



Two Halves are Better Than One

What does that mean? Competing successfully for a job today begins with a change in our mindset. Now, no one likes change, but we have no choice. The job market has undergone a fundamental reset, and we have to adapt or throw in the towel and give up.

What is the reset that's forcing this change? Without warning or public announcement, employers have revised the definition of what it means to be qualified for an opening. In the good old days before the recession, being qualified for a job meant that you met all of the requirements specified for it. If you did that, you deserved an interview and often got one. Today, you don't and you won't.

The recession accelerated this shift, but is not its cause. The real culprit is global competition. Whether they focus on domestic or international markets or both, companies are now feeling the heat from other organizations that are more productive and more innovative. Those competitors are harnessing the power of talented people to beat out companies that were considered great just five years ago.

Americans employers, therefore, also have only two choices. They can either follow suit or fall by the wayside. And to follow suit, they have to acquire new hires that are every bit as talented as those working for the competition. They have to upgrade the definition of what it means to be a "qualified candidate."

The New Definition of Qualified

Employers today are seeking candidates who have not one, but two attributes:

- They meet all of the stated requirements for an opening and
- They can prove they will excel at their work.

They aren't under-qualified or over-qualified in the conventional sense of those terms. They are "ultra-qualified."

An ultra-qualified candidate exactly matches the skills, knowledge and level and kinds of experience specified for an opening. They don't meet eighty percent of those requirements or one hundred and ten percent of them either. They are a perfect fit for the position.

In addition, the ultra-qualified person must be able to excel on the job and to persuade recruiters and hiring managers that they will. It's not enough to show that they can do the work. They must also demonstrate that they will do it superbly.

Now, please don't shoot the messenger. I know that no one, but especially those enduring the stress and frustration of a job search, wants to hear that they have to change their mindset. To my way of thinking, however, it's better to know the truth than to continue beating your head against a brick wall. Moreover, if not half but all of the game is mental, then adopting such a change can give you a huge competitive advantage in the job market.

So, how does an ultra-qualified person conduct their job search? Here are two tips that will get you started.

Don't waste your time applying for jobs where you are under or over-qualified.

Instead, invest that time searching for openings where you are a perfect fit. And, use every medium at your disposal: online job boards and social media sites, print publications, and real world meetings where you can network with your peers.

Don't rest on your laurels by coming as you are to the job market.

Instead, enroll in an academic course or training program that will upgrade or supplement your skills even as you search for a job. Then, add that fact to your resume as proof that you are always reaching for ways to excel at your work.

Today's job market seems incomprehensible to a lot of us. The tools and techniques that worked so well for us in the past now get us nowhere. However, it's not the tools and techniques – our resumes and use of job boards, for example – that are the problem. It is our mindset. The way we look at the nature of the challenge determines how we use those tools and techniques. But, changing our mindset for half the game isn't enough. To be successful, we have to play both halves with that new outlook so that we apply our tools and techniques in the right way from start to finish.

Thanks for reading,

Peter

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