't matter in their job search.

Fact: Federal Human Resources Specialists and hiring officials do review candidates' social media presence. Why not take advantage of showcasing a professional presence at least on LinkedIn? There are so many opportunities to extend the candidates' knowledge past the federal résumé and application through social media. If the candidate is positioned properly in their online presence, it can persuade the hiring official to invite the candidate to interview. Make it *easy* for the hiring officials to learn about the candidate!

Myth: It's Too Much *Red Tape*
OK, this may not be a myth. There are a lot of steps to take, but with current education and guidance, it can be a great experience, fun, successful…and most important, duplicated throughout the candidate's career!

Fact: Applicants need to understand there are six potential gatekeepers and each gatekeeper has certain criteria that must be met or *checked off* in order for the application to proceed through the process. Those who are persistent, follow directions, and convey their value in relation to the job announcement in all their application materials and social media presence without stretching the truth will be more successful. It doesn't hurt to seek the help of a federal hiring expert with proven success to get hired faster.

Conclusion
The federal job search is still complex in comparison to private sector. Landing a federal job will

most likely take longer than landing a job in private sector, but it can be well worth the effort. One of the requirements for success is to submit a well-written, strategic federal résumé aligned to the job announcement that includes all the detail that each gatekeeper needs to do their job. Follow all the instructions on the job announcement precisely to get the green light on an interview.

When applying for a federal job, follow every instruction. Over-deliver on requirements with a strategic cover letter and a professional social media presence to open the door to a quality conversation. Ensure that all of the gatekeepers have everything they need to keep the applicant moving through the process.
Here are some final tips:
–Copy the vacancy announcement to a Word document and save it as the job title and the date due (even if it is saved in the applicant's profile on USAJOBS).
–Print the vacancy announcement and highlight all of the keywords and keyword phrases, or highlight them on the computer in Word and work from multiple monitors.
–Make sure the candidate is eligible to apply and possesses all the qualifications necessary with proven accomplishments to demonstrate value and how they will contribute.
–Incorporate keywords and KSA statements into the résumé for applicant tracking system optimization.
–Include at least two accomplishments with keywords and keyword phrases to demonstrate value and expertise for each requirement.
–Write narratives, if required, to a specific example using the STCARI method of writing—Situation/Task, Challenge, Action, Result, Impact. STCARI is an easier method to help flesh out accomplishments.
–Be prepared to dedicate time to preparing a quality federal application. Depending on the job announcement, it could take up to 40+ hours.
–Don't miss the deadline and don't wait until the last minute to submit the application. The system can be very slow the evening of the deadline. It is better to submit the application at least 24 hours in advance so that if something does go wrong, the applicant has time to notify the contact listed on the job announcement so that alternate arrangements for submission can be made. Otherwise, at 11:59 p.m. (or whatever the deadline may be), the job closes. The candidate needs to receive a confirmation by 11:59 p.m. that the submission was successful.

It cannot be emphasized enough that today's federal job search is more competitive than it ever has been. For a federal job seeker to be successful, it is critical for those who are advising federal job seekers who are serious about landing a federal job to become educated in the federal hiring process, which includes writing a successful federal resume, cover letter, narratives, and social media profiles; connecting with the right people; and acing the federal interview.

It is important to take advantage of every possible opportunity to land the interview. As Nelson Mandela said, *"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."* To become educated in the federal hiring process, study our Federal Job-Landing Blueprint™ to understand and realize why candidates need more than a resume to land a federal job. Following the blueprint will put the candidate on a path to success!

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Chapter 3

The INFLUENCE of SOCIAL MEDIA on JOB SEEKERS in the DIGITAL AGE
by Wendi Weiner

Technology has altered job seekers' way of thinking through the creation of new trends, offerings, and influences. That impact has channeled through Millennials, a group of individuals born in the 20th century and fall into the age bracket between 18 and 34.

In Technology is Changing the Millennial Brain, current studies show that *"the average Millennial spends 18 hours per day using any type of digital media. And, 90 per cent of young adults use social media,"* a number that has increased by 12 per cent since 2005.

One of the toughest aspects of social media is the unfettered discretion that comes along with it, thereby leaving the user in a quandary about appropriate content, image, and emotions derived from the effects of viewing others' lives on social media. Yet, focusing on the advancements that technology has provided for job seekers, the U.S. workforce has now increased its savviness and capabilities as a result of social media. Armed with these two things, job seekers have access to more pathways for success, growth, and change as a result of social media.

The Pre-Smartphone Era of Job Searching
In 2003, online job boards such as Monster and Career Builder provided the bulk of resources for job seekers who used fax or email to get their resume to prospective hiring managers and recruiters. Applicant tracking systems had not yet reached their peak to weed out the right candidates from the ones who lacked the ability to ascertain proper keyword matching. The typical job seeker may have even walked into a company and handed his or her resume copy on a pre-selected template from Microsoft Word and in Times New Roman font. The typical resume encompassed a work history summary, responsibilities, and hobbies. It was simple, easy, and did not involve much thinking outside of the box.

Fast forwarding to 13 years later, our digital age has taken the workforce to a whole new level with the advent of social media. Job seekers are tweeting about their job needs and desires. They are tweeting to companies about positions and interests. They are connecting with CEOs, hiring managers, and staff recruiters on LinkedIn and quickly accessing networking opportunities through online events advertised on Facebook. Not to mention, now an entire industry has formulated and created positions that solely focus on having professionals serve as subject matter experts on social media.

Each social media avenue can have exceedingly beneficial use for job seekers in the digital age. In fact, using social media can prove to be effective and methodical when it comes to building

relationships, creating new job opportunities, and developing a strong professional reputation and presence.

The Power of LinkedIn for Job Seekers
With an average of 400+ million users on LinkedIn (107 million in the United States) and 2 new members joining every second, technology has created an even stronger outreach for influencers (DMR, 2015). CEOs, top executives, and hiring managers are all on LinkedIn. These key professionals are scoping others out on a daily basis – and career professionals are reciprocating the gesture with connection requests and follows.

While LinkedIn did not have much notoriety in 2008, it has become more compelling than a resume in 2015. This is due to the leverage that LinkedIn gives job seekers for networking, applying to jobs, and even building large lead generation.

Ninety-four percent of recruiters use LinkedIn to "vet" candidates, there's an average of 3 million jobs advertised on LinkedIn, and job views on LinkedIn have increased 5.7 times compared to Facebook and 3 times to Twitter. Additionally, recent research shows that 40 percent of LinkedIn users utilize LinkedIn's mobile app to search for jobs (DMR, 2015). What's even more persuasive is that companies are no longer relying on the traditional job boards to advertise for positions, but instead are looking to LinkedIn to draw in their next ideal candidate. LinkedIn makes it simple and easy to apply for jobs and to be discovered for recruitment.

Consider this example:
Ana was struggling for six months with her job search. As a sales and marketing representative with 10+ years of experience, she thought her job search would be easy. She had a LinkedIn profile with a headline that listed her most recent position, provided experience details of her prior positions, and noted her headline as *"Assistant Concierge."* Yet, she wasn't receiving inquiries. Upon seeking out help from a career expert, Ana's profile branded her sales and marketing profile with an added catch, "*Seeking to transform sales and marketing profits with innovative solutions.*" Within a few days, she was contacted by multiple organizations, including a lucrative healthcare one. This headline soon morphed into an interview and job offer.

The interesting fact to point out is that Ana didn't apply to this company the traditional way through an ad posting on a job board. Instead, this company had their talent acquisition specialist initiate contact with Ana, and it came to fruition all because of her creative headline. This situation is not atypical. It is happening more than career professionals realize because of the impact of social media today.

LinkedIn provides its users with 120 characters for a headline for a reason. LinkedIn knows that the average job title is not 120 characters. Employing creativity and enthusiasm into a LinkedIn profile can generate more views and allure the reader with a greater return: a job offer, a new lead, or even the next client for a large business deal.

Creating a powerful headline on LinkedIn is just one feature of many that can have a terrific impact for career professionals, business leaders, and job seekers. Crafting a compelling summary,

expanding work experience with results-driven accomplishments, and listing awards, promotions, endorsements, and recommendations, are other ways to leverage one's professional stature on LinkedIn. All professionals – including business owners, entrepreneurs, and job seekers – can utilize LinkedIn and its full benefits to create a unique selling proposition to its millions of users.

Tweeting to the Next Career Move
The job industry is changing, and a great part of that is due to Millennials and their love for social media. Statistics show that 73 percent of 18–34 year olds obtained their last job through a social media platform (Capterra Blog, 2014).

While LinkedIn has surely dominated the job search market for social media, Twitter allows for widespread search capabilities, with an unprecedented 8 million job matches for candidates. The reason for Twitter's success in the job search world is its ability to search for hiring-specific hashtags such as #salesjobs or #managementjobs. Although users only have 120 characters to compose their tweet, users can express their career needs succinctly and with relevant keyword-rich content.

Consider the story about Nina Mufleh:
Nina was a passionate Millennial who became infamous on Twitter as the hungry job seeker who took her tweeting to the next level. Mufleh went after her dream job with Airbnb, a $25 billion startup company, by doing something out of the ordinary: she tweeted to Airbnb's CEO and CMO about her desires to work for the company and enclosed an infographic resume that patterned the company's website. Mufleh's strategy consisted of studying Airbnb's website and partnering with a graphic designer to create something out of the ordinary. Her tweet ultimately went viral, with a response from the c-level executives that included, *"Wow this is the best social application I have ever seen,"* and *"Ok. You floored me with this brilliance. We'll set something up for us to meet. I love your smarts. Very much."* Ultimately, she received an interview from Airbnb, and she also became sought after by other Silicon Valley startups. All of this was due to a single tweet that went viral on Twitter.

One major takeaway from this is Mufleh's realization about job market competition and its impact on job seekers. In a recent interview, she stated, *"What I learned from the challenges that I've faced is it's really about finding a way to add value, stand out, and communicate that value to the audience that you're interested in talking to."* Job searching today is all about communicating that value through creating a strategic marketing platform for skills, career progression, and accomplishments. It takes a big picture mentality to develop a way to stand out in a sea of hundreds of other similar career professionals.

The *"Liking"* Power of Facebook
Since its inception, Facebook has revolutionized the way career professionals share ideas and factual tidbits about their lives. Facebook is constantly changing and upgrading its features, including affording the ability to publicize job search needs and industry-related topics through status updates, and enabling business professionals to create company pages to create rapports with clients, followers, and even possible job candidates. While Facebook is not nearly as popular as LinkedIn for professional contacts, Facebook still plays a vital role in the networking and

job search process given its 1.5 billion users.

With 5.5 million job openings as of September 2015, job seekers are looking for new opportunities and ways to gain leverage (The Sociable, 2015). Facebook provides a great avenue as users can classify their friends list into varying categories in order to post targeted updates towards those groups. For example, if a user wants to target his/her post towards his/her college or graduate school peers, Facebook provides that opportunity. Another useful feature of Facebook is the number of groups that users can join – from marketing, to local groups, and even personal interests.

Converting an Inner Professional Image to an Outer Professional Image
One of the most important things that social media has taught job seekers is the importance of creating an outer professional image that aligns with an inner professional image. Certainly the stories of employees who have been fired as a result of questionable or negatively-charged social media posts constantly circulate the internet. Social media has been shaped by revolutions in digital marketing and job seekers are no exception to this. There is a large influx of overuse of social media in work environments, a whopping 65 percent of surveyed human resource professionals and hiring managers noted that excessive use of Facebook during work hours constituted misuse.

Researchers and executive managers recognize that job seekers could benefit from having two different Facebook pages – one for professional work life and the other for personal communications. Professionals are convinced that if their privacy settings are properly attuned that they are free from judgement or suspicion. However, commenting on a public post with a politically incorrect or controversial statement can be easily picked up and tracked.

It is estimated that 93 percent of recruiters and human resources personnel perform checks on candidates' social media profiles before extending a job offer *(US News & World Report,* 2015). In today's age, all digital content is trackable which has led many job seekers to consider abandoning social media platforms to preclude visibility and any digital footprints. The drawback to being undiscoverable on social media is that prospective employers and other professionals are left wondering why. Further there are limitations to expanding networking opportunities that social media truly affords.

