

# DEC Connection Job Hunting

Con Call on 5/19/09 – NOTES from Bob Farquhar

Sara Alvarado, Phoenix, AR (Who is Hiring?)

Linda Ginac, Austin, TX (Interviewing, Networking, New Career)

Caleb Stewart, Randolph Associates (Consulting as a Career)

Moderator: JACK MILES KI

Nuggets I took away from the call:

## From Sara:

- *Just because you think a company isn't hiring doesn't mean you shouldn't send that company your resume*
- *If you were just laid off, find out who your company's competitors are and apply there. Many of that company's jobs will be similar*
- *Most chambers publish a book with names of companies listed by industry. In some cases, contacts also will be listed*
- *Definitely check out: [www.jobsover50.com](http://www.jobsover50.com) (a free employment service for "Baby Boomers" and retirees)*
- *Ditto: LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)), already everyone's favorite social networking site*
- *Companies are hiring. Often it's who you know. The key: Get your resume into that company*
- *Don't give up*

## From Linda:

- *If you're changing careers, you need a gap analysis*
- *A career change might be incremental: If you're in sales and want to be an engineer maybe you become a sales engineer first; then an engineer*  
*There's a .005 % chance you'll get a job on the job boards*
- *If you're a marketing person and want to get into HR, maybe you do a little of both for a while until you're ready to transition into HR only*
- *Your resume should be two pages max; one if you can do it*
- *In an interview, talk not about what you did in the past but what you learned in the past that can help you in the new role*
- *Build new networks on LinkedIn or Twitter in your targeted field*
- *Useful web sites: <http://online.onetcenter.org> and [www.BrainBench.com](http://www.BrainBench.com)*

## **From Caleb:**

- *Working through an agency is a great way to get project-oriented work*
- *Build credibility with the agency – call it back when you say you will; update it, etc*
- *Brand your resume – target it toward specific jobs if you can. Have at least two versions of your resume.*
- *In contract work, age discrimination is less likely because people are hired for a period of time and skill set.*
- *Many contract jobs are for six months. Companies sometimes renew these.*

## **The Details**

### **SARA (Who is Hiring?)**

Born, raised in Mass. Went with DEC to West Coast. Started interviewing when things got bad.

Think about what you want to do a year or two out. She went from DEC to Intel. Worked for Intel in Arizona. Has been there ever since.

Note “Who Is Hiring” link she sent out. Lists various companies by state.

Companies are gathering info for a pipeline even if they’re not hiring now. So don’t hesitate to send companies your information.

Behind every hiring manager is a person who is the lead person in his or her group. They’ll end up with the resume.

Put together a plan, she advises. If you left a company, find out who its competitors are and apply there. They’ll have jobs that were similar to yours. When she left DEC and went to Intel she was in a state of shock for 9 months. It was a no-nonsense, bottom-line-oriented company. Very different culture.

Suggestion: Look up the companies in her link. Don't be dismayed if you see no job openings. Big companies are always hiring. Don't give up.

How do I find out about companies? Go to job boards (Monster, etc.). Look at the job descriptions. Ask yourself is my resume suited for this? Do I have the right words in there? Companies have applicant "tracking system" that highlights key words of resumes they receive. Wrong or no keywords, expect no response.

At one point her job at Intel was to find jobs for people being displaced. The chamber in every state puts out a book with every company by industry (manufacturing, retail, medical, for example). The book often will include contacts.

Tough time to get a job, she said. Job-seekers must be more creative. You'll be up against a lot more people competing for that job than in the past.

Companies usually have to post jobs internally for 10 days before going outside. It's a legal matter. The person out on jury duty or medical disability can see the job and apply for it.

Fifty-five or over? Tough situation. Diversity is king. Link she said to look at: [www.jobover50.com](http://www.jobover50.com) (Sponsored by Goliath Jobs, the web site is a free employment service dedicated to the needs of "Baby Boomers" and retirees.

LinkedIn the most effective social networking site, she said. In search space, you can call up companies or people and sometimes it will list recruiters' names.

