

## The Value Proposition

By Randy Block

Remember the good old days? People used to return calls and email. When inquiring about a job, applicants used to ask, "What do you want?" One well-written resume fit every opportunity. Demand for people far exceeded supply. Conveniently, hiring companies did all the analysis to see if the applicant was a good fit for the job. All that the candidate had to do was just show up for the interview and answer the questions.

Well, those days are well behind us now. Globalization, the dotcom bust, business consolidation and many other factors have insured that. These are factors the job seeker had no control over.

Today, the job seeker and/or candidate must have a value proposition. Companies are now hiring solutions and not people. The 90's were driven mostly by the "wants". Companies in the new millennia now hire based on their needs.

There are two main needs common to most organizations today. Put succinctly, they want to know, "How can you increase our revenue?" and/or "How can you help us be more productive"? No matter what kind or level of job you are applying for, that is the crux of the screening. If you can't deliver productivity and/or revenue proposition solutions and the other candidate can, you are definitely at a disadvantage. I have found this to be true in non-profit organizations as well.

Conducting retained search in the 80's and 90's, I would expend a lot of time and effort evaluating the candidates background relevant to the clients' job description. I had to dig sometimes very thoroughly to bring out the candidates relevant strengths. Today, *the candidate* has to "connect the dots" (their strengths and skills with the employer's needs). *They* have to show why they are a good fit with the employer.

Applicants need to show the relevancy of their backgrounds to the employers needs. In networking, they must focus on listening for the needs of the person with whom they are networking. The cover letter and resume have to be slanted to demonstrate that their background is a good fit for the employer. The thank you note needs to again "connect the dots" ("these are the challenges we discussed in our meeting and these are my strengths and experience relevant to those challenges").

Organizations like to be chosen. If you have targeted them because you share their excitement with the industry, products, services, culture etc. that increases your marketability and prospects of being hired. You are *genuinely* excited about them vs. “I am looking for a job.”

Your value proposition reflects you and what you do not only well but also naturally. Candidates who impressed me in the interview, were not only excited about the job and my client company but were excited about who they were and what they liked to do

Once you have proven that you can fulfill a need then you can talk about how you can best work together. Your value proposition comes usually in 3 flavors: Full time, part time and short term contract. Always leading with “Do you have a fulltime opening?” can greatly limit your exposure and opportunity for meaningful work and cash flow stress reduction (e.g., short term leading to full time.)

As Bill Bridges suggests in his book “JobShift”, the full time permanent job is slowly disappearing. However, in today’s world there are plenty of challenges requiring unique value propositions.

*So what’s **your** value proposition?*

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