

## Career Management Digest

### The Value of Experience

*A common question presented to our offices is from mature, experienced workers who are looking toward a job change. Perhaps this is due to lay-off, company restructuring or relocation. The job change can be self-initiated and be driven by a change in responsibilities, work load or commute. As a jobseeker begins to look for new opportunities, they might be challenged by some real or perceived barriers. This issue will address how to approach job search as a mature, experienced worker and also offer some perspective on job search and the overqualified individual.*

#### JOB SEEKING/CHANGING HINTS FOR THE MATURE WORKER

*The following thoughts may help you in your job search or career change.*

Be hopeful, innovative, practical, engaged, energetic, creative, and enthusiastic with an emphasis on taking the initiative.

The moment you decide to update skills and go back to school or training – you are perceived as a younger and a life long learner with goals and ambition - like you are “going somewhere.”

Only reflect the last 15 years or less on your resumes and within your applications and interviews. This will help you stay on the topics that are most relevant and most valuable.

Give yourself a short time to swallow, digest, reflect, and absorb your job loss – but not too much time. Be proactive about change and transition in your life. Turn reflection into research.

Friends, counselors, co-workers, business contacts can comfort you, but they can't hire you.

Do not disclose or “dump” on someone who you are counting on as a reference. It may give them too much information and sway their opinion of your stability and your future.

Think long term and make any financial adjustments to ride out any extended period of unemployment. It's still a rule of thumb... one month of job search for every \$10,000 of income. All things being equal in time, discipline, and effort to get the job done in this economic recovery.

Don't under estimate the seriousness tied into company research, labor market

information, preparation with multiple resume formats, etc. Your goal is to get in front of someone. Diet, color your hair, read more,



pray, meditate, shave, exercise, volunteer,--- anything that gives you balance and reflects CHANGE.... This will have an impact on first impressions. We all agree that first impressions are important. What kind of first impression might someone have as a volunteer that has high visibility in your community and could result in a significant job lead?

Go to work at getting back to work. Are there barriers? Will you face discrimination? Are you ready and employable? Then whatever the concern might be, these issues are NOT insurmountable!

There is no easy way to deal with job loss emotionally, but you can do your best to deal with it professionally. Put your best foot forward. Show your class – be a class act.

Think about phone calls: eliminate distractions, have notes readily available, stand up when you are speaking on the phone (Yes, stand up in your own space-it will immediately make you sound more professional). Keep it conversational, be yourself and ask a few questions to establish rapport.

Resumes and cover letters introduce you to employers and will silently speak for you

when you are not there. For some job seekers - generic letters and resumes will work. For life changing opportunities - customize and target your cover letters, resumes, thank you notes to the company's hiring authority, and this will help you remain competitive and PROUD of your EFFORT.

Go out there and find your SMILE. If you lost it, remember what it feels like. SMILE.... And when you've found your job, go out there and CELEBRATE....

~Submitted by Ed Duda, Career Counselor, Workforce Development, Inc.—Olmsted County  
*Resources used for this article:*  
Elizabeth H. Sanders-Park : Author of *No One Is Unemployable* . WorkNet Solutions  
[www.worknetsolutions.com](http://www.worknetsolutions.com)

Dick Gaither: Author of *SKILLSTALKING*. Job Search Training Systems [www.wizardsofwork.com](http://www.wizardsofwork.com)

Richard Nelson Bolles: Author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?* [www.jobhuntersbible.com](http://www.jobhuntersbible.com)

In societies where mature workers are respected and where their wisdom is respected, everybody benefits. Workers are more engaged and productive. Their health is better. They live longer.

– Deepak Chopra

## ARE YOU OVERQUALIFIED or MISUNDERSTOOD?

Are you job searching or considering a career change and feel that you might be classified “overqualified”? Some HR staff put mid-career job-seekers into three categories: 1. too many years of experience 2. too much education or 3. too highly paid in current or previous job. This can be a label that is challenging to get around.

Many times, job seekers don’t offer enough information on why they are looking for a position that many would view them as overqualified for. Your previous employer might have moved the company to a new location or been sold and the change did not include you. You are in a position where moving is not an option, so you apply for a job that is a bit below your experience/qualifications. Your reasons for staying “local” could also be: grandchildren/elderly parents in the area, the opportunity to change up your work duties or have a little less responsibility.

Sometimes, how you apply for that job could affect your opportunity: You might underestimate your contributions to previous employers...or you come across sounding like you had were responsible for just about everything.

If you think that the overqualified label could be applied during your job-search, you want to address the perception head-on. Develop a two-part strategy: First, focus on your job-search correspondence tools, where you will need to develop a short statement explaining exactly why you are seeking the position given your background. The second part focuses on your sales pitch during the job interview, where you can elaborate on why your experience, skills, accomplishments, and enthusiasm make you perfect for the job.

In the article “Fighting the Overqualified Label: 10 Tactics for a Successful Job-Search” by Randall S. Hansen, Ph.D. , Hansen offers some tactics you could use:

- 1. Let your network speak for you.** Nothing you could say about yourself is stronger than a recommendation from someone who knows you and can recommend you. The ideal scenario is for you to use your network to find someone within the organization and let that person make the first pitch for you.
- 2. Focus more on skills and accomplishments than job titles.** Use the employer’s own words — from the job description — to show how your skills match perfectly while at the same time downplaying skills not required for this job.
- 3. Take salary off the table.** Make it clear from the beginning that you are completely flexible about salary — and that your previous salary is of no relevance to your current job-search.

**4. Reveal financial advantages of hiring you.** If you suspect salary will be a concern, use specific examples from your past experiences to show how you increased revenue generation and/or cut costs/realized increased savings.

**5. Emphasize teamwork and personality.** Demonstrate that you are a team player — that the success of the team is more important than any of the individual team members.

**6. Showcase current or cutting-edge knowledge.** Discuss recent training or skill-building that shows that you adaptable and up-to-date — not stuck in the ways of old.

**7. Demonstrate loyalty.** One method to attempt to overcome the fear that you will leave as soon as a better offers comes along is to point to your longevity with previous employers.

**8. Do what it takes to get the interview.** Be prepared to deal with the overqualified issue when you call to follow-up your application — and sell the hiring manager on at least giving you a “meeting” if not an interview so that you can make your case in person.

**9. Everything in moderation.** You should illustrate how you are the perfect candidate for the position without overwhelming the hiring manager with your experience — or your ego. Avoid intimidating a younger hiring manager.

**10. Express interest, admiration, and enthusiasm.** Nothing wins over a hiring manager more than a positive attitude and a passion for the job — and the employer.

~Submitted by Valerie Kvale, Placement Specialist, Workforce Development, Inc., Freeborn County

To read the complete article, go to: <https://www.livecareer.com/quintessential/fighting-overqualified-label>



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