Some recommendations for creating a professional social media image today include deleting inappropriate photos, utilizing sophisticated and professional language in status updates and posts, and avoiding negative discourse about friends, family, former employers, or political commentary. Additional considerations encompass limiting search parameters for friend lists, followers, and protecting posts from being seen by outside social networks. Some researchers strategize that personality traits can be predicted by analyzing what users like on Facebook, who or what users follow on Twitter, and who you are connected to on LinkedIn.

Future Considerations for Social Media
As time marches on, technology continues to develop, change, and develop again. Social media has replaced traditional methods of communication, job searching, job application, and back-

ground checks. It is incumbent on job seekers to engage in proper social media mediums by constructing professional profiles, actively participating in joining groups and sharing articles, and eliciting connections from other professionals. Deciding on proper content to showcase is an important factor to consider. Social media will continue to create an influx of jobs in the digital marketing realm, and will continue to foster an expansion of the traditional networking methods for job seekers. It is even hypothesized that online resumes may replace the traditional methods through apps and other digital realms. Job seekers should be prepared for the changes as the influence of social media will continue through the 21st century.

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Chapter 4

USING LINKEDIN TO CONNECT
By **Kimberly Schneiderman**

LinkedIn is a powerful professional networking tool. It is designed to bring people together, expand networking circles, and empower users to exchange information.

However, this powerful tool can be a mystery for some people. They don't have a full understanding of its use and how it can be leveraged effectively in a job search for research, networking and outreach, and self-marketing.

In addition, people often think of LinkedIn as only a place job seekers go when they are looking for a job. While it is true that LinkedIn does have a strong pull for job seekers, it is smart for anyone that is seeking to advance their career in the long-run, trying to sell a product or idea, or seeking to connect with fellow experts to stay active on LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a networking site that opens a world of opportunity for anyone with both short- and long-term career goals.

Basics on LinkedIn
A user can leverage LinkedIn to connect with people they know to ask advice, ask for information, inquire about an open position they saw advertised, or conduct research on a company or its employees. Some main ideas to understand about LinkedIn are:

• Picture: Analysis has shown that pictures with an open mouth smile and a slight head-tilt are the best pictures.
• Headlines: By leveraging the headline statement to communicate one's professional expertise, a user shows that they are career-focused, not just an employee of a company.
• Short Paragraphs: By limiting paragraphs to 2–3 sentences, information will stand out better and readability of the profile will be enhanced.
• "I" Language: Because LinkedIn is a networking site, it is meant to be supplemental to a live conversation. All users of LinkedIn should write the profile using "I" language rather than in resume style or third person to come across in a friendly, personable—yet professional—manner.
• Connections: There are no rules about who makes a good connection. A user can connect with professors, colleagues, peers, managers, supervisors, co-workers, clients, vendors, friends, and, as the Sesame Street song goes, "the people that you meet each day."
• Quantity of Connections: The more connections one has, the easier it is for that person to be found by a recruiter or hiring manager that is conducting a search based on key words.

Natural Networking Ideas that Work
Some people are naturally good at networking and treat it as a way of life. They easily start con-

versations, seem to know someone wherever they go, and often make connections for the benefit of others. All professionals can learn from these people, no matter if the focus is on landing a new job or simply expanding their network. Here are several practices those natural networkers seem to use:

• Invite Conversation: People who "know everyone" seem to invite conversation; they ask about peoples' children and their jobs, and they are interested in talking about topics that most people know something about—top news stories, seasonal events, or kids' activities.
• Remember Details: By remembering details about other people, one can ask others specific questions like, "How is Janie enjoying college life?" or "How is your new job going?" People feel important when others remember things about them.
• Reach Out: Once a person starts taking in more information about other people, they will naturally find more reason to reach out to them via email, LinkedIn messaging, or phone. A person can send an article they think a contact at their target company may interested in reading, they can share an idea for an industry expert that can help their contact with a project, or simply say how great it was to talk with a new contact.
• Share: When one is seeking to expand their professional reach or is in an active job search, it is not the time to be tight-lipped. It is important to share professional goals and talk about aspects of one's life beyond work. By being open about professional goals and focus, it opens opportunity for others to offer help.

These ideas are important for anyone seeking to network with people both on LinkedIn and through external situations, like industry conferences, business meetings, chance encounters, networking meetings, and special events.

LinkedIn's Advanced Search Function
One of the tools LinkedIn has created that is particularly useful to job seekers and for those seeking to network is the Advanced Search function. With this function, a user of LinkedIn will be able to look for a person with a very common name and tie them to a specific company; they may even be able to find a person with a specific position within a company at a specific location. The advanced search function is extremely useful when one is conducting an aggressive job search and may be doing a good deal of outreach.

In the search bar, a user can search on a person's name, job title, or company name. The Advanced Search function (Figure 2) opens the option to search for combinations of information. This type of search is also referred to as a "Boolean search." To use the Advanced Search function, click on the word "Advanced" next to the standard search bar. Once the selection is made, the Advanced People Search window opens.

Now a user can search on a host of keywords, people's names, job titles, company names, and locations. The data can be filtered by degree of relationship and multiple other options that will help target specific results.

Those results can then be used to help a professional or job seeker identify people they wish to contact. In the following sections is information and suggestions on what can be said and what

can be asked of those contacts.

Specific Requests and Communications

An area in which people often do not represent themselves well is the request for specific help and communicating specific information. While there is likely a host of psychological reasons people in are shy about this, the bottom line is that the more specific the information offered or request given, the easier it is for others to fulfill that request and understand one's goals.

This is especially true for people in a job search. Job seekers are often in need of information, resources, introductions, or other help, yet do not ask for it directly for fear of coming across too aggressively or closing themselves off to opportunities. The reverse is actually true. By communicating specifically, the job seeker comes across as focused and confident, and it ensures their intentions are understood, and it gives the other person precise and actionable requests they may be able to fulfill quickly.

Specific requests or communication messages may include:
• Information about a company or a person's industry experience in addition to professional and educational background.
• Introductions to a key hiring manager, recruiter, or other influential person.
• Pre-interview research on the history of a company or a position, or data on the company or specific products.
• Advice and insights on job search strategy and goals.
• Resources and recommendations for deeper learning that may include seminars, books, trade journals, and courses.
• Self-marketing and request for consideration in response to an application.

These communications can appear in a variety of ways for a job seeker. Sometimes the messages come easily; other times, a job seeker may find it hard to figure out what to say. Here are examples to help a job seeker formulate what they wish to say:
• Asking for an informational meeting: Hi Jenna, it was great bumping in to you last week. I was hoping I could spend a little more time with you. I'm changing my career path right now and am focused on the [industry or field] and thought you might be able to share your experience working with [name of company or industry]. Could I buy you a cup of coffee next week or could we set up a time to talk via phone?
• Asking for an introduction: Hi Greg, I noticed on LinkedIn that you know [person's name] at [name of company]. Would you be able to introduce me to them? I saw an open position at the company that fits my experience and skill set to a "T," and I would like to make a connection there to learn more.
• Asking for information on a company: Hi John, I was hoping you and I could connect early next week. I have an interview with your firm, XYZ Company, in the research department for a consumer research manager position. I want to be sure I market myself well and was wondering if you would have 20 minutes time to discuss the company's current focus and recruiting processes with me?
• After applying to a job: Hi Jane, I recently applied for the open [Title of Job] position and wanted to reach out to you to introduce myself. Jeff Jones, marketing manager at your company,

gave me your contact information; he and I worked closely together from 2010–2015 and he recommended I contact you directly. Three distinct skills I possess that will be an advantage in the position are [Skill 1, Skill 2, and Skill 3]. In past positions, I've been able to leverage these skills to help the company achieve results that include [quantifiable results]. I welcome the opportunity to talk with you about the position and how my experience aligns with your needs. Thank you for your consideration.

• After applying to a job (to a recruiter or hiring manager via LinkedIn): I've just applied for the Operations Mgr spot (Req #12345) that you posted. I invite you to review my profile and welcome the chance to speak with you about the position.   *This message is 140 characters— the perfect length for the Personalized Invitation message on LinkedIn.

• LinkedIn connection request to past colleague: Hi Jeff, hope all is well. It has been almost 7 years since we've spoken – it's about time we reconnect! Your career path looks great; can't wait to hear all about it.   *This message is 134 characters—giving you 6 more characters to use for the Personalized Invitation message.

• Asking for advice: Hi Helen, great to hear from you! Actually, I'm in transition right now. I'm pursuing a change and am focused on landing a new [Title of Job] position. I'm looking to leverage my 10 years of experience in [description of work] to really create an impact in the area of [corporate goal or objective]. In fact, you may be a good person to connect with. I'm trying to better understand [insert area of advice needed] and would love to get your input on that. Could we set up a coffee date or phone call later this week?

What If's of LinkedIn
What if a person doesn't respond to a connection request or to an email sent on LinkedIn?
This happens frequently. There is no way to predict the follow-through habits or level of use of LinkedIn of another person. In this case, the user can resend the email or try to reach out to the person via regular email to launch a conversation.

What if a person cannot be found on LinkedIn?
Some people simply have not joined LinkedIn yet. A job seeker could try using a Google search to locate a person's contact information or seek out their other contacts and colleagues to obtain an email address or phone number of the desired person.

What if someone unknown requests to connect?
There are different schools of thought on this. Some people will decide outright not to connect with anyone they haven't already met; others will simply respond to the request with "Thank you for reaching out. What was your motivation for contacting me? How can I help?" Some LinkedIn users have decided to be open networkers and accept any invitation they receive. No matter what the decision, be sure to have a deeper conversation with anyone requesting a connection. Engage the person in a quick conversation and see if there are shared interests or needs.

What if an endorsement is given for a skill not possessed?
Endorsements are easy to give. All one has to do is a few clicks and they can praise another person for a bevy of skills that they may or may not possess. The jury is out, but leaning toward the negative, on the power of endorsements since they are so easy to obtain. The bottom line is that for most people, the legitimately-held skills will rise to the top of the list and they ultimately

communicate what skills one truly does possess. A user has the option of approving the endorsements or deleting endorsements they do not want to appear on the list.

What if a person writes a recommendation; is it more powerful than an endorsement?
They can be more powerful if the recommendation is sincere and specific. The person leaving the recommendation should comment on projects they have worked on with the user or specific management styles and skills the person possesses. Recommendations can be given by former managers or colleagues, peers, vendors, clients, or co-workers, among others. However, recommendations shouldn't be tit-for-tat or part of a self-promoting strategy. It looks suspicious if two people leave similar recommendations for each other.

Remember, It Is Not All About Taking
When people think of networking—either on LinkedIn or in everyday life—they often think of what they can get out of the outreach, as if it is a transaction. Networking shouldn't be a one-way street. In a networking situation—whether it is a conversation with a neighbor or coffee with a colleague—if a person pays attention to opportunities to give in the meeting rather than just focusing on what they can get, they will come across as someone that cares and is intrinsically focused on others' success in addition to their own.

Here are a few ideas for ways to contribute during a networking meeting:
• Make an introduction to a colleague who can help the networking contact. Perhaps one knows a consultant or subject matter expert for a project the contact is launching.
• Refer a candidate for an open position (a job that isn't right for the job seeker, of course) that the contact is seeking to fill.
• Offer information about or a key contact at a company with which the person is seeking to do business.
• Provide a reference for a job candidate; comment on the candidate's skills and experiences as they align with the job requirements.
• Share experiences from the job search with a contact who is also seeking new employment. Include information on what has worked well in networking, interviewing, and outreach.

This approach to networking doesn't mean the exchange will always be one-for-one, but it does show the contacts that the job seeker or networker is willing to contribute as much as they can. In advance of any meeting or outreach, the person can think of a few ways they might be able to give, not just receive.

Wrapping it Up
LinkedIn is designed for business networking. It doesn't require hours of attention and isn't meant to be a social outlet or a site with content that changes from minute to minute. Among its many uses, it is meant to be a place that a user can go to connect with peers and others in the interest of pursuing career aspirations or just maximizing one's professional reach.
No matter what one's level of use is with LinkedIn, it is important to have a presence so that when the time comes for more aggressive networking (i.e. when a person enters a job search or has important connections to make), the person isn't starting from scratch. By using LinkedIn on a regular basis to connect with colleagues, reach out with quick notes to touch base, or to connect

with industry experts, a person will be able to count on those relationships in times of need.

Recommended topics to research on LinkedIn include building the profile, networking through groups, leveraging others' connections, posting articles, following companies, communicating through the messaging feature, and using the job board, among other topics.