Unemployment Offices often have opportunities listed. Worth keeping up with.

Companies are open to relocation but will look at local talent first.  
Associations: Opening your own business? There are associations of small business groups. May tell you about what it's like to start a business.

The key thing, she said: Everyone is hiring. Often it's who you know. But the key is to get your resume into that company.

Make sure you have the right words for the job description as well as other skill sets you haven't listed that may be needed. Key words will be scanned and you'll be eliminated right away if those don't show up in your resume.

## **LINDA (Interviewing, networking, changing careers).**

Want to change careers? She does “gap analysis” – what skills do you have today; what skills do you need.

Build a plan to get to where you want to go.

If you want to remain in same industry and same career, that’s a job change, in a way, she said. If you want to stay in same industry and move into a new career, that’s a change. Move into an entirely new industry, brand new career it’s a complete transformation.

If you were a marketing manager at Dell and want to go to HP that’s a job change. Opportunities you’ll get will be mostly tactical in nature. If you want to develop your career – move in a similar career but in sales, it’s a “career shift.” If you want to make an industry change – you’re working at a high tech company and move to a health care company – that’s an industry shift. A transformation is one where you say I no longer want to be in marketing, etc. I want to open a bagel shop or stop a consulting company. That’s a transformation.

A complete transformation will take a lot longer to do than just a job change (even the latter isn’t simple these days). So give yourself 6 months; yes, you do have 6 months. She knows people who have been unemployed for 2 years.

You must have 6 months worth of income to last 6 months.

Think about “complexity,” she said. If you have to go back to school to earn another degree it might take two years; certifications will take less time but still require time and money.

Most important thing to consider if you’re making a change: Your emotional state. If you have to pay the bills, people go back to old behavior and say they can only do one thing.

She has seen doctors become sales people; sales people become teachers. Across multiple industries. It’s frightening to be in limbo. So, what’s your emotional state? If someone has to get a job right now in order to pay the bills, Sara suggests a “serial approach” (see her boring slides).

In a serial process, what are the competencies, abilities a person has for the profession they've been in 10, 20 or 30 years?

A software engineer wanted to get into sales, she said. Companies slammed the door in his face. Once an engineer, always an engineer, hiring managers often feel.

Most people don't know what job skills they actually have. They just look at job description to see if they're a fit.

The entire inventory includes hobbies, friends, what they feel is important, etc. Then she looks at bare minimum competencies to perform as, say, a sales manager. From engineer to sales manager would be an abrupt change.

She would say what is the position that's closest to engineer that would move an engineer toward sales. The answer: sales engineer.

A serial approach is the most practical approach to career change.

She did a "parallel" approach. Her experience was in marketing. She was miserable and didn't want to do it anymore. When she was asked at Intel to help people make transitions, she decided she could do that as a career.

So, in parallel 90% of income came from consulting. At nights and weekends she would do consulting over time to get experience. She got to where she was doing 50% of each and had to decide which she was going to do because she couldn't do both, she discovered.

During this period, she said, you don't have a personal life. Forget family time, spending time with kids or friends not there. It can be stressful and time consuming but it's the second most practical to changing careers.

Parallel happens faster than serial, she said.

So, with a gap analysis you go to online to Onet ( <http://online.onetcenter.org>), which can help you with skills, technology tools, and more. And you can go to [www.BrainBench.com](http://www.BrainBench.com), which will help you assess any skill or ability you have from novice to expert.

Gap is difference between your current skill and skill that's needed. Then you decide how to fill the gap (could take a year, often takes more).

There are certifications for a lot of things, but more is required to get your foot in the door (she evidently hasn't heard about Boston elementary school teachers who failed their certifications but were hired anyway).

Once you know what you want to do, know your gap and skill sets, figured out what road map needs to look like and have acquired the minimal skill sets, how do you get your foot in the door?

The average person spends 40-50 hours updating their resume. It's "resume addiction." They post it on job boards night after night with little success.

