

by Allen Anderson

Getting Rid of Assumptions

One of the easiest ways to expand job development success is to rid yourself of assumptions or preconceived notions when you contact the employer. The contact point with the employer (the point at which you say something to each other), is the key to any job development success. This contact point can be used wisely and yield many opportunities, or it can be squandered through poor preparation.

There are several preconceived ideas that often lead us to getting poor value from the contact point. Abandoning these ideas is a very cheap and efficient way to increase the numbers of jobs you secure.

1. Often when we do job searches, we look for one specific job for one specific candidate. Unless you have a very small number of potential candidates, looking for one job at a time is a waste of resources. You always keep in mind the person you want to place, but when the job type you are looking for does not exist with that employer, you should still explore other needs and opportunities. You may find something for someone else that you had not thought of, or predicted. Looking for a specific job for a specific candidate is time consuming, too narrow a search and boring to employers, as you present yourself as being stereotypically limited in capacity to respond to the employer's needs. Many jobs exist that candidates would not identify for themselves, but once known, they would be pleased to consider. Look for opportunities with a candidate in mind, plus for any other candidate you may have or for any need,

which may be there. You will always turn up more with the broad search for needs than the narrow search for a specific job for a specific candidate.

2. Do not accept an employer's need description at face value, unless you have the perfect match of candidate to job. Remember, when an employer is describing the desired candidate, they are really describing their solution, not their problem. Dig for the problem and you may find that you can offer an alternative solution to the employer, which they have not considered. .

An example: the employer wants an experienced person and you don't have one. Make use of this employer contact. What does "experience " mean to the employer? Is it:

- ♦ Someone who can operate a specific machine or function? Can you teach this on the job? If you can, what other benefits in conjunction with TOJ will give you an alternative solution you are confident to present?
- ♦ The code for someone who is dependable because they already know the job, will fit in, be familiar with the culture, or save the employer time meeting production deadlines? If these are the real reasons for experience, how can you help?

The worst that can happen with your inquisitive nature is the employer will see you are interested in them and you are willing to look deeper at their problems.



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3. You can expect a lot of no's when you have employer contacts. If we are maximizing the contact point, what is the best thing to do when you get a no? If you just leave, you have wasted the time and contact. You can probably ask two more questions after the no. Some suggestions:

- ♦ Could I re-contact you when I have something I think might interest you?
- ♦ Who do you think might have some opportunities where we could be of benefit?
- ♦ What did I outline which might have been of some interest to you?
- ♦ What would enhance our chances of being able to work here?

Try to leave the door open, or to gather important information, so when you go back you are better prepared and knowledgeable. Remember, most employers will say no five times before they say yes. You always want to be able to go back.

The employer contact point is the gatekeeper to employment. You must learn to open the gate and ensure you don't lock it by setting your own limitations.