Enjoy networking!

About the author

Kimberly Schneiderman is currently a Practice Development Manager with the innovative outplacement firm, RiseSmart. In her role, she develops content, programs, and training courses for both job seekers and the company's coaches. She hails from the career services industry. In 2003 she launched her own resume writing and job search coaching business after what can only be called an "Aha! Moment" with a friend seeking a new job. Through the years, she built a specialty practice working with senior level officers from several law enforcement sectors as they sought to transition to the private sector. In addition, she has worked with professionals and executives from fields of fraud prevention and protection, technology, finance, research, law, sales and marketing, and other areas. Throughout her years in the industry she has developed numerous tools including guides for resume and cover letters, LinkedIn, interviewing, networking, skill building, and even entrepreneurial pursuits. She has also presented on those same topics at professional industry conferences, on client-facing webinars, and onsite for corporate customers. She has authored numerous career-related articles and videos, and has appeared on news and radio programs as a subject matter expert. She has held various board positions with the National Resume Writers' Association and is currently the Certification Committee Chair for the organization. She has attained certifications in resume writing, leadership coaching, and interview strategies, and is a member of the National Resume Writers' Association and an associate with Career Thought Leaders. She earned the Bachelor of Science [Business] in 1997 a Saint Cloud State University G.R. Herberger College of Business.

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Chapter 5

CHALLENGES FACED by OLDER JOB SEEKERS in a TECHNOLOGY DRIVEN AGE
Steven A. Watson

The immense impact of technology on our society is seen all around us. New, more advanced tools, such as smartphones, tablets, and other devices, seem to appear almost daily with a profound increase in people's communication capabilities and access to knowledge, but with an accompanying complexity not see before. People who choose to take advantage of technology in their daily lives are at a distinct advantage over those who minimize or avoid its use. This is particularly true for people looking for new or better employment, with social media, job boards, web searches, electronic career materials, and Skype interviews quickly replacing newspaper ads, hardcopy resumes and cover letters, and face-to-face interviews.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, people aged 65+ still in the labor force reached 22.1 percent for men and 13.8 percent for women at the end of 2010 compared to 17.7 percent and 9.4 percent, respectively in 2000 (West et.al., 2014). Because the number of aging baby boomers who choose to work will continue to increase, it is important to closely examine this age group and determine the special challenges they face in finding and maintaining employment.

The Impact of Technology on Job Search Campaigns
There has been a significant transition in the way people search for new employment over the past decade, with the use of the internet gaining prominence. A recent survey released by the Pew Research Center shows that 54 percent of U.S. adults have used web-based sources to access job information with 45 percent applying online for work (Smith, 2014). It appears that the internet is taking the place of more traditional approaches, such as personal and professional networks, employment agencies, and job fairs. In addition, data show that 28 percent of Americans have used a smartphone to look for employment opportunities and approximately 66 percent of Americans access social media platforms with 35 percent using the medium to conduct employment research.

It is interesting to note that the use of technology has not been restricted to people looking for work, but also includes recruiters and employers looking to find talented employees. According to the annual Recruiter Nation Survey conducted by Jobvite in 2015, only 4% of recruiters are not using social media to some extent in their recruitment efforts (Jobvite 2015). In addition, 19% of recruiters find quality hires through use of mobile career sites with 37% of companies using these sites to support their recruitment activities. LinkedIn was the most common mobile platform cited with 87 percent of respondents indicating its use; 55 percent indicated using Facebook and 47 percent using Twitter. It is interesting to note that recruiters are also using social media

platforms to gather additional data on viable employment candidates, looking at issues such as length of average job tenure, mutual connections, and commitment to professional organizations.

With the dramatic increase in use of online resources as an important job search tool for workers and recruitment approach for employers, it is clear that comfort in using technology is critical for success. People who avoid the use of technology run the risk of being left behind and possibly delaying the achievement of new or better employment.

Challenges Faced by Older Job Seekers in a Highly Competitive Market
The job market has been very tough since the 2008–2009 great recession for all age groups. Although unemployment figures have been dropping as the economy recovers, older workers who are unemployed or underemployed face unique challenges.

In December 2014, U.S. Department of Labor Statistics (BLS) showed that overall unemployment was 5.6 percent, compared to 3.9 percent for older workers (BLS, 2015). This seems to be a positive trend for older workers. However, data from the BLS Displaced Workers Survey in 2014 show that workers age 50+ took 5.8 weeks longer to find employment than those aged 30–49 and 10.6 weeks longer than those aged 20–29 (BLS, 2014). Researchers studying the survey data suggested that older workers have greater difficulty finding employment due to employer concerns about their suitability and a mismatch of their skills with the skills required in today's jobs (Brenoff, 2015).

According to data compiled from the BLS' Current Population Survey (CPS) in March 2015, 44.6 percent of unemployed workers 55 and older continued to lack employment after 27 weeks with the level being 22.2 percent for those under 25 and 36 percent for people aged 25–54 (Kosanovich & Sherman, 2015).

The extended period of time required for older workers to find employment increases the chances of these people facing significant life crises. An analysis of relevant datasets conducted by the General Accounting Office in 2012 found that extended unemployment for older workers often leads to diminished retirement savings, loss of homes, deferred medical care, accumulated debt, and need to claim social security benefits earlier which results in lower monthly payments (GAO, 2012).

There is also evidence that a large number of older workers leave the workforce before they intended to due to lack of employment opportunities. According to data presented by the AARP Public Policy Institute earlier in 2015, displaced workers aged 65+ are more likely to leave the workforce than their younger counterparts. In 2014, 54.7 percent of workers 65+ years of age and displaced for 3+ years left the workforce, while the figure was 22.7 percent for those aged 55–64, and 12.2 percent for those aged 25–54 (AARP Public Policy Institute, 2015). It was suggested that much of this trend can be attributed to the social security and other benefits people aged 65+ receive, reducing the need to stick with job searches over an extended period of time.

With older job seekers facing what seems like an uphill battle to find employment, it would seem critical that these people have access to and embrace available technology tools and techniques

to bolster their job searches. However, the evidence is mixed whether older people are taking full advantage of technology in their everyday lives, much less job search campaigns.

Older People and Use of Technology
Over time, older workers have been stereotyped as techno-phobic or at least more likely to avoid technology then actively pursue it. This is one of numerous tags that have been used to describe older workers in general. Six others cited by researchers in their examination of age-based biases include: lack of motivation, less willing to participate in training and career development, more resistant to change, less trusting of superiors and co-workers, less healthy, and more vulnerable to work-family imbalances (Thomas, et.al, 2012). Although it can be argued that all of these stereotypes are interrelated, the focus here is on technology and, indirectly, on lack of motivation to participate in training which is tied to technology use.

A meta-analysis of the literature that included 418 empirical studies regarding the six stereotypes of older workers cited above suggested that the unwillingness to participate in training and career development was the only stereotype that showed a negative (weak) correlation. All the others showed no correlation within the reviewed literature. The authors cited several possible reasons for older people to be less interested in training and career development, including less capacity to learn new material due to memory and recall issues, less focus on achievement than younger workers, and less incentive to learn unless the material addresses a specific purpose(s)—in other words, not wanting to learn for the sake of learning. It appears that older workers' lack of commitment to professional and career development is tied to the belief that it will not provide sufficient benefit to them.

Matteo Picchio from Marche Polytechnic University, Italy, studied the effectiveness of training programs in improving the employability of older workers. His research on learning in older adults indicates that they are able to acquire new skills (Picchio, 2015). The research found training can avoid skill obsolescence and respond to the growing importance of technology-based occupations and that subsidies for training of older workers might be a tool for increasing participation in training programs.

However, Picchio also found older adults are slower, less effective, and more heterogeneous than younger people in learning new skills and that training older adults might be ineffective if it does not meet their specific learning needs. Research indicated older workers are less likely to participate in training and might, thereby, lose the opportunity to boost their employability and that firms might fear low returns from training older workers because of age-related stereotypes and shorter time to retirement. Estimates of the relations between age and productivity, age and learning, and training and employability might be biased because they are based on non-experimental studies.

A review of the literature is not necessarily consistent regarding the belief that older people avoid technology more than other age groups. Study results published in 2009 provide evidence that suggests older people do not use information technology (that requiring a microprocessor) as much as younger people, but that there are reasons for this that can be addressed (Charness & Boot, 2009). Some of these include age-related factors, such as eyesight, hearing, motor control,

anxiety, and decreased memory capacity. The authors suggest that adaptations to various technologies be considered to make them more user-friendly to older people, along with the importance of using training approaches that take into consideration age-related factors.

A survey conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2014 reported that people aged 65+ continue to lag behind younger people in the use of technology, but to a much less degree now (Smith, 2014). In fact, more than 50 percent of people 65+ years of age now use the internet with this figure increasing by 9 percent in just one year (2013–2014). However, a sizeable percentage of older people do not use technology considered basic such as internet and cell phones. It is useful to note that older people tend to use tablets and e-book readers more than smartphones and that many older people gravitate to websites, such as Facebook, as a way to connect with family and friends. A few barriers cited by the author preventing older people from embracing new technology included physical and health issues, skepticism felt by many that technology is important to their quality of life, and difficulties in learning.

A similar survey was conducted by the Pew Research Center in 2010 looking at social media usage by adults aged 50 and older (Madden, 2010). Social networking use among older internet users nearly doubled—from 22 percent to 42 percent from 2009–2010, with almost 50 percent of online adults ages 50–64 and one-quarter of those ages 65 and older using Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media sites. Data suggested that having high-speed internet connectivity was a significant catalyst for increased usage by people aged 65 and older. In general, the research showed that older people tended to use the internet more to connect or reconnect with friends and loved ones, as well as to assess online health-related material.

Older Worker Training Trends
Agencies looking to assist older workers in finding and retaining employment are focusing more on the need to offer targeted training and support to address age specific issues. The GAO report cited earlier found that lack of required skills, discouragement, and difficulty in completing online applications as being barriers to employment which many agencies are now trying to address.

Research conducted by at the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, AARP Public Policy Institute, found that older workers are often not knowledgeable about the skills required to find gainful employment nor the best ways to obtain those skills (Van Horn, 2015). There are a vast array of programs and training courses available to older workers. However, many do not take into account issues related to learning nor do they focus on skills most needed by employers, such as computer and other technology skills. The authors point out that a marriage of community-based, employer, government, and other sources, such as unions could be the most optimal approach for best reaching older workers.

Importance of Bridge Employment and Career Change to Older Workers
Older workers have often had long-term careers in a particular career track. However, in order to remain actively employed, it is necessary to pursue other careers similar or even much different than their original work focus. This situation is referred as bridge employment and can be a critical factor in an older worker's ability to maintain an income, remain active, and is even tied

to self-worth and self-esteem. Successfully transitioning to a bridge job or career change often requires training and the ability to learn and use certain technologies.

The American Institute for Economic Research published results in 2015 from their Older Worker Survey that addressed issues of bridge employment and career change (American Institute for Economic Research, 2015). It is interesting to note that older people unsuccessful with a career change felt more anxiety about the transition process than those who were successful. In addition, older people who did not effectively identify the skill set required to make a change and who did not have a strong foundation of support from family and colleagues tended to be more unsuccessful than those who had these advantages.

Discussion
An examination of the data related to older workers and use of technology implies that the demographic group does lag behind in the use of technological tools to look for and secure employment, although this trend is gradually changing. Older workers appear more skeptical of the benefits of training and career development and often face difficulties in accessing and learning to use web-based and other technological tools. However, the outlook is not as bleak as it may seem because there is evidence that older workers can learn to accept technology if convinced that it will result in direct benefit to them and if given the training and tools needed to be successful in using it.

There is clear evidence that the workforce will continue to age as time passes and baby boomers who choose to continue working will reach their late 60's, 70's, and even 80's. Therefore, it is imperative that efforts be made to help these people remain competitive with their younger counterparts and keep pace with the quickly evolving needs of employers. It appears that older workers will accept the need to be techno-literate if they can be convinced that it will make the difference between gainful employment and no or limited employment. Data show older people are using social media much more now, but that it is often focused on accessing friends and loved ones and performing research on issues important to them. Therefore, the issue is, in most cases, not inability to use technology, but the motivation to do so.

