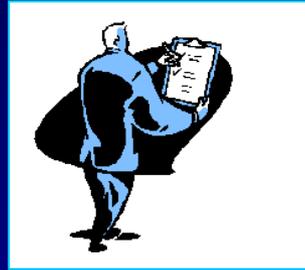




Career Tactics and Strategy: How Your Next Job Will Find You

presented to

The Software Quality Group of New England



by

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Building State-of-the-Art Teamwork
In Problem-Solving Organizations

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Core message

- Even if your job isn't yet outsourced, your raises have already been
- To thrive in today's environment, we must change how we view "career"
- Think of yourself as a company
 - Don't just do a job search – market yourself
 - Don't just acquire skills – build assets
- Replace "job security" with "career security"

Waiting until you're laid off is one approach.
Jumping to your next job is far better.

Issues for those “between jobs”

- Personal network might be in disrepair
- Job-search skills might be outdated
- Job skills might not be in demand
- Long résumé gaps aren't attractive
- Competition: you might be part of a crowd
- Financial stress
- Perfect credit rating might be a condition for hiring
- COBRA has an 18-month time limit
- Self-esteem under strain
- Desperation shows in interviews
- Stress at home
- Networking events are low yield, waste of time
- Résumé tweaking doesn't seem to work

Issues for the experienced

- Extensive experience in a specialty is a liability
- Employers prefer youth (less than 45)
 - Lower compensation
 - Less sophisticated about compensation
 - Naiveté makes them easier to manage
 - Age inversions less likely
 - Less risky to terminate them arbitrarily
- Employers see the experienced as more likely to self-terminate
 - More sophisticated about equity, job-hopping
 - More extensive personal networks
 - Better able to work the internal opportunities
 - More likely to have financial resources

Issues for everyone

- Jobs (generally) don't last as long as they used to
- Companies are no longer committed to retention
- Layoffs looming
- Survivors of previous layoffs are overworked
- Outsourcing and contracting are shallowing the job pool
- Compensation tracks the market only if you switch jobs
- Employer-funded retirement plan risk is increasing
- Relocation support is retreating up the org chart
- Predatory career services providers erode self-esteem as a business strategy
- Most of us hate to sell, and selling yourself seems to be necessary

Yesterday's loyalty is today's apathy

Stats

- Average compensation cut in new job: 30%
- Small business failure rate: 50% in first 4 years
- Annual increase in health insurance: 8-10%
- Average white-collar job search: 6 months
- Average US household debt (excluding mortgages): \$14,500
- Annual per-family credit card interest: \$1,200
- Average US job tenure dropped 7% 1983-1998, accelerating

Dealing with these issues: Tactics and Strategy

- Tactics deal with specific situations
 - Can be preplanned or *ad hoc*
 - You might not have to use all the tactics you develop
- Strategies shape the situations you might have to face
 - Must be preplanned – *ad hoc* strategies usually fail
 - Usually, we apply all strategies we develop
- What fits for one person might not fit another

Plan strategically – act tactically

Strategies

1. Diversify
2. Build and maintain your network
3. Skate to where the puck will be
4. Market your brand
5. Build financial flexibility
6. Find more high-quality leads before anyone else

Strategy #1: Diversify

- Minimize portfolio risk by relying on
 - Multiple jobs
 - Multiple careers
 - Multiple employers
 - Multiple investments
 - Multiple skill sets
- Develop assets with broad appeal and applicability
- In job search, hit multiple channels at once
- Continuous marketing

Tactics for diversifying professionally

- Assume that your current job is insecure
 - Take courses
 - Teach anywhere they'll have you
 - Build a side business of your own
- Market yourself continuously
 - Consciously seek assignments to build your résumé
 - Publish
 - Speak
 - Build your network
 - Attend conferences, even if you have to pay yourself

Tactics for diversifying financially

- Work at a company where your spouse doesn't
- Work in an industry that your spouse doesn't
- Limit investments in your employer
- Get an investment advisor (if assets justify it)
- Join an investment club

Strategy #2: Build and maintain your network

- At work:
 - Get to know people outside your specialty
 - Keep your ear to the ground
 - Watch for opportunities
- Outside work, connect with those who can point the way to:
 - Jobs
 - Investments
 - Marketing opportunities
 - Seismic shifts
- Give back

