



HRxaminer

*Examining practical HR issues business owners
and managers encounter every day*

A New Twist on Employee Magnetism: Keeping Your Job or Finding the Right Job

February 2009

More Tips for
Those
Searching for
Work

Applicants have to recognize that merely sending a resume to a job listing is not sufficient. They really have to understand that they're selling themselves. Think about yourself as a product – what characteristics do you offer related to the

Being A Keeper

My programs on Employee Magnetism focus on how supervisors can become magnets to attract the best employees and hold onto retain the right employees. In this issue of HRxaminer, I'm twisting the concept of magnetism a little.

One of my colleagues and friends, Cathy Fyock (can you believe there is another HR pro who also sings?) wrote the following article for her newsletter: Employment Strategist. I've abbreviated it a little – her contact information is below in case you want to read more.



Ten Ways to Fire-Proof Your Career (So it won't go up in smoke!)

1. Make yourself indispensable at work. Be the go-to person. Work like

job that I want to “buy?” The clearer you can communicate this, the better.

► Make your sales pitch visible. When I review a resume, I’m looking for the same words that are in the job description and the employment ad. So tweak your marketing pieces (resume and cover letter) to match my needs. Pretend that my employment ad is an interview questionnaire and answer those questions in your cover letter. That will make you stand out.

► Keep track of how many times you respond to the same ad. When I’ve received your resume 4 times for the same ad, I not only stop reading, but I take you off the list.

crazy so that you'll be the last one on the list for downsizing.

2. Network with others outside your organization. Who could lend you a hand to help you with your search if the worst should happen? Join organizations and become active!

3. Identify your Plan B. If the worst should happen, have you thought through what the logical next steps might be? Have you researched how to turn your hobby into your next career?

4. Brush up your resume. Add the latest accomplishments and credentials.

5. Volunteer. The next volunteer assignment could open a door to your next employment opportunity.

6. Blow your own horn. Be sure that others know about your accomplishments. This is no time to be modest!

7. Maintain a positive attitude. Be the person that brightens the day for others. Become increasingly indispensable.

8. Invest in lifelong learning. Take a class. Update your skills. Finish up that degree.

9. Focus on value-adding activities at work. Demonstrate that what you do makes a difference to the bottom line.

10. Raise your hand for added responsibilities and projects. You'll learn, grow, and become even more indispensable.

▶ Be a little persistent, but not overly persistent. Send a follow up email inquiring about your application, even resell yourself a little. But don't overdo it. Don't stalk the interview and don't appear to be begging for the job. Give me additional information I don't yet know to keep me intrigued.

▶ Don't exaggerate your capabilities. If you've never managed people, don't say you're an experienced manager. Chances are your resume or your salary requirements tell the truth about your abilities and experience. Don't create a reason to be screened out.

▶ Stretch a little, but don't over stretch. If you're really not

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Being A Finder

While I typically focus on tips for managers and business owners in **HRxaminer**, I am helping a client screen and interview candidates for several job openings, and feel compelled to advise you on how to help your friends and family conduct a successful job search.

I recently hired an Administrative Coordinator. I ran an add solely on Craig's List and received over 175 resumes. While the majority of candidates were not selected because they didn't possess the exact qualifications we were seeking, many were not selected for their failure to recognize how ineffectively they were presenting themselves to the hiring organization.

I've listed below and in the column to the left tips that I hope you will share with others on how they can avoid being screened out rather than being considered.

- Typos, typos and more typos: I am amazed at the carelessness that I observed. Some failed to correctly spell words in their resume, others in their cover letter and some addressed their cover letters to the

you're really not qualified for a position, focus on applying for the position that suits you. Or explain to the reader why you're ready for that next opportunity. Or inquire whether there are other positions that could utilize your skills and expertise.

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wrong people and companies!! If candidates don't take the time to present themselves at 100% in this venue, I assume they won't present my organization at 100% either.

- Follow the instructions in the employment ad. I ask specifically for a cover letter in almost every ad I run. I want a writing sample from my candidates and want to see how candidates describe their abilities. However, probably 30% of the resumes didn't include this requested document. This is a test. Candidates who don't take the time to follow through, can lose out just by not following directions.

- More on cover letters: Be unique, but not weird. I enjoy a little humor or enthusiasm, but don't get carried away. Don't write a generic letter – target the ad. I'm looking for someone who sells themselves directly to what I'm looking for. A form cover letter doesn't do that. It's okay if the letter is in the email, but a simple 2-3 sentence paragraph is not a cover letter. Show me you know who you are, what I'm looking for and can present it clearly.

In these times when there are more candidates than job openings, it is vital that applicants truly shine. Feel free to share these tips with those you know.

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About Arlene Vernon

Arlene Vernon, PHR, partners with small businesses as their Human Resource Xpert to create their HR systems and solve their HR problems.

If you have gaps in your HR operation, have an employee problem to solve, or want

to enhance your managers' skills, call Arlene today. Learn how HRx can save you time and help you avoid costly HR mistakes. HRx, Inc., Eden Prairie, MN 55344, 952-996-0975, www.HRxcellence.com. Arlene@ArleneVernon.com

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