Stereotypes of older workers, including resistance to change, lack of motivation and trust, less healthy, and incompatibility of work and family needs, often accepted by employers, recruiters, and others do not appear to be particularly valid. Researchers have found a weak correlation between older workers and lack of interest in professional and career development, but the case has also been made that this age group needs to be convinced that it will help them before accepting it.

The literature shows that older workers often feel discriminated against during the hiring process. This suggests the need to better educate employers to the unique talents and perspectives people 55+ in age can bring to the workplace and will require a shift in assumptions, recruitment practices, and training approaches to reach this age group.

Greater efforts need to be made by agencies and training organizations that help older workers find employment to target their assistance on motivating this population and meeting their specif-

ic needs. Training needs to be geared to particular skill sets required by employers and accounting for limitations that the population faces, such as reduced memory capacity and hearing and sight impairments.

For many older workers, employment, even part-time work, can make an important difference between struggling economically and being able to maintain independence. Helping them achieve their work goals is not a convenience, but will actually contribute to a healthier, more productive society in general.

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Chapter 6

PEOPLE and TECHNOLOGY:
A Winning Recruiting Combination
by **Damali Curry Edwards**

In the mid-1990s, applicants sent their resume via fax machine. There was a P.O. Box set up for executive-level positions where someone was in charge of checking the P.O. Box a few times a week to get hardcopy cover letters and resumes to review that people mailed with a U.S. postage stamp! Email was a step up from the fax machine. Then emails got overloaded, and eventually online applications were a way that people sent their resume for an open position and these applications were re-directed into a separate database away from email. When the employment website Monster.com® was born, it was a major technology game-changer for recruiting talent at the time. A Monster.com® sales representative visited my staffing office and my manager had no interest in meeting with him, so he asked me as the next person in the chain of command to meet the representative and provide feedback and thoughts on our direction. I can remember this big green monster folder with pricing sheets for job postings (Photo, 2011). I remember looking at the cartoon-like monster wondering, *"What is a job posting and what does it have to do with a little green monster?"* I told this representative that I would take his information and give it to my manager, but I really wasn't sure about this job posting business since we posted our jobs weekly in our local newspaper! Needless to say, we, along with the rest of the world, starting using online job boards soon enough.

Technology is always changing and has an impact on how people apply to jobs. Yet, with all this technology, how organizations hire people still today is based on the *know, like, and trust* factor. Technology without people is just technology. People still hire people.

Employers typically hire in the following ways:
1.Internal / Promotion: When a position becomes available, one of the first things any organization considers is if there is someone who is already on staff locally and/or at another location who can do the job. This could mean a lateral move for some and promotion for others. This is a key way companies hire, as many organizations pride themselves on offering their employees growth opportunities, and this practice of hiring from within keeps that promise alive. Employers who hire from within also know their employees' performance, like their performance, and trust their performance. Everyone is on their best behavior in an interview setting where we want to present our best selves. However, the level of someone's skill set and ability to perform is really evident only after one is hired and is able to show what they have. Employers typically have a "sure thing" when they hire from within, as the employee has already shown some ability, and the *know, like, and trust* factor is in full effect.

2.Employee Referral: If the organization does not hire from within, the next best way to hire someone they feel comfortable with is to ask their employees to recommend people they know. Often employers not only ask for referrals from their existing employees, but they incentivize them if the arrangement proves successful. This is often referred to as the employee referral bonus. An employee refers a family member, friend, or previous colleague and the company pays them a bonus if the newly hired referral works successfully for a period of time, say 90 days, without a hitch. The employer may not personally know, like, and trust the referral but they know, like, and trust their employees to refer good people.

3.Direct Recruiting/Sourcing: For highly skilled, hard-to-fill openings and executive roles, many organizations practice the technique of directly sourcing talent for their organization. This requires strategy. The organization must first determine not only the skill sets they are looking for but who would most likely be the most successful in their culture. For example, many years ago a private company had a series of government contracts providing medical services to certain facilities. The owner of this company hired my firm to source candidates from rural hospital systems as he found that these types of individuals assimilated to his company better than those who worked for big healthcare systems in the city. The *know, like, and trust* factor is still present in this scenario as the organization relies on the candidates having a certain skill set and, more importantly, knowledge of their issues because they have worked in an environment of similar size or type, thus ensuring more opportunity for their long-term success in the organization once hired.

4.Networking: Networking is in every recruiter's toolbox. Top companies even pay event costs or membership fees to various networking associations for their recruiting staff to have a pipeline to talent. Independent recruiters also pride themselves on their networking abilities. When an organization is not hiring internally and the opening is not necessarily for a highly skilled, hard-to-fill position, or an executive opening, networking is a great tool to find talent. The recruiter is able to meet and greet potential talent and when they come back to the office they don't just come back with resumes—they come back with real people and real people stories. When the decision maker asks, *Who did you meet?*, the recruiter is able to give more data from networking scenarios in which they met actual people than if they had been simply reviewing online resumes. When recruiters go out to network on behalf of the organizations or clients they represent, they are actually performing mini-interviews with everyone they meet they are able to determine if the person is a potential fit for the company via their skill set but also are able to assess likability and trust factors.

5.Follow-Up by Applicant: It has often been said that many organizations say to applicants, *Don't call us, we will call you*. However, let's face it: the job seekers who make a point to reach out to organizations creatively—whether by a phone call or by sending a clever package via express mail—get attention; they stand out and recruiters like it. These are the go-getters, the creative types, the persistent ones who may or may not have any connections on the inside but based on their own gusto can still get the job, as these are good qualities that any growing organization seeks. Whenever an applicant creatively gets in touch with an organization about their interest to work there, they have a chance to get an interview or, better yet, the job offer, because they dared to go beyond the standard application process to make themselves known, liked and trusted. Organizations hire applicants who follow up on their applications.

6.Online Applications: This method is usually the last resort for how organizations hire employees. The main reason being that the *know, like, and trust* factor is the lowest in this method. Most online application systems require recruiters to log in to review resumes. In times past, when an email address was given, the application immediately went to the recruiter's inbox for review. Now, to review the majority of applications, a recruiter must log in to review. Once a recruiter logs in to the system, there are thousands and thousands of resumes to choose from. Often, the recruiter has to use clever keyword searches to narrow the pool of applications to a manageable workload. There is no interaction with the applicant—just looking at a computer screen with a list of skills and qualifications, which could be completely falsified. A CareerBuilder survey given to 2,000+ hiring managers found that 58 per cent of employers found a lie on a resume, with most-common lies including embellished skill sets, dates of employment, and job titles (CareerBuilder Survey, 2014). Nonetheless, organizations still hire people from online applications, especially when previous methods did not bear fruit. Being hired from an applicant tracking database typically requires applicants to really interview well to increase their "know, like, and trust" factor and ultimately get the job.

LinkedIn® – A Technological Game Changer for Recruiting
Social media websites have certainly been a technology game-changer in recruiting talent. LinkedIn®, in particular, has taken online recruiting to new heights. Recruiters can review profiles and interact with prospects using InMail and Group chats (LinkedIn® Help Center, 2015). In times past, a recruiter would physically attend professional association meetings, now, they can now log on their computer and meet people online to network from the comfort of their offices or homes. Let's face it: reviewing resumes and profiles of potential candidates on social media websites is more exciting than the typical applicant tracking database system. Perhaps this is why nearly all recruiters (93 per cent) use LinkedIn® to find talent (Schawbel, 2012).

With that said, social media profiles typically include a picture, summary, and other data that help the prospective job seeker seem more likable, known, and trustworthy than an online job board or applicant tracking system, where you are seeing only an image of a resume or responses to an online application. For example, on LinkedIn®, a recruiter looking to fill a professional trainer/instructor opening may not only view a resume of someone's training skill set, but also view a posted video showing them in action (actually training a class), which certainly increases the *know, like, and trust* factor. On LinkedIn® you can add work samples to your profile such as a portfolio, pictures, video or presentation.

The People Behind the Technology
Back in the day in recruiting, job boards were the rave. Now, it's all about social media, especially sites like LinkedIn® that have revolutionized how organizations attract talented active and passive candidates by transforming the way they can interact with prospective candidates. Furthermore, job seekers can actively search contacts to market themselves for openings—directly, versus posting their resume on a job board and waiting for someone to contact them. Social media sites allow for more interaction from both sides. It will be interesting to see what technology we will be talking about ten years from now. But until the computers and robots take over—people still hire people! Technology without the people is just technology.

The people behind the technology in recruiting talent fall into a few categories:

1.Decision Makers: These individuals are in charge. They run companies small and large, for-profit and non-profit. They run departments, staff, and projects. They are always looking for top talent to make their businesses thrive. If an applicant is known, liked, and trusted by one of these individuals—they are hired. These individuals have the job titles of Director, Assistant Vice President, Vice President, President/CEO, or Board Member.

2.Internal Influencers: These individuals' jobs require them to find talent for their employers. They are paid a salary to fill job openings. They often receive bonuses for the number of hires they make and/or for saving the organization money on the salaries offered to new hires. They have the ability and influence to grant interviews. They may not make the final decision like the decision makers, but setting up interviews is still boss, because job offers are given during or after an interview. In other words, no matter how much technology exists, one still has to talk to someone (interview), even if it is by phone alone. The higher the skills, the more likely both phone and in-person interviews will be required to get hired. Consequently, if one is a job seeker, their mission is to get as many interviews lined up as possible, because only then do they have a real chance of getting a job offer. These individuals work on the In-House Recruitment team and have the job title of Corporate Recruiter, Talent Acquisition Specialist, Recruiting Generalist, Recruitment Coordinator, Hiring Specialist or Talent Management Director. If it is a smaller organization where the Human Resources rep has the dual responsibility of hiring employees as well as managing them, they may also have the title of Human Resources Generalist, Human Resources Director, or Personnel Director.

3.Employees: These individuals work for companies that the job seeker is targeting. They are not necessarily the decision maker or internal influencer. They could be the one that answers the phone or cleans up the place. Their title doesn't matter; these employees have something that job seekers don't have—an employee badge. They can walk a job seeker's resume and give it to the decision maker or internal influencer—and may even get an employee referral bonus for doing so!

4.External Influencers: These are organizations that specialize in providing professional recruiting services to organizations that have openings to fill. These organizations can be large global companies or small, one-person independent recruiters. The positions they typically fill are highly skilled, hard-to-fill and executive openings. They are paid professional fees and commissions for locating talent that the companies using their services hire. For key roles that include direct recruiting and sourcing strategies, organizations often rely on these external influencers to make calls to their competitors to recruit talent. These individuals are typically referred to as an Agency Recruiter, Staffing Recruiter, Search Professional, Executive Recruiter, Researcher/Sourcer, Executive Search Consultant, or Headhunter.

Summary
Technology is an important component of recruitment. It is how the organization and the recruiter specifically get information. Do they get it by mail? By fax? By email? By online application? By job board? By social media? It will continue to evolve and help make the process of getting and housing information efficient.

However, technology without people is just that—just technology. People hire people and always will. Organizations still want to hire people they know, like, and trust. They want to feel good about their hiring decisions and still rely heavily on the source of an applicant—often giving preference to those that are internal hires or promotions, or even those that were recommended as an employee referral, over someone who is external to the organization and only applied online. By understanding the people involved in the recruiting process, one can get a better picture of how organizations hire top talent, not just the technological tools they use. One can also find who the key players are to market themselves to if they are, in fact, in a job search. For example, just as organizations can log in to their LinkedIn® accounts to locate potential talent, jobseekers can log in to their respective accounts and market themselves directly to decision makers, internal influencers, employees and external influencers. Technological advances allow for more interaction, if leveraged, in building better relationships online.

Recommendations
Organizations must stay on the cutting edge of technological tools so they don't get left behind their competitors in sourcing talent. Remember my comment about the early days—how we were not going to use job boards because we posted our jobs in the local newspaper? When was the last time you or someone you know looked for a job in the newspaper? Whether you are an early adopter to new technology or slower to adopt, you must adopt or you will get left behind.

One creative way that companies can attract talent online is by creating company social media pages to help build their brand image to attract active job seekers. This technique is also great to make your company known to passive candidates (who are currently working but may be willing to look at new opportunities). Remember that by direct recruiting / sourcing—with the right social media marketing—your organization can attract those candidates who in years past could be reached only by cold calling them, which saves your organization not only time but money (Sammons, 2013).