Tactics for building your network at work

- Lunches and breakfasts
- Travel
- Parties, sports, charity events, volunteering
- Training: sit with people you don't know
- Offer yourself for assignments that get you out
- Alert your network to opportunities

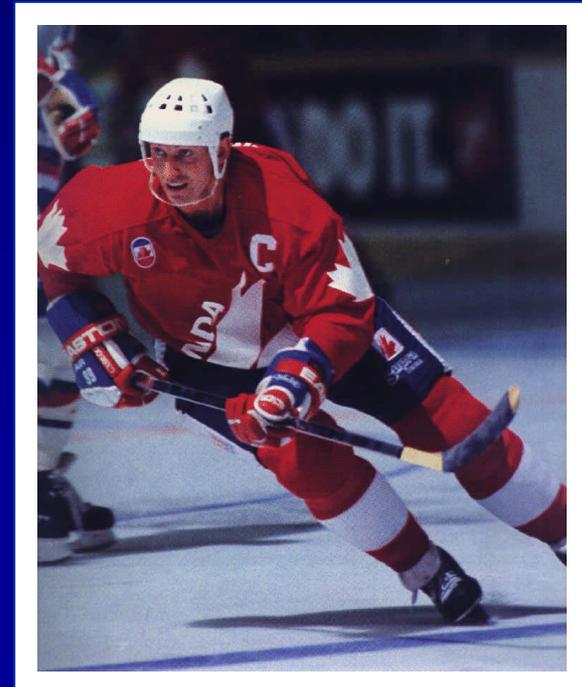
Tactics for building your network outside work

- [LinkedIn.com](https://www.linkedin.com) or similar networking sites
- Volunteering
- Local or national professional societies
 - Volunteer
 - Board positions
 - Job listings
- Regional or national conferences
- Academic and corporate alumnae/alumni groups
- Regional, ethnic networking
- Continuing education
- Giving back

Strategy #3: Skate to where the puck will be

- Use your current position to prepare for the next
- Keep moving forward
- Avoid what everyone else is doing
- Read futurists
- A job like the one you just had positions you to lose ground

As the ship goes down,
the parts still above water
get very crowded



Tactics for figuring out where the puck will be

- Know the basic trends
 - Demographics, energy, communications, change, nano-miniaturization, globalization
 - Economic polarization, knowledge management
- Read the business press
 - General look-ahead topics
 - Specific to your industry
- Read future trends literature and Web sites
 - Institute for the Future (itft.org)
 - Your professional associations: IEEE, ASQ, PMI, ...
 - USC/Annenberg School/Center for the Digital Future

Tactics for skating to where the puck will be

- Get out of the dead-end career
 - Dead-end = *contracting* opportunities
 - Choose a career with *expanding* opportunities
- Seek job assignments that move you in the right direction
- Volunteering: do what you want to learn
- Check out college/university course catalogs
- Continuing education
 - Focus on courses that have term projects
 - If you don't see what you want, offer to teach it
 - Submit purchase recommendations to your public library
- To get the puck passed to you more often, pass it

Strategy #4: Market your brand

- Stop blaming yourself: you're wonderful
- Become known:
 - The better known you are the better off you'll be
 - Be a resource for something people want
- Design brand "You"
- External brand can differ from internal brand
- Develop a marketing plan
- Execute your marketing plan

When people have jobs to fill,
you want them to think of you

Tactics for becoming known internally

- Volunteer for visible tasks
 - Task lead
 - Tool building/maintenance/distribution
 - Writing up resource material
 - Task forces
- Seek responsibility for giving out goodies
- Become an expert in something important
- Put your photo on your door
- If intranet Web sites are permissible, build one
- Make your intranet site a destination
 - Links collections
 - Data people need – even phone numbers or photos

Tactics for becoming known more globally

- Publications
 - Books
 - Articles: journals, newspapers, trade press, newsletters, ezines, letters to the editor
 - Web site
- Presentations
 - Conferences
 - Local professional societies
 - BOFs
 - Broadcast media
 - Moderate/participate in panels
- Volunteer/leadership roles in professional societies