***.005 % chance you'll get a job on the job boards.***

Get a second opinion, she says. Be able to use 2 or 3 resumes at most. I've never used more than one, she said.

Mention On-net again; sounded more like O-Net this time (Government-related?).

Once you have a resume, it's your lead generation tool. Use it to build the brands for everything you do, how you network, it's how you handle objections, and you'll get many of these.

If done right, the objections can be eliminated.

Job titles typically give you away. Think of DEC's job titles; hard to figure what they meant. Also, don't date yourself (oops). Don't talk about stuff you did 30 years ago (oops).

When you're filling out the job application you can "tell what the truth is."

People over 55 get these objections because of age bias. Companies also figure you want too much money, she said.

How long should a resume be? Two pages at most. Should be one but tough to do.

The interview: With job description in front of you, cut and paste and put it in a Word document. For every job you apply for you need a 90-second "story" to tell about the various aspects of a job.

Don't talk about what you did in the past but what you learned in the past that translates into the new role you're seeking.

Talk about problem-solving steps you took. A 20% increase here, a 50% increase there. (If you don't have these kinds of examples, give what you do have).

HR people like behavioral best because it's supposed to trigger an emotional response to how you'd handle something on the job. They may ask how you handle irate customer calls. They want a very specific, concrete step-by-step ... here is why customer called, what the complaint was, how I solved it, who I had to talk with to get it resolved, etc. That's a BEHAVIORAL Interview.

A functional interview? They'll ask technical questions, testing you on process and/or experience. How do you go about putting together a marketing plan for X? Tell me your sales process selling into government? These questions are asked for sure if you're going for a consulting job. Want detail. She asks a product manager, "Go build me a door." Wants to know what kind of door, what is the purpose of the door, is it handicap accessible, etc. Expects a step-by-step response and think strategically, out of the box.

Face to face networking. Build new networks with groups and associations you want to move into.

Get seen to build a new network that will lead to new opportunities. Most people go to 1 or 2 meetings and leave. Won't work, she said. Get involved. Identify the industries you want to be in and go those networking events. Don't go empty-handed. Have business cards, even if you're unemployed. Just name, phone and business area.

If I'm speaking to someone for 5 minutes and I'm asked for a card, I'll write a personal note on the back of it so they'll remember me (this is a good argument for staying away from glossy business cards that don't allow you to write on the back).

Elevator Pitch is a must. Answer 3 things: Who you are, you're in transition and you're there to learn about new opportunities and the kinds of companies that will hire someone with your expertise. Ask a lot of questions and you'll learn more about how people can help you vs. promoting yourself.

Mentions again the Book of Associations. There is an association for anything. Google “national association of...” or “international association of...”

Are job networking events (job fairs, for example) helpful? She says really they aren't. You want to go places where people aren't looking for a job.

How do I use “Social Media” to be effective? There are at least 12, she said. Forget all of them except LinkedIn and Twitter.

On LinkedIn make sure your resume and your LinkedIn account are similar. Do you want an open or closed account (public can't access if it's closed).

Then invite your contacts – business and personal. Concept is multi-level marketing device like Amway, etc., You get to know people who know people. If you can get 50 people you'll have an excellent base to network with a group of people who will help you make your transition. Get at least 10 recommendations.

In Questions and Answers form in LinkedIn, it's organized both by industry and by topics. Go to these and see what types of questions are asked. Make sure you can answer these and you'll attract more people.

Q&A is for professional purposes, not for asking who has a job.

The Job Search aspect of LinkedIn. Click the job tab, type marketing manager and zip code. It will come back with some listings – 10, maybe. Click the job to read more about it or in the right hand column look at “Who can introduce you to this opportunity?” Click on it and there will be 4 or 5 names. Your first level contacts, your second level contacts. If you know a first level contact and have his email, email them and ask for help getting a foot in the door. Second level: Ask Sally to introduce you to Linda, who has the opportunity -- the “get introduced by” feature.

A word of caution: Don't bother with third-level connections. If you're making lots of introductions, you'll be labeled as a spammer and your account will be terminated. Place in the first and second levels.