Job seekers must also keep up with technological tools to stay current. It amazes me how many job seekers I talk to in my workshops that say they don't have a LinkedIn® profile or they have one but haven't updated it. If 93 per cent of recruiters (whose job is to fill job openings) use LinkedIn® to find potential candidates, and you are not on it but are looking for a job in the current day— wow! This may be the reason you are not getting any traction—you are a fish, but you are not where the fishermen (executives, hiring managers and recruiters) are—on LinkedIn®. Make LinkedIn® a study. Read books like ***I'm on LinkedIn–Now What***? (Alba, 2014). Follow blogs on the subject and implement tips from checklists that give you daily actions to complete on LinkedIn® and other social media sites to attract more traffic to your profile (Riklan, 2015). Organizations and job seekers alike cannot rely on technology alone to recruit or be recruited. Both have to work on making a real people connection. Organizations must see behind the razzle-dazzle of some applicants' marketing materials to get to the real truth of what they offer and if it is a true fit for the organization. Job seekers, too, must look beyond a well-developed company Website and social media sites to know if the organization truly offers the career path they desire. Both organizations and job seekers must also remain open to learning the current technology, not to mention anticipating *the next big thing* as we know it is coming.

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About the author

Damali Curry Edwards is a graduate of the University of Virginia and holds numerous certifications in career and executive coaching. She started working in the career services industry in 1996. She started in the recruitment arena, where she worked in staffing and later worked in corporate recruitment and human resources management. She started her own practice in 2002, Conscious Recruiting (formerly Edwards Consulting Firm, Inc.), providing executive search services and career coaching. Her search firm has gained recognition in the industry, being named a Rites-Honored Recruiting Firm and being listed in the top 25 per cent producing recruiters in 2008 and 2010 for Top Echelon (an exclusive recruiting split network). Her firm also provides career coaching and training services to individuals virtually, as well as in-person services to local networking groups, companies and local government agencies. In 2015, she received the Career Directors International Lifetime Achievement Award. True to *walking her talk,* she is planning her own *next step* in her career to work with people beyond their resumes to help them heal from their grief by assisting them in navigating their pain to find their true soul mission and life's work. She will accomplish this by providing grief and spiritual life coaching programs, retreat offerings, and speaking engagements on these topics. Contact her as follows:
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Chapter 7

THE GOLD STAR EFFECT:
The Gamification of Career Decision-Making
by **Ronda Ansted**

Job seekers have primarily used advances in technology to conduct research (i.e. salary calcula-tors), organize data (i.e. spreadsheets or databases of contacts or job applications), or to network (i.e. LinkedIn). In the realm of career decision-making, technology has made the conversion of standardized career assessments such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator and career interest inventories into online versions for instant scoring and results. These types of assessments can provide insight and potential career matches, but not everyone fits neatly into the established categories nor does everyone find their career fit through such assessments. In fact, connecting a personality type to an occupation has not proven to result in job satisfaction or high job per-formance (Arnold, 2004). Often, additional work is needed to bring one's personality, passion, preferences, values, and life situation together to design a career path that is fulfilling and finan-cially gratifying. This is where career coaches, counselors, and other professionals often come in to play, to help the job seeker pull the pieces together and decide which career opportunities to pursue.

The career development field, like the rest of the world, has experienced times of rapid transi-tion during major shifts in the global job market and economy (Lent, 2001) and has been unable to address the seemingly chronic condition of a lack of employee engagement in the workplace (Gallup, n.d.). The reasons for low engagement and job satisfaction are complex and intertwined and the career development field requires approaches that can address this complexity. Help-ing job seekers to see patterns, new perspectives, and their strengths is important to identify a good career fit, but this process is not an easy one for many job seekers. Zikic and Hall (2009) described different types of barriers to career exploration and decision-making, including socio-economic, situational, personal, emotional, and relational factors.

Often, the career-making process is daunting and confusing, even more so for the individuals who don't have the resources to work with a career professional. It is important for the field to take stock of the resources we have to address the complexities of career decision-making for underserved and indecisive individuals. Technology has given the field robust tools to research jobs, connect with like-minded individuals, keep track of actions, and assess personality traits but not much to motivate a wide audience to do the difficult work of self-exploration and moving out of comfort zones.

Gamification
However, there is a concept that is used in businesses, schools, and human resources that has yet

to be utilized by the career guidance field: gamification. Gamification does not refer to games, per se, but rather game-like elements in non-gaming situations. For example, businesses provide points and rewards to repeat customers, sales teams use leader boards to encourage competition and higher revenue generation, and HR departments create simulations of the work experience to entice recruits (Meister, 2015). More complex gaming elements include story-telling, problem-solving, feedback, and customized challenges. A primary purpose of gamification is user—customer, employee, student—engagement. The methods are intended to both introduce fun into task-oriented processes and trigger the body's natural reward mechanisms (Hartley, 2013).

Gamification is not a new concept. How often have parents or teachers turned a tedious task into a game, introduced prizes, or tapped into an innate desire to play? In fact, the current process of gamification is well-established in the classroom (Faiella & Ricciardi, 2015), but has expanded beyond school into the adult-centered world of work (Marczewski, 2012). The ubiquity of computer-based games and advances in neuropsychology have prompted both researchers and businesses to investigate the potential upsides—and market potential—of games' addictive qualities when used in other contexts.

Gamification and Learning
There has been a large body research into the impact of gamification on students and their learning outcomes. As with most innovations, the results have been mixed. Much depends on context, the students, and the quality of the gamified activities (Faiella & Ricciardi, 2015). Intrinsic motivation only appears to be positively impacted when the activities are rote or boring and the gamification component makes the tasks more interesting. Extrinsic motivators such as rewards or point in some cases decreased interest in the work. Public feedback and competitions have different impact depending on the students; some excelled while others reactive negatively. Giving students a choice in whether they would learn using a traditional or gamified method seemed to consistently increase engagement in the activity, although there was less engagement as the novelty wore off.

One important finding in the research was the potential of gamification to foster curiosity and problem-solving, especially when working with complex rules and overcoming multiple obstacles. The students' skill sets increased, as did their sense of accomplishment and optimism (Faiella & Ricciardi, 2015). Gamification also allows failure and the opportunity to reframe mistakes as a crucial component of the learning process.

These are highly useful attributes for job seekers. As they become more curious and optimistic, job seekers can identify new options that they may have otherwise overlooked. The development of emotional resilience is especially useful. Rejection from a potential job could be reframed as an opportunity to learn and adjust your *game strategy.*

Gamification and Behavior Change
Companies, universities, and non-profits are starting to see the potential in gamification. With social media and mobile apps increasing in popularity, *"there is a growing clinical trial base of evidence that shows that games can improve players' health behaviors and outcomes in areas such as addiction control, healthy eating, physical activity, physical therapy, cognitive therapy,*

smoking cessation, cancer treatment adherence, and the self-management of asthma and diabetes" (Schoech, Boyas, Black, & Elias-Lambert, 2013, p. 199). Games and gamification demonstrate potential in motivating players to adopt difficult but healthier behaviors. This strategy will in all likelihood became more important when working with the millennials and digital natives who expect information, fun, and social networking to be accessible by tablets and smartphones (Kim, 2015).

Research has also been conducted on how gamification could be used to prevent dysfunctional behaviors such as substance abuse and relationship violence. One such study created and tested a tablet-based multiplayer program aimed at young teenagers to help them make healthy and prosocial choices (Schoech, Boyas, Black, & Elias-Lambert, 2013). The researchers found that an extensive knowledge set was required, not only in gamification and technology, but also in prevention, behavior change, cognitive science, and psychology. For a complex program on substance abuse prevention, the researchers need to know how young adults make decisions and reacted to peer influence, as well as how they respond to gamified activities. A multi-disciplinary team worked over three years to develop a program that encouraged positive and cooperative behaviors through a gaming situation, and challenge in itself due to the expectation that teams typically try to beat their opponents, not cooperative with them. This complexity notwithstanding, the study found an increase in engagement, motivation, co-learning, and a preference for the gamified program over traditionally taught curriculums.

Although typical career decision-making behaviors are not at the same level as substance abuse or relationship violence, some important insights can be gleaned from the research on gamification and behavior change. One such lesson is that gamification can influence behavior and produce positive outcomes. Another is that gamification has potential in reaching younger audiences and planting the seeds of effective career decision-making. Yet another lesson is the complexity of doing so. However, career decision-making gamification does not need to be a multiplayer, networked system that needs to engage 13-year-old boys, but can use common technological tools with a twist. Looking at how career professionals have used technology up until now can provide clues on how decision-making guidance can be taken to the next level.

Career Development, the Internet, and Gamification
Internet-based career guidance has been used by professionals since the 1990s to support career decision-making (Gati, Kleiman, Saka, & Zakai, 2003). An internet version of Making Better Career Decision (MBCD) was found to have a positive impact on career indecision, primarily due to an interactive component of the system. For example, as the users were selecting careers, the program would prompt them to consider other options through a series of questions which helped them to identify possibilities they considered suitable. Internet-based programs also encouraged people who may not have sought out career counseling due to stigma, convenience, or cost, providing these job-seekers a benefit they may have received otherwise (Gati & Asulin-Peretz, 2011).

These types of programs have limitations, of course. Algorithm-based programs can't address complex challenges that many job-seekers face and offer general options that may not be relevant or desirable (Gati & Asulin-Peretz, 2011). Since the results are not individualized and there is no

interaction between the job seeker and a career professional, the job seeker may not interpret the results correctly and become frustrated, confused, or dismissive of the relevance of career guidance.

Another important aspect of online career decision-making guidance concerns the lack of the *fun* factor. These programs are most often boring. Although this component has not been empirically studied so far, anecdotes from many job seekers indicate that the process of taking career assessments was so tedious and repetitive that they procrastinated the rest of their career counseling. This leads some career professionals to discourage the use of career assessments, online or otherwise, prior to the initial session, claiming it makes client*s grumpy* and resistant to coaching.

So internet-based programs can offer a valuable service at a low cost per job seeker and reach a wider audience than face-to-face career guidance, but it can also be frustrating and non-specific, which is little better than no career guidance at all. This is where gamification can make a contribution. If gamification can contribute to motivation, resilience, and productivity in school and work settings, there are certainly applications in the career sphere.

What is *Successful* Gamification?
Gamification has been shown to impact learning, engagement, motivation, and behaviors, thus clarity about the goals of the gamification project is important. The strategies used for learning differ from behavioral change (Kim, 2015). Kim (2015) describes the importance of understanding the most likely user type, since different types respond to different strategies. For example, a *player* likes to collect badges or other types of extrinsic rewards, while a *socializer* wants to be able to connect with other users, a *free spirit* wants autonomy to explore the program, an *achiever* is motivated by mastery over a skill, and a *philanthropist* is purpose-driven. Demographic variables also reveal differences as females tend to be less interested in competitive gamification than males, and older users use programs to connect with others more than younger users who tend to gravitate towards entertainment-focused diversions.

In addition, the elements of gamification need to align with the user's own goals. Gamification does not replace intrinsic motivation, but can enhance it (Kim, 2015). Neuroscientists have found that our innate reward system, dopamine release, is activated to build learning and adaptive responses. Dopamine is a crucial part of human and other species survival. We are rewarded by a deep sense of pleasure and satisfaction after overcoming a difficult and risky challenge and when we are aware of our accomplishment (Willis, 2011). Gamification itself does not trigger a dopamine response; it simply creates a situation where the user can problem-solve, discover something new, or overcome a challenge. Users then want to work on something more difficult. It is not the points, rewards, or gold stars that are the true power of gamification but human desire for mastery.

Gamification works when the results are uncertain but not impossible. If users know they are going to succeed, there is no chance for mastery. If the user assesses that they are not able to complete the task, either because of past experience or perceived difficulty, then they will not engage (Willis, 2011). Learning takes place when there is first foundational understanding of the process, individualized and progressively more difficult levels, corrective feedback, and recognition of progress.

Gamification's Potential to Reach Underserved Populations

Although gamification in and of itself can contribute to engagement and motivation of job-seekers, it also provides opportunities to reach those who may not otherwise reach out for career support. Gamified activities could be designed for smart phones and other internet-connected devices, which is more and more accessible to poor and remote populations across the globe. In addition, after the program is built, active participation from career professions is minimal, meaning that the cost to the job seeker is likely to be minimal. Yet because many people can be reached, high volume could offset the low price point and remain profitable to the career professional offering the program. Since cost is often a barrier to serving poor populations, gamification offers a new opportunity to build the skills, knowledge, and confidence of the underserved.

