A guide to creating your next position

If circumstances affecting your career have caused you to reach a decision that it is time to seek a new position, the following tips may be helpful in search­ing out more fulfilling opportunities than the one you are leaving behind.

1. Adopt a positive search attitude that this transition is an opportunity to develop the most ideal new career situation imaginable - better man the best one you have ever had.

2. Write a descriptive profile of your most ideal work organization: large, small, public, private, sales driven, production driven, laissez-faire, structured, aggressive, conservative, local, elsewhere, line, staff, maintaining, creating, etc.

3. Use trade journals and business references such as those available at your library to identify organizations that meet your ideal profile. Directories such as Corporate Report Fact Book (synopsis of public and private companies in our Federal Reserve District), Standard & Poors, Dun & Bradstreet, ValuLine, etc. will be helpful in creating your prospect list. SIC (Standard Industrial Classification) codes, which list companies by industry groupings, may also be a place to start.

4. Research on-line your targeted companies or contact by telephone or in writing to obtain literature such as annual reports, proxy statements, and l0 K reports. Check products and services offered; review financial performance.

5. Know your strengths and talents; list and prioritize them. Identify the special skills, achievements, and qualities you can offer to targeted organizations.

6. Make direct contact with the person in an organization who stands to benefit most by your being hired. This might be a Board Member or it maybe an internal line or staff executive whose areas of responsibility could most benefit from your unique qualifica­tions.

7. Respecting his/her time, call that person directly and explain briefly why you are calling and how you can add more value to the organization than you expect to extract. Offer to treat this decision-maker to breakfast or lunch where you can explain more thoroughly the advantages you offer.

8. Try this direct approach with all appropriate organi­zations for whom you can legitimately demonstrate a capacity to deliver value.

These proactive steps are designed to put you in touch with the organizations for whom you would most like to work, whether there is an immediate opening or not.

By attempting to create your next position through a process designed to utilize your strengths in the environment that suits you best, you are in effect, designing your own job and hiring your next employer.

Meanwhile, continue to network through your personal contacts, professional trade associations, bankers, lawyers, venture capitalists, and other persons who may be in positions to know of new opportunities, present and future.

Throughout this networking process, keep in mind that no one else is responsible for finding you the right position, but you. Include others, but do not depend on them to find you the right opportunity. It is your job, not theirs. Appreciate any support you may get along the way, but the journey is yours alone to com­plete.

Remember, no one else cares as much as you do. ft may seem at times that things are taking longer to develop than you would like. People move at their pace, not yours, and that may not seem fast enough. Press ahead, but be as politely assertive as possible, without being overbearing.

Most retainer-based search firms are not structured to meet the individual needs of a write-in candidate, no matter how talented one might be, unless there is a precise fit for an active search they are currently con­ducting. Most firms accept only one to five retained assignments, per consultant, at a time. Therefore, the likelihood of a retained search consultant having a search for which you are the most ideally suited person, at the precise time you are available, is really slim! Feel free to send your credentials to as many search firms as you wish, but don't "wait by the phone". Most search firms are not staffed sufficiently to respond to every outstanding candidate who initiates contact unless there is an appropriate search in progress.

Finally, newspaper announcements, ads, and place­ment-firm listings, should not be overlooked as potential sources, but these openings are pursued by many other talented candidates, as well. Keep in mind that responding to openings is reacting to what is available as opposed to developing an opportunity that suits your personal criteria. Your strategy should include both - attempting to develop your own most ideal situ­ation and responding to positions that are available. Ideally, your multi-level strategy will yield several attractive offers from which you can select your next employer, where you can perform in a position that most closely meets the ideal criteria you have estab­lished.