In the status bar of LinkedIn, you can post your status. Had a great interview for this type of job. Talked to someone really knowledgeable in X area.

Twitter does the latter best. It's more addictive, she said. You have a Twitter account, use a first name or a name like "career goddess." Then look at "tagging." Create a tag. Who are the social leaders on Twitter. Follow these people to see what they're "twittering" about.

Watch and listen.

When it's pertinent, you begin to engage in the discussion. Then you'll create a following by having something interesting to say. Of course, the people who follow you could be anybody – hiring managers, influencers...

Be a social media topic guru. Say it in 40 words or less per "tweet." If you're a baby boomer you're saying to hiring people you're current and a social media person. Otherwise, you're in the dark ages.

## **CALEB (Consulting as a Career)**

In the business since 1994. Great way to get project-oriented work. Working with an agency is good because it will market your skills to potential customers. Make sure the agency has a crystal clear understanding of what you do.

If agency is confused over what you do, it will send your resumes to the wrong companies.

Keywords important here, too.

Develop mutual trust through communications with agencies. If you're a match for the job, an agent should be able to speak to the customer on your behalf.

When dealing with an agent, the agent should tell you the name of the client he's talking with.

If you pursue opportunities on your own, keep track of them. Keep a log, including rate discussions.

Keep in touch with agencies, call them back when you say they will, update them on your situation, including skills you've gained.

The person looking to make a clear change isn't a good candidate for agencies, which seek people who have done certain things.

His company hires people on a "W2 basis." Clients protected by liability insurance and bonding. If working with a 1099 you have to wait to be paid by the client. W2 basis best.

You're responsible for marketing your own skills to a client. Can be tough to do. An agent can help by marketing your skills while you're working. His company does marketing, too.

When you're dealing with an automated search process and keywords are important, it's trickier, he said.

Rates remain stable over last few years, he said. Driven in part by how many people available. There are more people looking for work than there are jobs today.

Rates are regional. Salary searches are plentiful on the web, he said.

Your resume: Keyword search is the beginning of every search these days. Don't be afraid to repeat some keywords. Don't assume your audience will know that VMS is an operating system. Spell it out.

Brand your resume, target it toward specific jobs if you can. Have at least two versions of your resume.

An agent could help you tailor your resume for a particular job.

In an economy like this, people are worried about age discrimination and being "over qualified." In contract work, age discrimination is less likely because people are hired for a period of time and skill set.

Drop off dates of education but don't drop earlier job skills (maybe say prior to 1985 held positions in software engineering with DEC and Sun. Details on request). Doesn't suggest you did it "110 years ago" but might be valuable information for someone looking for those skills.

Many contract jobs 6 months in length and often renewed. Some people have been on board for 15 years but on a contract basis. Great opportunities for this kind of work in government. Mostly in engineering but also in publications and marketing.

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## **Q&A Examples:**

**Question for Linda: For face-to-face networking... any stats on what works best?**

LINDA: I attend a lot of networking events with clients because that's the thing they most fear. Haven't seen success for people attending job fairs. Where I see networking being effective is figuring out how to leverage your own network and connecting with as recruiter, a coach or a friend. Sometimes one person can open the door to dozens of people.

I don't feel networking works if you're just giving me your business card. He hasn't spent the time to get to know me. I'd never recommend someone who doesn't have at least the basic professional etiquette. Find the right 3 or 4 people to work with.

Do coffees, luncheons, dinners – and then reach out for help.

**Question to Anyone: Are there head hunters that will work with you through thick and thin?** In the old days, you'd hire a headhunter and he'd listen to what kind of job you wanted, present you with opportunities, and stick with you. Now, head hunters are interested in placing you in a particular job; once you don't get hired they drop you.

**SARA:** It's an employers' market. Most head hunters want to keep the relationship going because there will be someone else up next who needs what you do. Of course, it's a two-way street. You need to be checking with them all the time.

**LINDA:** Recruiters are paid a commission. They spend time and energy with people who can close that req.