

Thinking Outside the Box

By Deborah Noel

Job seekers today are inundated with an overwhelming amount of advice on how and where to job search. However, upon reflection, it is apparent that most of this advice is the same old tired information over and over again. Quite often, when assisting a person with a resume they will ask me “Is this what everyone else is doing?” with the assumption that the right path is the one most traveled. Well, that might not always be the case.

In job searching, as in most other parts of your life, one has to be creative at times to be successful. Go down your own road! Dare to be different! Easier said than done. How does one develop and cultivate creativity? Here are some tips that I have found can boost and stimulate your creative juices;

- 1. Listen to music by Bach. Studies have shown that listening to classical music, and in particular, Bach, can boost your creativity. Dust off those albums. If nothing else, you will feel smarter while indulging in some great classical music.**
- 2. Brainstorm. If properly carried out, brainstorming can not only help you come up with sacks full of new ideas but help you decide which one is best.**
- 3. Always carry a small notebook and pen with you (some people are lucky enough to have a palm pilot!). That way, if you are struck by an idea you can quickly note it down.**
- 4. If you are stuck for an idea open up a dictionary, randomly select a word and then try to formulate ideas incorporating that word. This concept works on a little known truth that freedom inhibits creativity. There is nothing like restrictions to get you thinking.**
- 5. Define your problem. Grab a sheet of paper and write down your problem in detail. You’ll probably find ideas positively rushing out once you’ve done this.**
- 6. If you can’t think – go for a walk. A change of atmosphere is good for you and gentle exercise can shake up the brain cells.**

- 7. Read as much as you can about everything possible. Books exercise the brain, provide inspiration and fill you with information that allows you to make creative connections easily.**
- 8. Don't watch TV. Experiments have shown that watching TV can cause your brains to slowly trickle down your ears. (This is a joke but do you ever feel smarter after watching tv?)**
- 9. Do not do drugs. People on drugs only think they are creative. To everyone else they seem like people on drugs.**
- 10. Talk about it. Talk to clever people and have interesting discussions. Conversation cafes are a new concept that seems to be catching on. For information on where a conversation café is happening near you check out the website – conversationcafe.ca**

You would be surprised at how well these suggestions work. You may have already tried some of these ideas.

How can developing your creativity apply to job searching? (Someone had to be the first to send out a resume—they were called curriculum vitas back then...). Maybe you can emphasize different skills. Change your covering letter. Get rid of the same tired old phrases. Adding a touch of creativity may help you develop a whole new approach to your job search. Just imagine, with a little imagination, we may all be doing it your way some day.

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