Experiences with Gamification

This practitioner has been experimenting with gamification to help clients with self-exploration, career decision-making, and proactive job-search strategies through an online program. This program guides the job seeker through various assessments and exercises using a visual design as the overarching narrative. The framing of the job search as a creative endeavor helps my clients to see themselves as in control of the process instead of reacting to external forces. The program tracks their progress and as they proceed, their actions build a graphic. The program starts with a minimal, line-based drawing that becomes more colorful and complete after each task, both helping them to identify what they have left to do, but also providing incentives to continue working to see the final image. Plus, with every task completed, job seekers get a gold star just to recognize their efforts and accomplishment.

Although my program is still in the pilot phase, the responses from my clients have been enthusiastic and encouraging. I noticed an innate responsiveness to the design metaphor and a sense of play that was not obvious when I gave my clients the exact same exercises separate from the program. In addition, it has been useful to have all the results and exercises stored for me so that I can quickly see the progress each client has made. Also, having a computer-based platform can make some tasks much more easy to play with. When thinking about work/life balance, for example, job seekers can enter in the hours or percentage of their day they spend in each activity and immediately see a pie chart, a visual that can help them identify areas of imbalance. It is too early to tell the potential that gamification can have on people's career decision-making and job search success. However, there is enough evidence to suggest that experimentation and evaluation can add to to our body of knowledge on how to support the undecided job seeker.

Conclusion

Gamification, done properly, is a challenging, complex process that requires resources, planning, an understanding of its utility and limits, and possibly new business models to tap into its potential for the career development field. This is not an arena to enter into lightly. However, there are people who could greatly benefit from career decision-making guidance who are simply not being well-served, people who cannot afford private coaching, people who don't have access to university career centers, people who do not benefit from what is currently available online. Gamification is a tool that could address these gaps. Plus, a gamified system has the potential for improving the programs we already have. Although technology is a useful component of gamification, face-to-face classes could benefit as well. Create teams, offer badges for accomplish-

ments, and turn the process into an adventure. Like treasure-hunters, job seekers could focus on uncovering hidden strengths or forgotten passions. Networking could focus more on learning and overcoming obstacles rather than collecting business cards. Find ways to let people fail, learn, try again, and then experience that dopamine rush when they succeed. Bring on the fun!

Career services have improved over the years by incorporating positive attributes such as hope, gratitude, empowerment and the job-seekers' strengths. Perhaps now it is time to incorporate play.

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About the Author

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Chapter 8

MOBILE TECHNOLOGY:
Evolutions and Trends for Career Resources, Searches, and Networking
by **Ruth Pankratz**

A strong economy boosts organization's profits that fund hiring efforts and create a market rich with job opportunities. According to Jobvite's 2015 analysis, half of employed job seekers see their current position as temporary or as a stepping-stone for continued job growth (Jobvite, 2015). When the job market has abundant openings, job seekers become active and competitive in their search for the next career possibility.

One of the fastest rising global trends assisting job seekers is mobile technology and apps that support professionals with their job search and career efforts. Evolving resume formats, apps that offer new job postings, virtual networking options, and online interview scheduling tools create new and evolving interactions between job seekers and hiring managers. During 2015, professional's use of mobile technology is clearly outpacing recruiters and employers.

Many employers understand the value and opportunity to attract talent by using technology and mobile-optimized offerings. International mobile job search traffic to Indeed.com has increased from 33 per cent of total mobile traffic in 2013 to 50 per cent in 2014, with an additional 17 per cent growth increase in 2015. Earlier Asian country adopters—Japan and Korea—have the highest mobile job search rates in the world (Indeedblog, 2014).

Mobile Use by Organizations
Employers who accept mobile applications can receive double the amount of applications than employers who use traditional application methods. While mobile recruiting has been discussed for years, there is little forward momentum. The lack of technology integration in recruiter and employer efforts can create bottlenecks. A recent LinkedIn survey of 13,000+ talent acquisition professionals and recruiters reported that only 20 percent had mobile-optimized career sites (LinkedIn, 2014). So while job seekers are using mobile devices and technology to benefit their career efforts, employers and recruiters are struggling to optimize technology.

Organizations searching for key talent are quickly learning that a considerable portion of job seekers come to them via mobile options, so the organization must be prepared by being mobile and technology savvy. Many talented job seekers have limited time during their commute, lunch break, after work, or on the weekend to search for new opportunities. Employers who understand how job seekers find opportunities and realize the value of mobile recruiting will be able to locate

and retain top talent. One way an employer can attract talent is by providing helpful information on their mobile-optimized website, effectively communicating using social media outreach efforts, and simplifying application processes.

Mobile Use by Job Seekers
The benefit for job seekers using mobile technology can be instant alerts regarding new opportunities, the ability to quickly create meaningful and targeted connections, and strategically managing career efforts from any location. Job seekers can now optimize their time by effectively and efficiently searching for work. Job seekers are learning the value of having their resume file saved in an easy access point, like Google Drive or Dropbox, allowing them to have career document ready to submit whenever and wherever a job opportunity is presented.

Every day, more and more professionals are using smartphones and mobile devices to accomplish work tasks (people2people, 2015). LinkedIn surveyed 800 professionals and found that 72 per cent of active candidates and 62 per cent of passive candidates use mobile devices to research a company's career site. In addition, 45 per cent of active candidates and 21 per cent of passive candidates use their phones to apply for a job (LinkedIn, 2014).

A survey revealed that 57 per cent of people2people's job listings are being viewed on mobile devices and 78 percent of professionals surveyed said that they would apply for a job using their mobile device if the process were simpler. Employers who are implementing simple mobile application process are receiving twice as many applications (people2people, 2015).

While other employers are starting to embrace technology by using LinkedIn profiles or offering a shared resume file resource such as Dropbox or Google Drive for job seekers to us to complete the application process.

Mobile Technology and Networking
There are many ways professionals are using technology to network. Some professionals are networking at a business event that was promoted on social media, while others are reaching out using LinkedIn connections or groups, and some professionals are using networking apps like Treatings to connect and target organizations in order to catapult their career.

While browsers are great at searching for information, apps are a shortcut to everything online without having to navigate the Internet. For example, health care professionals have established apps as an invaluable tool to expand their practices, network with colleagues, and attract new patients. Most of the health care industry has embraced the use of mobile devices, making them commonplace in many health care settings (NCBI, 2014).

According to a Manhattan Research/Physician Channel Adoption Study, ownership and use of mobile devices is pervasive, with 87 per cent of physicians using a mobile device in their workplace (NCBI, 2014).

Research from Gartner reveals that mobile app downloads surpassed 81.4 billion worldwide in 2013. By 2016, the use of mobile apps will surpass internet domain names, making mobile apps

the dominant means of engaging with organizations and professionals (TheAge, 2013).

Numerous apps can assist with learning about organizations, assisting with time management, providing networking opportunities, and referencing other professionals. Dedicated networking apps like Treatings, Caliber, and Jobr pull information from social media accounts or relevant websites. Some apps, like Weave, are designed for connecting specific types of professionals, like engineers, in a specific industry like manufacturing. While other apps, such as Happening, Aloqa, and GroupMe, are designed to help professionals with locating upcoming events in a specific area, or a targeted location, or virtually through group chat options. As networking apps continue to gain interest, they will grow and evolve.

Conclusion
Job seekers are using their mobile device specifically to search for work opportunities at least once a day, making the mobile job search more than just a trend (Glassdoor). Since demand and need drive offerings, employers will increase their mobile capabilities and streamline hiring processes to accommodate the mobile-centric market. Organizations that want to align with job seekers' mobile needs will locate talent in a more efficient and timely manner. Organizations unwilling to adapt will experience increasing difficulty locating talent, increased hiring costs, and lost time trying to locate talent.

Mobile job search is a reality now. The number of professionals applying to jobs using their mobile device continues to rapidly increase, putting pressure on mobile-optimized company career sites, the need for streamlined technologies, cloud file sharing capabilities, and mobile-friendly options such as LinkedIn viewable profiles.

Job seekers will continue to place priority on having access to the latest job listings and competitive employers will streamline their mobile capabilities, while balancing job seeker behaviors, in order to stay competitive.

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Chapter 9

THE ART and SCIENCE of BUILDING RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIPS for CAREER and JOB SEARCH SUCCESS
by Millicent N. Simmelink

In today's job market, change is everywhere. Technology is transforming not only how we work and the type of work we do, but also when and where we do them. In a new, information-based economy, careers and how one searches for new opportunities is being revolutionized by the internet, but human connectivity on a personal level is still needed for us to become our best selves both personally and professionally. Exploring the art and science of building reciprocal relationships that are genuine, mutually beneficial, and that fuel career and job search success provides beneficial insights to career practitioners and the clients they serve.

Today's Workscape: New Trends and Changes in How We Work
If one word could be used to describe the emerging workscape of the early 21st Century, it would be change. Some scholars and historians suggest that our world is undergoing one of the most dramatic and widespread transformations since the beginning of the modern era and the days of the Industrial Revolution (Daft, 2008). We are living, working, and playing in a world where the rapid development and use of advanced communication technologies is enabling people from around the globe to become more interconnected than at any previous time in the history of humanity (Shockley-Zalabak, 2009).

Globalization and the nature of innovation are two key factors that are fueling this unique and profound transformation. In today's workscape, innovation can occur anywhere, anytime, and is no longer limited to superpowers and highly developed countries (Shockley-Zalabak, 2009). The ability to collaborate virtually across time zones and cultures to create new products, processes, and markets or to advance one's own career goals is historically unprecedented. As a result, the nature of work, how we build careers, and ultimately, search for new opportunities, is changing both quickly and dramatically. So, too, are the skills that will be needed to compete in a new economy that is fueled by global networks and cultural diversity. Networking skills based on relationship building and cultural sensitivity will be essential on both a macro and micro level.

Traditional jobs are still needed, but are changing. In the United States of America, Japan, Germany, and the United Kingdom, for example, some white collar jobs have been relocated to countries like India, Russia, and China while additional routine jobs that have become obsolete have disappeared entirely (Shockley-Zalabak, 2009). In some organizations, 40-hour work weeks are being reduced due to the rising costs associated with minimum wage and employee benefit pack-

ages. Demographic shifts and a steadily growing population in Africa are additional concerns that carry implications for the world of work, as well as, our world economy. A recent Wall Street Journal article reports that by 2050, 25 percent of the world's population will reside in Africa (Hinshaw, 2015). Advanced technologies, the rising costs of doing business, shifting population demographics, and the availability of new incentives in a global marketplace are considerations that are causing many organizations to re-evaluate efficiencies in an effort to be competitive on a global scale.

In the United States of America, more than half of the workforce and gross national product is now rooted in knowledge industries (Shockley-Zalabak, 2009). This observation suggests that America has already become a postindustrial information society that is quickly shifting toward a conceptual age in which inventive, empathetic, and big-picture capabilities will be required for optimal job satisfaction among its workforce (Shockley-Zalabak, 2009). According to Daniel Pink (2005), the future, in a Conceptual Age, will belong to the big picture thinkers who are inventive, empathetic pattern recognizers and meaning makers. If, at some point in the future, all knowledge centers on the planet become connected as a global network, as posited by Thomas Friedman, the possibilities for prosperity, innovation, and collaboration by companies, communities, and individuals could be amazing (Shockely-Zalabak, 2009). How effectively individuals in a knowledge-based conceptual era develop connections for career development, job search, and on-the-job success will largely depend on their emotional intelligence, self-direction, and their ability to create meaningful relationships both in person and virtually.

In a new age that values connectivity while being reactive to new labor market trends, there are three career models that are reshaping how people choose to manage career-related issues. The first model, The Kaleidoscopic Career, suggests that there are many moving parts to a career and how one makes career decisions. Individuals who subscribe to a kaleidoscopic model value authenticity, life-work balance, and challenge in their work, yet may require flexibility for family reasons (Sharf, 2013). The kaleidoscopic model can be helpful to organizations and human resource managers seeking to justify programs such as job sharing, telecommuting, and flex time (Sullivan & Mainiero, 2008). The Boundaryless Career is a second model which suggests mobility within an organization and between organizations (Sharf, 2013). Temporary assignments, working from home as a consultant using the internet, and/or frequent internal transfers to a new position or location within one organization are types of boundary-less careers.