Tactics for dressing your brand

- These work whether you're still employed or not
 - Some cost money
 - Some take time during the day
 - Doing them while employed is advantageous
- The tactics:
 - Get certifications
 - Take courses: both professional and career/job search
 - Teach
 - Volunteer professionally
 - Get a coach

Strategy #5: Build financial flexibility

- Financial pressure can create problems
 - Self-esteem
 - Stress
 - Family problems
- These problems can come across in interviews
- Assume that you might need time to find a suitable position
 - Be willing to adjust the definition of “suitable”
 - Configure yourself financially to last 18-24 months

Tactics for financial flexibility: Take interim work

- Looking for work is a full-time job
- But it isn't necessarily done in business hours
- You can work as:
 - Teacher
 - Contractor
 - Volunteer
- Choose positions to dress your résumé and fill the gap
- Avoid positions that you can't mention on your résumé

Tactics for financial flexibility: Clear the decks

- While still employed, get your financial house in order
- Measure and track your burn rate
- Tactics while still employed:
 - Pay down debt, especially credit cards (get counseling if necessary)
 - Consolidate or do 0% balance transfers until you pay off
 - Take care of all medical/dental procedures
 - Exploit benefits: eyeglasses
 - Flare liquidity of savings over 18-24 months
 - House, car repairs
 - Cancel subscriptions you don't read
 - Favor over savings anything that's both necessary and deductible
 - Perform or volunteer for jury duty

Tactics for financial flexibility: Lower your burn rate

- Accept that it isn't fun
- Make it a family effort
- Understand the psychology of peer pressure
- Eliminate waste
 - Buy new books *very* selectively
 - Avoid auto leases
 - High-efficiency appliances
 - High mileage cars
 - Don't top off your gas tank or round off the price: rely on auto shutoff
- Harvest freebies
 - Use your air miles
 - Use cashback credit cards
 - Use coupons

Tactics for financial flexibility: Lower your burn rate (continued)

- The hard realities:
 - Fewer restaurant meals or takeout
 - Stretch lifetime of clothing, cars, furniture, ...
 - Buy for function, not fashion
 - Blockbuster or tape-from-air instead of cable, buy or theater
 - Local vacations
 - Library instead of bookstore
 - Cell, Skype or calling cards instead of land line long distance
- At the supermarket:
 - House brands, not national brands
 - Play the sales
 - Lowest everyday prices: Costco, Market Basket

Tactics for financial flexibility: Know your credit cards

- Do not *ever* miss a payment
- Pay cards off *in toto* every month
- Rotate your spending: use each card for only 10 days after its closing date
- Forget about miles – you're taking local vacations
- Prefer cards that give cash back



Pay *every* bill – even your phone bill – on time.
If you don't, your credit card interest rate can jump.

Strategy #6:

Find more high-quality leads before anyone else

- In some sense, finding a job is a numbers game
- Finding more high-quality leads faster helps
- Find the company that needs you:
 - Before they start looking for candidates
 - Before anyone else finds them



Tactics for finding leads

- Networking
- Broaden your scope
 - Hiring in one category might imply hiring in yours
 - Announced products or initiatives might presage hiring
 - Use financial research sites
- Google news alerts:
 - For targeted companies
 - For specific developments, products or technologies
- Volunteer to manage job listings at professional societies

Tactics for your résumé

- No gaps: volunteer, consult or teach to fill the gaps
- At work:
 - Do not edit or print your résumé
 - Don't send it by email or enter it into databases
- Beware privacy issues
 - If employed, take care that your employer not know
 - Identity theft
- Be selective about distribution
- Call before sending email
- Drop résumé at:
 - Targeted companies
 - Monster and similar
 - Specialized résumé banks
- Refresh database drops every six weeks

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- Topics:
 - Communications
 - Meetings
 - Project management
 - Change
 - Workplace politics
 - Conflict
- <http://www.ChacoCanyon.com/pointlookout>

Or: Write “subscribe” on your business card

Resources for you

- These slides are at the SQGNE Web site
- At my Web site:
 - Resources for people at work

<http://www.ChacoCanyon.com/resources/peopleatwork.shtml>

- Resources for career-builders

<http://www.ChacoCanyon.com/clientarea/sqgne.pdf>

