

Job Seekers: Can You Offer What Employers Need?

Written by: Steve Van Oostenbrugge, Ph.D, MBA, CM | September 22, 2015



When I was younger (and perhaps more foolish) my father told me many times to “never throw away old shoes until you have new ones.” As with many sayings, the truth of it is perhaps more obvious than many people may realize: Don’t reject what you have until you are sure of a better replacement! According to the U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, individuals born between 1957 and 1964 have held an average of 11.7 jobs between the ages of 18 and 24^[1]. This single statistic bears out the truth of this metaphor as applicable to the world of job seekers and career changers. They, too, must consider both *what they have* and *what they need* prior to “throwing away old shoes” and striking out for (supposed) greener pastures. **Knowing Yourself**

As a job seeker, don’t minimize the importance of asking yourself a couple of key questions and taking the time to ponder the answers.

1. ***Why are you looking for a new job?***
2. ***How does your present job differ from your ideal one?***
3. ***What job do you want? What job don’t you want?***
4. ***Are you qualified to do the job you want? If not, what will it take?***

Although I’m sure your answers will prompt even more questions, the point is that gaining a better understanding of yourself enhances your understanding of what you want and what

you have to offer potential employers. **Knowing the Market** Once you can answer what and why, don't start throwing resumes at every opportunity hoping that quantity over quality proves to be a valid method for finding the *perfect* job. Consider **WHERE** you want to work geographically. In conversations with family, friends, colleagues, and complete strangers, I have noticed that many job seekers narrow their search to a small radius from home. Although it makes perfect sense to look for jobs close by in order to save money on gas and shorten commute times, the smaller the radius, the fewer the job opportunities to choose from. Start small, but don't be afraid to expand your radius. When you find a position or company that interests you, do some research! The Internet provides a myriad of ways to find information about a company's mission, vision and values. Check out what other people are saying about the company (customers and employees alike) by reading posts and comments on social media. Go directly to the company's website and scrutinize other information, including the number of years the company has been in business, its key personnel, its organizational structure, the products and services they offer, and more. In other words, you need to become familiar enough with the company to determine if it is a place where you would want to work. **Decision Time** OK...

you've asked yourself some pointed questions and are satisfied with your answers. You've completed your research and discovered several jobs with companies that appeal to you. So now what? The next step is to reach out and communicate your interest in positions that meet your needs AND that you meet the needs of the company! As a job seeker you are the one offering the skills and experience needed to fill a gap the company has identified--a gap that, once filled, can provide benefits and value to the company. Do you have what they need? This is where your resume comes in to play, but be careful not to assume that your resume will automatically get you the job--it doesn't, but it can get you an interview. Your resume is the "first impression" that you make on a hiring manager, so be sure it is up to the task. Tailor it to the position, showing relevance through skills and experience that support the job. Make it easy to read by formatting and organizing the content to give it a smooth flow. These are simple, yet powerful ways to convince a company to contact you for an interview. You've made a positive first impression, now it's time to showcase your talents to prove that you are the best candidate for the job! [\[i\]](http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/nlsoy.pdf)
<http://www.bls.gov/news.release/pdf/nlsoy.pdf>

About the Author



Steve Van Oostenbrugge, Ph.D, MBA, CM

A USMC veteran with over 18 years of experience in sales, marketing and management, Steve uses these experiences teaching in higher education and liaising with other veteran organizations. He is a small business owner of Superior Ventures Consulting and holds a PhD from Capella University, an MBA from Davenport University, and is CM Certified.