And lastly, The Protean Career model requires individuals to be self-directed, adaptable, and driven by personal values when making choices about their career (Sharf, 2013). The kaleidoscopic, boundary-less, and protean career models provide clients with innovative views on conceptualizing career opportunities in a way that is adaptive to the changing demands of a new economy.

Self-Direction as an Emerging Trend in Job Search and Ongoing Career Management
In a recent study exploring the protean attitudes toward work, findings suggest that a protean attitude, one that is rooted in self-direction, is positively related to work success (De Vos & Soens, 2008). Self-directedness is an emerging niche in job search and career management coaching best practices. Coaching clients to be more self-directed in a new age economy requires career

practitioners to teach clients strategic techniques that will empower them to take responsibility for their own career growth and professional development. At the heart of self-directedness is one's ability to create meaningful and sustaining relationships. As career practitioners, we often find ourselves encouraging our clients, especially those who are introverts, to reach out to others as they explore possible career paths and search for new opportunities, but this encouragement is not always well received (Loney, 2014).

One way that practitioners can assist clients in taking a self-directed approach and managing anxiety as they network is setting SMART goals that are specific, measureable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. Practitioners can work with clients to set goals that they feel are comfortable, realistic, and authentic. SMART goals can also serve to create a system of accountability for clients who struggle with accomplishing specific tasks that are related to career building or job search success. Introducing clients to the effective use of SMART goals can help them build their career momentum, stay on task, and/or uncover new opportunities. SMART goals are an invaluable tool for igniting a sense of personal empowerment while reinforcing an individual's self-confidence.

Helping Clients Identify and Develop a Personal Board of Directors
As clients embrace the idea of self-directed leadership as a new means to career and job search success, the idea of creating a Personal Board of Directors to help guide that process is a fresh approach that can have a lasting impact. Jim Collins, in his seminal research on what makes good companies great, found that the leaders of great companies started not with a vision in mind, but with getting the right people on their "bus," the wrong people off the "bus," and the right people in the right seats so that the best path to greatness could be identified through collective input (Collins, 2001). Similarly, individuals who are self-directed leaders of their own careers, can benefit from Collin's findings. In order to go from a good career to a great one, an individual also needs a variety of trusted advisors in their life who can honestly provide feedback, open doors, listen unconditionally, offer encouragement, and, when asked, help brainstorm possible paths that might lead to new growth and greatness.

A Personal Board of Directors can change over time in composition as a person's career experiences change or a career vision becomes clearer, but some people may be chosen to stay on the "bus," even in a more limited advising capacity, for the long haul because their input is valued. Encouraging clients to be selective in creating a strategic board of trusted advisors that can organically evolve over time, depending on one's career interests and the changing market trends, is a savvy career practice.

Job seekers seem to understand the value of creating a Personal Board of Directors. They find it simple and to be common sense. If organizations can have boards of directors, why can't individuals who practice a model of self-directed leadership? Most of us do have an informal support network in place whom we can tap into, but a Personal Board of Directors for career planning is a more thoughtfully composed group of people who can specifically serve as a sounding board for professional growth, strategic search, and career decision-making.

At first, some clients might be unsure who they should include on their board. A good rule of

thumb is to start with one's most trusted inner circle and branch out from there. A person might begin by choosing three or four people whom they feel can be trusted confidants and sounding boards. These people need not know one another, but should have qualities and professional expertise that the self-directed leader draws energy from, admires and trusts. Possible directors might include a teacher, a career coach, a mentor, a sports coach, a family member, a friend, a classmate, a boss, a co-worker, a colleague, a clergyperson, and/or someone who is esteemed. As time goes on, the self-directed leader will, invariably, expand the number of their professional relationships through their involvement in professional activities, associations, work experiences, continuing education, community service, and informational interviewing, creating additional prospects for their ever evolving board. A Personal Board of Directors doesn't have to be organized as a formal group that regularly gets together, but relationship building is fundamental to creating a superior team to help guide one's career development, job search activities, and career decision-making. A Personal Board of Directors is a small group of trusted people with whom a self-directed leader builds relationship over time.

Generational Issues in Building Reciprocal Relationships
As career practitioners, coaching clients in the art and science of building reciprocal relationships can have long term implications for their career resilience, adaptability, and success. Clients who choose to develop a Personal Board of Directors may need coaching to learn how to authentically nurture their relationships. Suggestions such as scheduling occasional lunches or coffees, staying in touch through emails, social media or notes, volunteerism, sports, and attending relevant events together can offer enjoyable forums for building genuine relationships.

Having the necessary emotional intelligence to understand how generational differences influence relationship building expectations is also a plus. Regardless of one's age, ongoing communication and interaction creates a structure for building meaningful reciprocal relationships. At the heart of any relationship building initiative there is still the old question, "What's in it for me?"

The mindset for building meaningful networking relationships differs between older generations and Millennials. Millennials prefer to begin networking conversations by discussing their passion for work as opposed to the pre-Millennial mentality of using small talk to initiate a networking conversation (Cunningham, 2015). Networking for Millennials is not transactional. They do not expect anything in return for helping someone because they have a "pay it forward" outlook that is communal in nature (Cunningham, 2015). Millennials feel that if they ever need something someone else in the community will step up to help them. While older generations tend to view payback in a networking relationship as coming from the individual, Millennials perceive payback as coming from the community (Cunningham, 2015). In addition, the core networks for Millennials are not traditional structures like alumni networks or job search support groups, but are rather, selective communities that share similar interests (Cunningham, 2015). And finally, Millennials differ from older generations in that they view relationships as very long-term (Cunningham, 2015).

The use of social media and the connectivity of friends who know other friends has a significant impact on how Millennials develop their professional credibility and reputation (Cunningham,

2015). Millennials are committed to being good citizens and stewards of all their relationships (Cunningham, 2015). While the nature of reciprocity in building networking relationships differs, philosophically, between Millennials and older generations, the concept of reciprocity still exists. One approach is deemed transactional while the other is communal. In either mindset, there is still a give and a take. Career practitioners, then, are challenged to help their clients understand the differences in generational networking approaches and what communication styles will be most effective with a target audience.

Guiding Principles for Building Reciprocal Relationships
Building reciprocal relationships for career and job search success is both an art and a science. The art of relationship building boils down to three guiding principles: communication, trust, and appreciation. Smallwood-McKenzie (2015) suggest that networking is a two-way street predicated on clear communication and showing a genuine interest in others. As practitioners, helping our clients articulate their goals using transition or introductory statements that are concise, factual, and positive enables them to make a good first impression regardless of whether they are expressing themselves in person, on the phone, or in some form of written communication including social media. Giving clients permission to be genuine about what makes them passionate about their work is reflected in their communication style and body language. Providing tips to clients on how to effectively engage others in conversation using appropriate eye contact, acceptable personal spatial boundaries, and active listening skills can also be beneficial, especially if a client is trying to network with a culturally diverse group of people. Encouraging clients to seek others' feedback, opinions, consultation, and collaboration and to be generous in reciprocating their time with others are soft skills that are an art when it comes to building meaningful relationships based on kindness and genuine caring.

Trust is the foundation for any successful relationship. According to Shroeder (2013), little attention has been given in the academic business literature to investigating the specific skills and attributes involved in forming and maintaining relationships, except around the construct of trust. Research on trust suggests that successful business relationships that are associated with improved business performance are based on reciprocal trust between those involved (Shroeder, 2013). Trust building in any type of relationship takes time. Coaching clients to be honest, open-minded, patient, and consistent with their actions is fundamental to building a reciprocally trustworthy network for career and job search success. In addition, encouraging a client to become an expert or a go-to person in their career area of interest can create further networking opportunities and an elevated professional reputation.

Appreciation is another guiding principle in the art of relationship building. Coaching clients to genuinely show their gratitude for another's support is not only good business etiquette, but a powerful way to make a lasting positive impression. Gratitude can be expressed in an email, a hand written note, or verbally. Appreciation can come in the form of a nomination for an award, a recommendation for a position, a small gift or through an invitation to coffee. Letting others know that their time and expertise is genuinely appreciated creates a sense of goodwill that is personal and deeply satisfying for everyone involved. Appreciation can be key in helping clients develop a practical approach for staying in touch with their networks that is not overwhelming and easy to use.

The Impact of Networking *Ties* on Career and Job Search Success
Empirically, there is some evidence that suggests that networking *ties* have an effect on career and job search success. Granovetter (1973) conceptualized that **strong and weak ties** play a role in business relationships by differentiating between the types of value that are generated by various contacts in a network. According to Granovetter, the strength of a *tie* was determined by time invested in the relationship, the level of reciprocal services that were exchanged, and how familiar the parties were with one another. Strong *ties* exist when individuals or organizations interact frequently and get to know each other well. Maintaining these *ties* requires a significant effort and time investment. The benefits of strong *ties* included the sharing of high-quality information and complex, tacit industry insights. Weak *ties* however, were found to develop over time when there was a decline in time, effort, and information being introduced into the relationship to keep it vibrant. Granovetter argues that weak *ties* or looser networks between individuals or organizations that don't know each other well or that have infrequent contact can, oftentimes, offer even greater benefits than strong *ties* Stakeholders with weak *ties* are forced to expand their contacts beyond their immediate social or business circle resulting in access to more diverse information and resources (Granovetter, 1973).

Maintaining a large number of meaningful connections is not easy. The internet has expanded the possibilities for developing and maintaining weak *ties* that offer significant implications for relationship building on an as needed basis. In the business literature, it is suggested that strong *ties* be developed with key influencers who are likely to provide ongoing benefits and value while simultaneously maintaining a wider network of weak *ties* with people who have relevant knowledge, influence or expertise that might be accessed as needed (Schroeder, 2013). Career practitioners can apply this approach when coaching clients in building a selective network of meaningful reciprocal relationships. A client's Personal Board of Directors becomes the center inner circle of influential advisors and is rimmed by a larger, more diverse network of contacts that can be accessed as needed. Social media plays a key role in building the larger outer rim.

Coaching clients to connect with others on sites like LinkedIn should be done selectively and with thoughtfulness to include only people one knows or feels would be relevant to their career/business goals. LinkedIn is the premier professional networking site that can allow clients to manage their connections most efficiently.

Networking is relevant to the concept of career success. In a recent study that explored whether subjective career success could be fostered by improving networking behavior, career planning, and career optimism, it was shown that there was an increase in career planning and career optimism in the networking plus career coaching group that was indirectly positively related to changes in subjective career success (Spurk, Kauffeld, Barthauer & Heinemann, 2015). Networking training in combination with coaching indirectly enhanced participants' feelings of career success.

Mentoring
Mentoring relationships are another form of reciprocal relationship building that can have a powerful impact on a person's career. In the workplace, mentoring is a developmental relationship between professionals with one person typically more seasoned as a professional than the other

(Williams, 2014). Mentors generally provide direction on skill acquisition, career development opportunities, and workplace assimilation with professional relationship building or networking being a by-product. Mentoring can be a formal or informal relationship and can result in both parties learning from one another in ways that can enhance their career growth and satisfaction. Coaching clients to explore participation in a mentoring relationship is a best practice that can help clients to grow professionally.

Super Networking
In a new economy that is being fueled by technology, information, and innovation, the need for human connectivity has never been greater. Networking and relationship building has always had an impact on career management and job search success. Networking continues to be the number one way in which most clients reposition. As the ability to connect with others continues to expand, some self-directed leader practitioners, in particular, Millennials and entrepreneurs involved in start-up cultures, are practicing a new approach to networking that is called "super networking." Super networking takes place when self-directed leaders attend selective quality events that are pre-vetted exclusive venues with the intention of building a high quality network of relevant connections with whom they personally follow up with after the event.

Examples of selective quality events include *Forbes*' 30 Under 30 summit, *Advertising Week,* and Austin's *South by Southwest.* Attendees research other attendees prior to the event using the event roster and LinkedIn profiles. Background research using LinkedIn helps a self-directed leader identify common passions and interests that can facilitate relationship building. They might send an email to the individual through LinkedIn prior to the event in hopes of arranging an in-person meeting. In addition, seeing a potential contact's picture on LinkedIn aids in recognizing that person at the event. When a connection is made that clicks, there is generally personal follow up to set a time to meet for coffee or a drink to further explore professional interests. Staying in touch with one's super network by sending emails, texts, phone calls, following up with an article, or sharing a connection that might help the other person are methods used by super networkers to nurture their relationships. Career practitioners can help clients identify relevant super networking events in their geographic preference.

