Dear clients and colleagues,

There was no Ezine for May. I was ill with a kidney infection and my computer drive died at the same time (better the drive).

The lead article emphasizes the point that there are no recession proof jobs. In the Interview Corner, I have posted an article run before in this Newsletter: “Your Top Priority in an interview. In Boomer Corner, you can’t retire if you have any debt.

Copies of all past E-zines are archived on my website. Feel free to pass this E-zine on.

To subscribe, click on mailto:randy@randyblock.com
To unsubscribe, hit the reply button and type REMOVE in the subject line.

This month’s topics:

1. Featured Article: Your Network Is Your Only Insurance Policy
2. Interview Tips: Your Top Priority In Your Interview
3. Boomer Corner: Four things to consider about your retirement and your debt
4. Success Story
5. Humor Department: Comments On Performance Evaluations
6. Words that Inspire

1. Your Network is Your Only Insurance Policy

Dan Schawbel at Personal Branding.com, believes that job boards will disappear as soon as five years, based on data from a recent survey by Jobvite. Survey stats point to a significant rise in the use of social networking sites by HR and recruiters to find top talent. Of the companies surveyed:

· 76% plan to invest more in employee referrals (68% in 2008)

· 72% plan to invest more in recruiting through social networks

· 75%+ plan to invest less in more costly sources (job boards, third-party recruitment and campus recruitment)

· 80% of companies use or are planning to use social networking to find and attract candidates this year:

· 95% will use LinkedIn (80% in 2008), 59% will use Facebook (36% in 2008), and 42% will use Twitter

· 77% of respondents said they use social networks to reach passive candidates

· 15% of respondents tapped employees' social networks for hiring

· HR staff use social networks to research candidates: 76% use LinkedIn, 67% use search engines (Google), 44% use Facebook

· 24% of candidates disclose their social networking presence when applying for a job

Schawbel believes the survey results indicate "There are three main areas where you should focus your attention on right now:"

1. Protect your brand: Aside from using a website such as namechk.com to claim your brand name on social networks, you must ensure that you're painting a positive portrait of yourself on your profiles.

2. Promote your brand: Become visible so employers find you. Says Schawbel, "It differentiates you! This is a major opportunity to stand out since only around 1 in 4 applicants are doing it."

3. Partner your brand: a successful network is imperative for a successful career. Build your network so it will rise to the top. "Partner with people that are at companies you want to work for or have skills that can help you start a business," says Schawbel.

Source: http://personalbrandingblog.com/your-network-is-your-only-insurance-policy/

2. Interview Tips—Your Top Priority In Your Interview

Here's a hint: It's not getting the offer

You've had it ingrained in you. You are measured on results. If you didn't get an offer after your interview, you failed. Your self-esteem takes a hit and maybe even depression sets in. "Nobody wants me."

You make all about you. Yikes!

And you all have heard about how much a "bad hire" costs the company. Well it costs you as well. Your zeal to get the offer by overselling yourself with the "right answers" has resulted in a layoff after 6 months. How's that going to look on the resume?

Suppose there was a different number one priority. If you achieved this top goal, you felt good. You had a successful interview because you maximized the process. You are actually energized even though you didn't get the offer. You actually enjoyed yourself!

What should the number one objective be? Focus on the fit with you and the organization. Their always three elements to an interview: the candidate, the organization and the fit. Too many interviewees make the interview all about themselves. No wonder many job seekers become nervous or anxiety driven before an interview. They need to learn that it's not about them. It's about the fit.

Consider the following tips focusing in the "fit" and maximizing the interview:

1. Interview Preparation: Besides your normal due diligence on the company, industry etc., always ask for a job description in advance. Under Candidate Qualifications, concentrate on the "requireds." Honestly evaluate yourself against each point. Come up with one or two stories that illustrate your success with each qualification. (Keep you stories to less than 2 minutes please!) If you are strong in over 80% of what they are looking for, this is a good start. You can also prepare in advance good well thought out answers for the requirements in which you are not so strong.
2. During the interview: All of your answers should be relevant to their needs. The number one mistake interviewee's make in an interview is they give too much information. They answer the question and keep right on talking. Keep in mind that the only wrong answer in an interview is a dishonest one.
3. The end of the interview: If you have kept your focus on your number one priority, you have a pretty good idea as to the "fit." Consider asking what concerns they hiring manager may have. If there are too many concerns (especially about the facts of your background)), ask if they could recommend another manager where it might be a better fit. If the answer is no, then ask if they could recommend anyone in their network outside their company. It's not a bad afternoon if you don't get the "offer" but get 3 to 4 leads.

