

Job Search Frustration and Ultimate Success

My job search began February 5th 2013. I was employed for 33 years in the financial services industry and had only switched companies twice. The last 13 I had worked my way up to Director in Risk Management and looked forward to retiring from that role in the future. Unfortunately on this day I was brought into a conference room and told my services were no longer needed as my position was being eliminated.

At first I was shocked and then angry but realized this is the way of the corporate world today and I was lucky to be able to be successful and obtain skills that are in demand.

I took a few days to reflect on my situation and also start to outline my next course of action. I had a fairly up to date resume so I started to target companies that were hiring and applied online for a few positions. In the first two weeks I had two phone interviews so I was optimistic that I would land quickly. I also started networking and speaking to many contacts that would be able to assist in my search and provide me with leads in their respective companies. At first most were helpful but overtime it seems emails and phone calls were sporadically returned.

I entered career counseling at Lee Hecht Harrison and worked on updating my resume, cover letter, interview skills and marketing plan. Weekly meetings were held where a group met to share search updates and suggestions on how to improve results.

From March to June I had 8 interviews and was in the final running for at least 6 positions. I followed up every two weeks for statuses as I wanted to know if I was still in consideration for the role or not. The response was usually we went with an internal candidate or the skills were not a 100% match. I started to think that my age (59) or last salary was the issue although I reiterated that salary is negotiable.

I finally got called for an interview in July with 2 follow up interviews 2 weeks apart. I was offered a position and accepted and started work Aug 26th. It is a VP role and although pay structure was lower than previous position there is opportunity to grow.

The one thing older workers need to remember is be confident during the interview process and demonstrate why you are the right person for the position. Show how you can add value and be flexible when negotiating salary.

Don't give up and don't expect your network to be as supportive as you would want. You have to be persistent as your network will not reach out to you. Also apply for jobs that are 85%-100% match. The position I landed was not in my area of expertise but my knowledge and experience translated well into the role.

R.C.