Conclusion
Coaching clients on how to stay relevant in their fields, to see the value in all relationships, and to always be prepared for change is essential. Complacency slows career building momentum and a client's ability to reposition quickly. The art and science of reciprocal relationship building provides a long term strategy for career and job search success that has far-reaching implications for contribution in a rapidly changing new world economy.

Imagine an age when widespread human connectivity can create innovations and relationships that have the potential to improve the quality of life worldwide! On a macro level, the connectivity, convergence and potential of the human race has never been greater. On a micro level, relationships are the key. As career practitioners, it is our responsibility to help our clients understand the changing complexities that are associated with career building and the joy of building reciprocal relationships that can last a lifetime.

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Chapter 10

WRITING and FORMATTING RESUMES for TODAY'S JOB SEARCH by Louise Kursmark

Three technology-influenced factors deeply affect how career professionals must create resumes for today's job search:
1.   How humans read
2.   How computers read
3.   How visual design affects our viewing experience in every medium

All three of these factors have undergone enormous changes in the past decade or so, requiring that career professionals adapt our traditional approaches and learn new best practices. Otherwise, we risk ill-advising our clients and creating resumes that prevent—rather than promote—their success in finding new positions and advancing their careers.

How Humans Read
Among its many areas of profound impact on human life, the Internet has fundamentally changed the way that humans process information. Numerous studies have shown that:

• Rather than carefully reading entire contents, according to Nicholas Carr (2008) of *The Atlantic,* and in his subsequent book *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brain* (2010), we power-browse, or skim for keywords.

• **We read less.** This is especially true for younger people, according to a study by the National Endowment for the Arts (2007).

• **Reading has shifted from solely print to a variety of Internet sources and devices** (Webology, 2012).

• Online reading influences us to pursue and process information in *other than the traditional print pattern of top-to-bottom, left-to-right* (The Technological Citizen, 2009).

This fundamental shift in reading dictates changes to how we develop a resume. And despite the rise of computerized resume scanning (discussed later in this article), resumes must still be written and designed for humans, because ultimately humans are reviewing candidate qualifications and making hiring decisions.

As recently as five years ago, a text-rich three-page resume could be considered normal and perfectly acceptable for experienced professionals and executives. Today, that document appears

outdated, dense, and difficult to read.

While it is never a good practice to adhere rigidly to arbitrary *rules* about resume writing, it is important for career professionals to understand best practices and apply them to the challenge of creating an effective resume for each client—as appropriate to that client's specific career goals.

The following guidelines are in line with how we read today. They reward *power-browsing* and work for both on-screen and on-paper perusal.

• Deliver information in short "bites" rather than dense paragraphs. A good rule of thumb is to limit paragraphs and bullets to two or three lines, four at most.

• Position key information to be seen quickly. For example, rather than writing a four- or five-line summary paragraph, extract the key points and use a headline/subheading to share those critical keywords immediately.

• Capture attention repeatedly throughout the document—don't assume that readers will continue to read; rather, keep pulling them into the material as they skim.

• Avoid overly long bullet lists. If you have more than three or four bullet points, find ways to break up what can appear to be a solid block of text.

• Allow ample white space so that power-browsers can figuratively "catch their breath" and absorb information as they skim through a document.

As an example of some of these guidelines, consider the difference between the following two summary sections. The first is shown in traditional paragraph format. It's not overly long, but it is much less *skimmable* than the second version, which presents the most critical information but pared down into a few small bites rather than one large chunk (Kursmark & Enelow, 2015).

Global Corporate Development Executive
Senior Operating Executive / VP, Sales & Marketing

Bilingual (English/Spanish) Leader with demonstrated achievement including both top- and bottom-line growth in domestic and international markets. Effective business builder and mentor with a keen insight to solving business problems and creating synergies that drive multimillion-dollar growth regardless of economic environment. Tenacious at identifying new revenue opportunities, securing customer loyalty, and forging solid relationships with external and internal business partners.

Global Corporate Development Executive
Senior Operating Executive / VP, Sales & Marketing

Bilingual (English-Spanish) Business Leader
Delivering Top- & Bottom-Line Growth in Multinational Markets Since 2003

In this second example, the first excerpt shows a long list of bullet-point achievements:

• Produced $50M+ revenue from previously untapped states and large districts.
• Exceeded revenue target by $16M and attained 97% of margin against plan.
• Boosted market share from 39% to more than 50% of the US.
• Delivered YOY margin improvements since 2014 in a difficult environment; in 2 largest states, beat plan by $6.2M (30%) in 2015.
• Improved win percentage 45% through process changes that enabled team to respond to 25% more bids.
• Secured $145M in key contracts through competitive bids with state agencies in TX and FL.
• Reduced customer-facing errors 25% and liquidated damages $14M within first year of implementing new cross-functional leadership model.
• Led division's achievement of first ISO certification in 2015.

All of the information in those bullet points is meaningful and relevant, so eliminating content to reduce text density is not a good solution. However, something needs to be done to make this content more readable and *power-browsable*.

Here is one solution—divide the bullets into two groups and use a heading to introduce each group. Not only does this technique reduce overall text-density, it highlights relevant keywords in the heading, adding to the keyword richness of the resume and reinforcing the fields where this job seeker has relevant experience and accomplishments (Kursmark & Enelow, 2015).

Revenue, Profit & Market Growth
• Produced $50M+ revenue from previously untapped states and large districts.
• Exceeded revenue target by $16M and attained 97% of margin against plan.
• Boosted market share from 39% to more than 50% of the US.
• Delivered YOY margin improvements since 2014 in a difficult environment; in 2 largest states, beat plan by $6.2M (30%) in 2015.

Operational Performance
• Improved win percentage 45% through process changes that enabled team to respond to 25% more bids.
• Secured $145M in key contracts through competitive bids with state agencies in TX and FL.
• Reduced customer-facing errors 25% and liquidated damages $14M within first year of implementing new cross-functional leadership model.
• Led division's achievement of first ISO certification in 2015.

Above all, lean, tight writing is an essential technique in writing a modern resume. Stripping away unnecessary details, adjectives, and facts leaves more room for what's important and allows greater opportunity to add white space and increase readability (Kursmark & Enelow, 2015).

How Computers Read

By now, career professionals are well aware that resumes must pass a keyword-driven automated screen before they reach human eyes. These computerized screeners, known as applicant tracking systems (ATS), are used by virtually all large companies and many mid-sized and smaller firms as well. A resume that cannot be parsed by the software will never rise to the top of the applicant pool.

This job-search reality presents a dilemma to many job seekers: how to make their resumes attractive to human eyes while also readable for computer scanning. Fortunately, ATS continue to become more sophisticated and better able to read and understand content. Still, career professionals must be able to give clients foolproof strategies for resume formatting and design that will work even for older ATS.

Two completely different approaches can work for clients:

1) Create a plain-text resume, following ATS guidelines, and use it for all uploads. The primary, more *designed* resume, in Word or PDF format, can continue to be used for e-mailing and in-person meetings. This approach works well for those who have beautifully designed, highly formatted resumes and are willing to manage content changes to both versions.

2) Follow ATS guidelines in creating a single resume that serves both purposes: is attractive to human eyes and passes the computerized scanning test. This approach may be more practical for most, but it does place some limitations on how creative and colorful the resume design and format can be.

With either approach, job seekers and career professionals must create a resume that follows fundamental guidelines for ATS. Although these guidelines continue to change as the systems evolve, current advice includes:

• Use a reverse-chronological format. Functional resumes do not work for ATS because the system cannot relate the activities and achievements to specific job titles and timelines and therefore will discount information that is not presented chronologically.

• Use standard headings for all sections—such as *"Professional Experience"* or *"Employment History"* rather than something creative like *"Highlights of Career Contributions."*

• Do not use Word's text boxes feature. Contents of text boxes cannot be read by the scanners, so any information in a text box will be overlooked.

• List company name and location on one line, followed by job title and dates on the next line.

• Don't include large graphics, and be certain that any borders and small graphics are not touching any text.

Most applicant tracking systems can read Word and PDF file formats, so it's no longer necessary

to create a plain-text/ASCII version of a resume for uploading—although that version is 100 per cent readable and is fine to use. What's most important is for job seekers to carefully follow the specific instructions for uploading on each site.

Even if a resume is cleanly read by the ATS, without the right content it will not rise to the top of the candidate pile. The *right content* means the right keywords appearing in the right places and frequency throughout the resume. Often it's not enough to include a keyword in a list of core competencies; if the ATS doesn't find that keyword in recent job descriptions, it may downgrade that resume.

Primary keywords and keyword phrases can often be captured from the job posting, but employers can use any number of additional terms as part of their search function. For example, an employer who is looking for only local candidates can specify cities, states, and/or zip codes. The complexity of ATS combined with the ability of employers to customize each search means that it's impossible to *game* the system and guarantee job seekers a resume that will *pass* the ATS. Rather, the responsible approach to take is to create a resume that includes the right keywords, used appropriately, and is formatted correctly for ATS. Then, career professionals should guide their clients in the job search methods that are most effective—specifically, a networking-based targeted job search that makes passing automated systems a minor issue rather than a major hurdle.

How Visual Design Affects Our Viewing Experience
The third fundamental change in how we read relates to visual design—where material is placed on the page (or screen) and what additional graphic elements are added.

Because people now read so much more on screen and less on paper, we have become accustomed to different visual designs. Previously, when reading in traditional print media, we would glance at a headline or chapter heading and then peruse the content from top to bottom, left to right, start to finish.

Now, from reading online, we have become accustomed to:
• Reading in narrower columns.
• Glancing at content to the right, left, above, and below our primary reading material.
• Seeing color in all areas of content.
• Recognizing differences in content through differences in formatting. For example, when material on screen is hyperlinked, it might be in a different color and might or might not be underlined.
• Reading short segments of content—short paragraphs or bullet points—rather than large chunks of text.
• Skimming multiple headlines and subheadings to pick up context clues without deeply reading the material.
• Using menus to navigate to different content.
• Seeing movement in all areas of our viewing pane. We might see pop-up ads, video streams, flashing text, a rotating stock of photographs, or other element in motion.

The net result of these changes in visual design is that we are more distractible, more likely to glance rapidly from one area of a page to the next, and less likely to read content nonstop start to finish.

Translating these findings to resume writing and design, it becomes clear that the traditional text-rich two- or three-page resume is unlikely to be read in depth. Rather, it is probable that readers will skip from section to section, pick up content in short bursts, and be easily distracted by new bits of information. So it becomes incumbent upon career professionals to create resumes for today's readers and not yesterday's! Specifically, we must:

• Guide readers with headings and subheadings that catch attention visually and—just as importantly—keep that attention with meaningful content.

• "Start with the wow"—in other words, lead with the most impressive information so that it is not overlooked.

• Highlight the information that we want readers to notice and read. We might use bold print for accomplishments and numbers, shaded boxes for critical keywords, and other formatting techniques to call attention to the job seeker's most impressive information.

• Expect that readers will not absorb detailed information and therefore include just the highlights—and advise our clients that this is not only acceptable, it is preferred.

• Use color in a judicious and professional way as an important design element.

• Choose fonts and font sizes that are easy to skim in both screen and print versions of the resume.

Ultimately, despite changes in reading styles and the introduction of new media, the challenge of the resume writer remains the same: to position each client for his or her current career goals by selecting and presenting that client's unique information in a way that is meaningful and relevant to the reader. The challenge has not changed—but the techniques we use must change, in response to unprecedented changes in the way that human and electronic readers absorb information.

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One of the leading career experts in the United States, Louise Kursmark works with senior-level executives in career transition, helping them *tell their story* in a way that is compelling, memorable, and relevant. She is President of Best Impression Career Services, Inc.,and author of 20 books on resume writing, interviewing, and job search—including the recently published *Modernize Your Resume: Get Noticed … Get Hired,* co-written with **Wendy Enelow** to share new standards for today's job search. She was the first person worldwide to earn the prestigious *Master Resume Writer* credential, is a 6-time *Best Resume* award winner, and is a frequent keynote speaker and session presenter at careers-industry conferences. Previously, she was co-founder and executive director of Resume Writing Academy and Career Thought Leaders. Contact her as follows:

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