



CONNECTIONS

A non-profit volunteer organization that provides professional assistance to individuals in employment transition.

SPRING 2009

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High Visibility the Key to Keeping Your Job

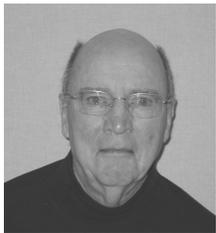
In tough times, it may take more than a job well done to keep your job. What can people who are currently employed do to combat the risk of a layoff? The February 2, 2009 issue of *Fortune* magazine suggested several tactics to make yourself more valuable and more visible:

Take credit for your work—Copying your boss on select e-mails or offering a brief summary of your current projects can help keep your work top of mind.

Make yourself visible—Putting in longer hours, volunteering for projects and working from the office instead of telecommuting are all ways to increase your visibility, and increase your chances of avoiding layoffs.

Be a standout worker without standing out—When managers are faced with the difficult decision of letting staff go, small factors can make a big difference. Make an extra effort to fit into the corporate culture—look and act the part of someone who belongs at the company.

Meet JOHN LITCHFIELD



John Litchfield considers computers his hobby. He spent half his career in the telephone industry but didn't develop an interest in computers until he retired.

"I really like problems. If you work with a computer, you are constantly being harassed with something that doesn't work," he said with a laugh. "That's the fun part."

While teaching computers at a senior center, John was introduced to CRC's Executive Director, Jan Leahy. Fortunate in his own career, John said he now feels an obligation to help others. He uses his passion for computers to help job seekers search for new employment. John tries to match people's interests and abilities with the best job sites for them. "There are hundreds of job sites and the trick is to find those that are most productive for people," he said.

Litchfield said he is amazed by how much the Internet has evolved in the 10 years he has worked at CRC. In this time, Internet job postings have gone from an exception to the norm. To help clients adjust to this new norm, John also offers tips on how to get an electronic resume noticed.

He said job candidates typically over-engage in searching Web sites. It has to be balanced with other job seeking activities. The most important tool is networking. "Networking is perhaps the

most important way to make contacts with people. But sending resumes on the Internet is a good follow-up activity," he said.

When not at his computer, John also enjoys creating art, a lifelong hobby that he calls "essential to my being." He enjoys painting, woodworking, sculpture and welding, adding with a laugh, it's a guy thing to hold a torch in one hand working with fire.

John lives in Lake Forest with wife Anne and enjoys visiting museums whenever he travels. If he sees something he likes, he will go home and try to replicate it. "It's a heck of a lot cheaper," he said with a laugh. "I do it reasonably well, but I add my own touches."

John works Tuesday evenings and Thursday afternoons.

Talking Points

Do you have a hard time striking up conversations while you're networking? Are you looking for new thought-provoking questions to ask at your next interview? The April 2009 issue of *Money* gave the following creative ideas to break the ice:

- How'd you land your job?
- What do you like most about your job?
- If you weren't in your current career, what would you be doing?
- What industry websites or blogs are must-reads for you?
- Who is your scariest competitor and why?

Cover Letters in the Digital Age

It's easy to think of electronic communications as informal. E-mails are often referred to as "quick" (although today's teens would surely point out how much quicker a text message would be). This quick, informal communication is a necessity—how many people could get through their Inboxes if they composed each e-mail with the care of a handwritten letter?

For job seekers, it is important to maintain a level of formality uncommon in today's communications. In a February 15, 2009 article in the *New York Times*, Phyllis Korkki explains that cover letters are not a bygone formality in the digital age – they are a critical part of your electronic application.

Style

A cover letter is the time to dust off your formal writing skills.

- Remember to use an appropriate salutation to open the letter, preferably addressing the decision-maker by name, followed by a colon.

- Keep the letter short – only three or four paragraphs – closing with a promise to follow up.
- End the letter with an appropriate closing.

Substance

The cover letter is not simply a narrative version of your résumé. Use this opportunity to position yourself as uniquely suited for the position. Avoiding these common mistakes may help you take advantage of the cover letter:

- Remember that the cover letter is not all about you – it's about how you can help the company reach its goals.
- You can share personal information that is relevant to the position, but don't share too much. Explaining why you are passionate about the position, company or industry is good; explaining your salary requirements or personal life is not.

Finally, if you miss the formality of a printed letter, follow up with one. According to Korkki, following up an electronic application with a printed copy of your cover letter and résumé can make a big impression on the decision-makers.

WHAT'S NEW AT CRC

NEW VOLUNTEERS

Charlene Ackerman is a new client services representative at CRC. After a career in early childhood education, Charlene still has more energy to devote to helping those in her community.

Yeongfu Chen is a retired architectural engineer who wanted to stay involved and keep learning about her community. She is manning our front desk on Wednesday afternoons.

Shelly Cohen brings years of employment industry experience to CRC as a client services representative. He is looking forward to helping clients fulfill their career goals.

Abby Scalf is an experienced journalist who will be lending her talents to CRC's public relations efforts. She will be writing press releases, profiles and other materials to raise the visibility of

SUCCESS STORIES

CRC clients have recently accepted new positions at:

Advocate Healthcare
 Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Illinois
 Chicago Housing Authority
 College of American Pathologists
 CVS Caremark
 Follett I.T.
 Hewitt
 Imperial Realty Corp.
 Internal Revenue Service
 Kids Hope United
 Konami
 LuPin Pharmaceuticals
 Murro Recycling
 Odysee Hospital
 W.W. Grainger

Congratulations to those who have successfully ended their job searches! With our wide range of services, from résumé help to computer classes, we look forward to helping write more happy endings.



