



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

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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- Job-search skills might be outdated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

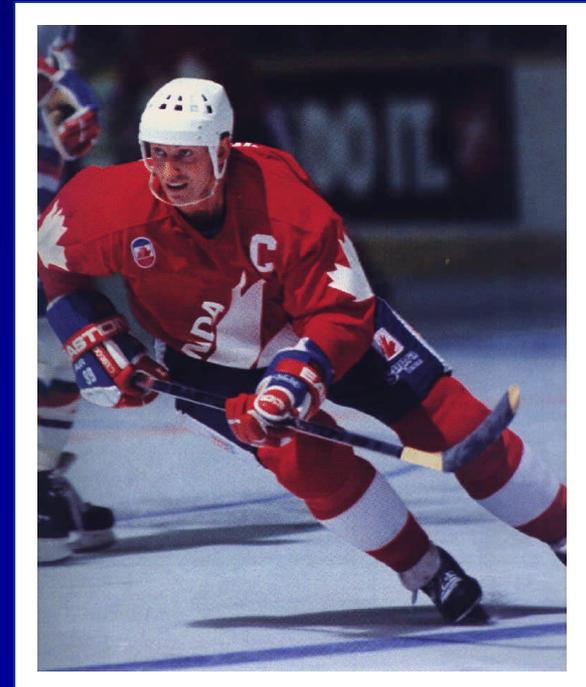
# Tactics for building your network outside work

- [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](http://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

# Subscribe to my free newsletter: *Point Lookout*

- Weekly email newsletter
- 500 words per edition
- Free
- 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>

