

Come As You Aren't

For years now, we've had a "come as you are" job market. Basically, you looked for a new job with the skills you had in your old job. All you had to do, therefore, was update your resume, ship it out to a bunch of employers, do a little networking around the edges and before long, you would have a couple of opportunities from which to choose. It was a simple, straight forward process, and unfortunately, it no longer works.

The "come as you are" job market was destroyed by the Great Recession. Employers today no longer believe they can survive, let alone prosper, with workers who are qualified for their jobs. They need employees who are better than qualified—they want those who are accomplished in their field. And, despite all the people now looking for work, many employers believe there is a scarcity of such workers.

If you find that hard to believe, consider this:

- According to a survey of employers by the National Association of Manufacturing, the Manufacturing Institute and Deloitte, one-third of all manufacturers say they can't find workers who can deliver the talent they need on-the-job.
- Almost half of all energy companies (43 percent) report similar shortages as do a whopping two-thirds (63 percent) of life science companies.

These are employers with open jobs they can't fill. Those vacancies exist, not because the employers can't find applicants—they have plenty of those—but because those "come as you are" applicants don't have what it takes to succeed in a cut-throat global marketplace. Their shortcoming, however, doesn't mean they are without hope ... unless they choose to be. They can reinvent themselves; they can become accomplished workers. And if they do, they'll have employers competing to hire them.

The "Come As You Aren't" Job Market

The world of work has now morphed into a "come as you aren't" job market. A lot of people don't want to hear that—they want to believe that things remain as they were—but that simply isn't today's reality. The needs of employers have changed—not a little, but a lot—and either we adapt to their new requirements or we join the ranks of typewriters and rotary dial phones.

What does adaptation mean?

Instead of looking for a job as we were, we must look for a job as we need to be. To achieve success in this new job market, we must always be changing, always growing, always be getting better at what we do. We cannot allow ourselves to grow stale or to stand still, but instead, have to strive constantly to become accomplished. We must, in short, be forever recasting ourselves into what we aren't ... yet.

What does such a person look like? How can you recast yourself as an accomplished individual?

From an employer's perspective, such candidates have a number of attributes, of course, but the three most distinguishing are:

State-of-the-art expertise in their field. The only way employers can succeed in today's highly competitive marketplace is if every worker performs at their peak.

What could prevent you from convincing an employer you can do that? If you aren't currently enrolled in or haven't in the last 18 months successfully completed a training or educational program in your occupation, you are likely to be viewed as obsolete ... no matter how many years of experience you have.

Ancillary skills that give them flexibility. The global workplace is in a state of constant flux, so employers need workers who can effectively switch into and out of a range of different venues and situations.

What could prevent you from convincing an employer you can do that? If you aren't able to prove that you speak a second language, effectively use advanced technology on-the-job and/or work collaboratively in alternative settings (e.g., on teams and task forces, by telecommuting and in virtual organizations), you are likely to be viewed as rigid and limited ... no matter how willing to change you may be.

A commitment to contributing on-the-job. The margin between success and failure is so small these days that employers can only afford to hire those who deliver a meaningful impact on-the-job and do so from day one.

What could prevent you from convincing an employer you can do that? If your resume shows only what you can do and not how well you do it, if it indicates that you showed up for work but doesn't prove that you accomplished anything, you are likely to be viewed as a risky hire ... no matter how perfect you think you are for the job.

The "come as you aren't" job market can sound like a very unforgiving place. And in some respects, that's true. There is no tolerance for those who want to do just enough to get by. It has no place for those who are content to be mediocre at their work.

However, for those who keep their expertise up-to-date and deliver it with impact wherever it's needed on-the-job, this new environment can set their fortunes to soaring. It empowers them to transform themselves from an ordinary job applicant to an extraordinary person of talent and to be seen as such by employers. It encourages them to become someone who isn't stuck with who they are, but is determined to reach for the best of who they aren't ... yet. And, that's a ticket to unbounded success in today's world of work.

Thanks for reading,

Peter

Visit me at Weddles.com

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