Organizations want to know how you can help them. They are looking for solutions. There are only two kinds of solution categories: revenue and productivity. Having a strong sense of self and a solid value proposition addressing those two needs is paramount.

It's not about you. It's about the fit.

Randy brings expertise in executive search as a certified career coach. He has guided all levels of professionals in the areas of career transition: changing careers, choosing a career direction, evaluating/negotiating offers, executive career marketing, finding jobs, getting organized, as well as finding opportunities for self-employment, freelancing and consulting. He holds an IJCTC certificate from the Career Planning and Adult Development, a CCMC (Certified Career Management Coach) from Career Coach Academy.

3. Boomer Corner-- Four things to consider about your retirement and your

debt

By Robert Powell, MarketWatch

BOSTON (MarketWatch) -- Not so long ago, Americans retired debt-free. Then, somewhere along the way, that changed. Now more and more Americans are retiring with debt, with mortgages, with home-equity lines of credit, with credit-card debt, with auto loans and more.

Before the great recession of 2008-09, that debt -- while not insignificant -- didn't seem to be a huge problem.

"Important measures of financial vulnerability suggest that the growth of debt might not be that worrisome," Mauricio Soto wrote in a 2005 Center for Retirement Research at Boston College report. "The combination of extraordinary asset growth and historically low interest rates allowed households to increase their debt relatively painlessly: their net worth grew significantly, and the portion of income used to pay for debt did not increase."

"This is not to say that baby boomers might not encounter a few bumps in the road or that some groups might not be vulnerable. But baby boomers as a group do not appear to have an immediate debt crisis," he wrote. Read that report, Will Baby Boomers Drown in Debt.

That was then and this is now. And now it's not just a bump in the road; the road has seemingly disappeared. The debt load of would-be retirees and retirees is worrisome. Consider: One in five (22%) boomers owe at least $50,000 in non-mortgage debt in 2009, up from 12% in 2007, according to the just-released "Debt: The Detour on America's Road to Retirement," Securian's 2009 Survey of Financial Values and Debt.

And nearly four in 10 baby boomers had non-mortgage debt of $25,000 in 2009, 29% in 2007. Equally troubling, the percent of those in the so-called "silent generation," the boomers' parents, with debt of $25,000 or more was 22% in 2009, the same as in 2007.

The great recession of 2008-09 has changed the behavior of many boomers, according to Kerry Geurkink from Securian. Americans, in general, are less likely to view debt as a way to fuel their lifestyle, are saving more for emergencies and looking for ways to save on groceries, transportation and the like. They are paying off car loans, credit-card bills, mortgages, home-equity loans, overdue bills, money owed to family or friends, and other debts.

But boomers are not. "Few are actively paying down their debt," according to Securian's report. Yet "most expect to have fully eliminated all non-mortgage debt within the next five years." And while that might seem a pipe dream, boomers aren't smoking dope when it comes to understanding that their debt will affect their ability to have a comfortable retirement.

So what's the takeaway here? In short, boomers must and should make retiring debt-free, even mortgage-free, a priority. And they must do that while making sure they have saved enough for retirement. "Retiring debt-free should be the goal for more Americans," said Geurkink.

But how? Here are four suggestions:

1. Set up a plan

In his book, "The Complete Idiot's Guide to Getting out of Debt," author Ken Clark talks about the need to change your lifestyle and spending habits, the need to start today and the need to set realistic goals. But Clark doesn't want this to be too painful. In his book, he suggests rewarding yourself along the way. He suggests treating yourself every time you eliminate a piece of debt.

His other piece of advice is to partner with someone who wants to get out of debt too, someone to whom you would be accountable for your debt-reduction plan.

2. Paying down debt versus saving for retirement

Experts have different opinions on this one. But Geurkink suggests that you do both at the same time, pay down your debt while saving for retirement. No doubt that could lengthen the time it takes to pay down your debt, but it will at least create two habits -- one of saving and one of paying down debt.

"You have to do both," said Geurkink. "Something changes when you start adopting a savings habit. When you accumulate money, your mindset changes, you start thinking like an investor rather than someone prone to impulse purchases."

Others suggest that you pay down your debt first, sacrificing your retirement nest egg if only till you get yourself back on track. By paying down your debt, you know exactly what rate of return you are getting on your money -- the interest rate the debt carries. By investing, at least in the stock market, you don't know what your rate of return might be.

Make no mistake about it, though: Paying down credit debt, if that's what you have, could either take awhile or it could limit your ability to save for retirement. According to Bankrate.com's debt reduction calculator, for instance, you would have to pay $432 per month over the course of five years to pay down $15,000 in credit-card debt that has a 24% interest rate. Or you could pay $1,000 per month and eliminate that same credit card debt in just 19 months.