MARKETING COMMITTEE

In 2008, CRC received a grant to raise the visibility of the organization through a formal marketing plan. Our newly formed marketing committee will help guide the efforts of an external marketing firm as they propose strategies and tactics for CRC.

The committee brings a wide range of expertise to this important task. Under the strong leadership of CRC Board member **Karen Longe**, the committee kicked off February 10 with the following individuals attending:

- Tom Beck, CRC Board Member, VP of Business Systems, Grainger

- Holly Marihugh, free lance speech and annual report writer
- Frank Nash, marketing strategist
- Amelia Anderson, brand management, CVS Caremark
- Joanna Seff, web design, Blick Art Materials

The marketing firm is currently contacting CRC stakeholders as part of their research and will be presenting initial findings to the committee in June.

CRC was awarded this Organizational Capacity Building (OCB) Grant by The Retirement Research Foundation.

A Growing Need: CRC Clients Double

*Lap top
Internet
access
now
available!*



Since the start of 2009, CRC has seen its number of clients double. We pride ourselves on the personal attention we can give each client and, in difficult economic times, are finding creative ways to carry out our mission for a growing population. Our staff and volunteers are working hard to provide new and expanded services to meet the needs of the community, including:

- **Expanded programming** – CRC has taken the initiative to increase programming to meet the needs of our growing clientele. This includes two software application classes each month instead of the usual one, 10 to 12 education events a month instead of the usual 5-7, and as needs arise, we are also offering ad hoc programs throughout the month.
- **Accountability groups** – We are leveraging the growing number of clients and helping them serve as resources for each other. Through CRC's facilitation many clients have joined small goals groups that meet either weekly or bi-monthly. The group setting will help clients stay motivated and on task while they offer an added sense of connection.
- **New client priority** – Our goal is to schedule a first advisor conversation within a week of registration. To meet this commitment, we are giving new clients first priority for open appointments.
- **Plain, old fashioned hard work** – Several advisors are offering more time each week and taking on additional clients to help meet the growing need.

Thank you to all our volunteers who so graciously offer their talent, creativity and dedication.

Share Your Talents—You Can Help Us Make A Difference!

As the needs of the community grow, so does CRC's need for volunteers. If you have time or talent to share, please consider sharing it with CRC. We are especially in need of individuals for the following volunteer opportunities:

Advisor: Must have extensive experience in mentoring, training and hiring individuals at all levels of an organization. Experience can be in any discipline. Familiarity with the hiring process and networking strategies are critical, but more important is your ability to listen and your desire to help.

Half Day a week for 2 or 3 one-hour private consultations

Network Facilitator: Enjoy conversing with individuals from a wide spectrum of disciplines? You can make a difference in a job seekers quest for new employment by facilitating a group of 15–25 job seekers. The ability to elicit an animated exchange of information between participants is key.

Tuesday evenings or Weekdays 4–6 times per year

Fundraising Assistant: CRC would not exist without voluntary contributions. You will assist the Executive Director in producing proposals, tracking donors and preparing thank you letters. Strong communication skills, excellent organizational skills and proficiency in MS Office are a must.

Flexible hours, approximately 6 hours a week

For more information on these or any volunteer opportunities, please contact Jan Leahy, Executive Director, at (847) 295-5626 or volunteer@careerresourcecenter.org

UPCOMING SPRING 2009 EVENTS

Thursday, June 4th, 11:45 a.m.

Brown Bag Networking

The key to a successful job campaign is knowing how to connect with and engage others in gathering information to further your search. Making these connections can also help you to tap the illusive “hidden job market” — jobs that are never publicized. Here’s an opportunity to expand your network, gather information on potential employers and assist others in their job campaign. Bring your energy along with résumés, handbills, business cards and your lunch.

Facilitated by: Betsy Smith, entrepreneur

Thursday, June 11, 10:45 a.m.

“What It Means to RIF-Proof Your Career”

Whether you call it a layoff, downsizing, or a Reduction in Force (RIF), the impact can range from challenging to devastating. While it is easy to feel powerless, there are ways to regain control of your situation. If you can answer yes to any of the following questions you won’t want to miss this session. *Have you applied for jobs you knew would be perfect, yet haven’t received a response? Do you feel you should be doing more to promote yourself, but you aren’t sure what? Would you like to know what it takes to protect and keep your job?* Rob will share the strategies he’s learned in over 15 years of coaching job hunters and employees alike.

Facilitated by: Rob Sullivan, Author, Speaker and Coach

*CRC’s philosophy is to
foster hope and optimism,
validate and restore self-
esteem, and encourage
persistence
in the face of obstacles.*



Hours

Monday, Wednesday, &
Thursday

9:30 am—4:30 pm

Tuesday

4:00 pm—9:00 pm

Friday

9:30 am—12:30 pm



In our recent alumni survey:
✓ 77% liked coming to CRC because of the professional environment
✓ 58% are more satisfied in their current job than they were in their previous job

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