

Self-Marketing Tips for Senior Executives on the Job Hunt

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If you're a seasoned executive, being on the other side of an interview table as a job candidate can be quite the awkward experience. First of all, it's been years since you've had to look for a new job. Odds are that businesses have been trying to find you, not the other way around.

Secondly, in spite of your lengthy history and experience as a leader overseeing corporate marketing and operational strategies, the fact that you are job hunting puts you in a very unique role - in this circumstance, you are the "product"! What does this mean? It means that a strategic marketing plan for your job hunt must be developed with the same diligence applied to all of your business endeavours.

The problem, though, is that you've probably never considered yourself a product, so this shift in roles creates a strong sense of unfamiliarity and pure awkwardness. Learn to recognize and accept this awkward emotional state and realize that it's really no different than the unique challenges you've successfully confronted throughout your career.

Start by asking yourself this: what are your features and benefits? What will your next employer buy? What expertise, experience and solutions do you offer that can help a new employer achieve increased success?

One of the challenges you face as a senior executive is that you've rarely sat down to think about what you've learned, your skills and key strengths or the key motivators that drive you to succeed. You may have undertaken a personality assessment at some point in your life, but my bet is that this document is long forgotten and buried in your bottom desk drawer.

In addition, you probably haven't kept up with resume styles, so your submission for a new job simply lists former employers and a set of repetitive tasks. Or, even worse, your resume is so short that recruiters are left to make assumptions and most likely remove you from the candidate roster.

At the same time, while proud of your communication skills and confident that you can ace the job interview, if you fail to provide concrete work examples that clearly demonstrate solid contributions to organizational success, your job opportunity will quickly and literally die on the vine.

I personally interview hundreds of senior executive candidates per year and I can share with you that the most successful candidates are those who thoroughly understand themselves and know what jobs are the best fit. They know their strengths and areas of challenge and how to

build a team to complement their skills. They bring strong self-confidence and strong positive attitudes, yet listen well and are open to new ideas and strategies. They bring a good blend of technical knowledge balanced with good people skills and they understand the type of work culture in which they work best.

In addition, I see successful candidates conducting their own research on a potential employer prior to applying for an advertised job. They act as their own search consultant by reaching out to network contacts that recognize the value of their product and can refer them to new opportunities. They explore and test these opportunities until they find the right one for their “product”. Once they feel comfortable with the potential match, they prepare to sell their features and benefits to the potential employer.

In doing so, these candidates focus on the skills they’ve developed over their career rather than where they’ve worked. In other words, they focus on selling themselves as the product. They then explore all of their work history and seek out parallels in their experience that’ll match the needs of a new employer. Next, they’ll develop concrete examples to present in their interview. They come fully armed and fully prepared.

As a result, when I encounter a candidate such as this, their personal power is very evident, their ability to sell their skills and expertise is exemplary, they impress the potential employer and, most often, they are offered the job.

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