So let's say you chose to do both: Pay down $432 per month for five years and save $600 per month over the same period. You would be debt-free and have $40,803 set aside in your retirement account, assuming a 5% rate of return.

By contrast, let's say you decided to pay down your debt first and then save $1,000 a month: You would have $44,609 in your retirement account, by my rough calculation.

Clearly the latter is the better deal, but it does mean being both aggressive about paying down your debt, changing your lifestyle and then making sure you start saving on a regular basis. When in doubt, many behavioral finance experts suggest putting the two habits on autopilot. And giving up $4,000 or so just might be the price you have to pay.

3. Don't borrow from your 401(k) to pay down your debt

It might seem like a good idea at first blush, but many experts say borrowing from your 401(k) to pay down your debt might not be in your best interest. Yes, it's a low-cost loan. But borrowing money could your 401(k) could create even more problems should you get laid off from your employer. Typically, you have to pay loan off within 60 days of leaving your employer..

4. Work longer

There's no doubt about it, according to Geurkink. If you plan to retire with debt, especially non-mortgage debt, you may put yourself in a bind. Living on a fixed income and servicing debt is a recipe for disaster. Instead, Geurkink suggests working, full-time or part-time, for as long as you can until you eliminate your debt. Once you eliminate your debt, then you can retire.

4. Success Story

Marcy, Age 41, Mother of a Five-Year-Old

Layoffs were nothing new to her. She had been laid off from her computer supply job in the 80s, from her job in publishing in the 90s, and laid off from her job as a Webmaster for the Pacific Exchange. The Web job well ran dry.

Someone suggested that she consider a government job, which would give her the flexibility that she craved. She began searching on federal jobs Web site, http://www.fedworld.gov . She requested that only California government jobs be e mailed to her, and landed a job.

She has been working on the job for the last year. She is making about $20,000 less than what she was making, but she says that the benefits, flexible schedule, and climate of fairness make up for the loss of salary.

She says: “If you feel like you have qualifications and other people are getting the jobs because they’re good at schmoozing, then the government would be good for you.”

5. Humor Department Evaluation comments

Some of you might like to know what the supervisor is really saying in all those glowing employee work performance evaluations s/he keeps cranking out.

AVERAGE: Not too bright.

EXCEPTIONALLY WELL QUALIFIED: Has committed no major blunders to date.

ACTIVE SOCIALLY: Drinks heavily.

ZEALOUS ATTITUDE: Opinionated.

CHARACTER ABOVE REPROACH: Still one-step ahead of the law.

UNLIMITED POTENTIAL: Will stick with us until retirement.

QUICK THINKING: Offers plausible excuses for errors.

TAKES PRIDE IN WORK: Conceited.

TAKES ADVANTAGE OF EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO PROGRESS: Buys drinks for superiors.

INDIFFERENT TO INSTRUCTION: Knows more than superiors.

STERN DISCIPLINARIAN: A real jerk.

TACTFUL IN DEALING WITH SUPERIORS: Knows when to keep mouth shut.

APPROACHES DIFFICULT PROBLEMS WITH LOGIC: Finds someone else to do the job.

A KEEN ANALYST: Thoroughly confused.

EXPRESSES SELF WELL: Can string two sentences together.

SPENDS EXTRA HOURS ON THE JOB: Miserable home life.

CONSCIENTIOUS AND CAREFUL: Scared.

METICULOUS IN ATTENTION TO DETAIL: A nitpicker.

DEMONSTRATES QUALITIES OF LEADERSHIP: Has a loud voice.

JUDGMENT IS USUALLY SOUND: Lucky.

6. Words that Inspire

“Adventure is worthwhile”
--Amelia Earhart, aviator

****
Your comments and feedback on this E-zine are welcome!

To unsubscribe from this monthly newsletter, hit the reply button and type REMOVE in the subject line.

Privacy Policy: We will not sell, lend or give access to our email/subscriber lists for any reason. Any information collected is kept strictly confidential and is not shared with or sold to any third parties or affiliates.

Randy Block . Staffing Consultant & Executive Coach
[**ph.** 415-383-6471 (**vm *only***) **e.** randy@randyblock.com
http://www.randyblock.com]
http://www.linkedin.com/in/randyblock

Helping professionals maximize their careers and job search

CCMC (Certified Career Management Coach), **CPRC** (Certified Professional Retirement Coach)
IJCTC (International Job and Career Transition Coach), **Now What? Life Blueprint™ Training**
Member: The HR Strategy Forum, Career Management Alliance, The Network, The National Career Development Association, American Society On Aging