



CAREERS

Marketing, marketing, marketing

By Sara Tusek

Recently I examined employment ads in *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. What I found there took me quite by surprise, and was even amusing in a somewhat bewildering way. About 3/4 of the jobs advertised in *The Chronicle* involved, in some way, marketing the institution in which the job existed.

Many faculty appointments included such phrases as “must have a successful track record of writing grants, as the position is self-funded” or “significant time is given in this position to professional outreach activities, liaisons with major research universities and establishment of cooperative agreements” (translate: sharing research money with other institutions or forming consortia to be successful in getting grants).

The administrative openings, which were far more numerous, nearly all required efforts at fundraising or otherwise raising the profile of the university nationally and internationally.

These very open references to marketing in universities, which are traditionally aloof from commerce and profit-making, startled me and made me think about the need to market everything in a free-market economy, even education.

IVORY TOWER LIBERAL ARTS

I worked in Career Services in two liberal arts universities from 1987-1993, and what I remember most clearly from those jobs was the often-expressed attitude by faculty members that the grubby business of getting a job had no place on a liberal arts campus.

My career services offices focused on the softer parts of career services (self-analysis, review of successful accomplishments, lists of values and goals) rather than the more technical aspects such as resume writing and interviewing, but

even the relatively blameless activities we highlighted were too “commercial” for some faculty members.

In those jobs I sometimes felt a bit like the moneychangers when Jesus entered the

temple and overturned their tables, telling them in no uncertain terms that moneychangers don’t belong in the holy house of God. The more idealistic faculty members I met had the same kind of purist thinking, that the university was about learning, not preparing for a career. I tried hard not to be defensive in the face of their criticism.



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Marketing, Marketing, Marketing

from p. 1

MARKETING, MARKETING, MARKETING

MARKETING YOURSELF

Although I didn't completely agree with their premise, I respected it. In a more ideal world it might be possible (and would surely be agreeable) to spend four years in the splendid isolation of an ivory-tower liberal arts university, leaning for the joy of learning rather than having to be mindful of how this learning might come in handy one day, when one entered the workforce.

But I knew from my own experience, and that of hundreds of university graduates, that the world of work casts a cold eye on those who don't know how to market themselves. I knew people with outstanding and valuable talents, insights, skill and knowledge who were pitifully underemployed or not employed at all because they weren't marketing themselves correctly.

At the career seminars I ran, I braced myself when we got to the interview

preparation session. I knew there would be at least one sincere, kind-hearted person who would say, "But why do I have to tell the employer what I can do? Isn't that bragging? Doesn't my resume speak for itself?"

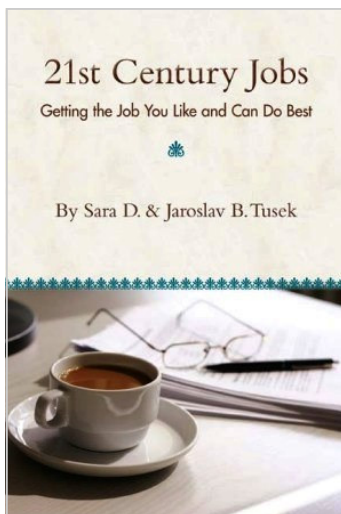
I hated to burst their balloon of naiveté with the sharp pricks of reality, but I did: "yes, it's not all that easy for a modest person to talk about her own accomplishments, but if you don't, the next person they interview will run you over like a Mack truck by reciting, in detail, all her capabilities and how they perfectly match the job in question."

The truth is that, in a marketing economy, everything is on the market, including people's job-related abilities (fortunately, in most civilized countries, the people themselves are not on the market, but the parts of themselves that an employer will hire are most definitely commodities to be bought, traded and sold, like any other market-based item).

I wonder how many of those old-school liberal arts faculty members are still on the job. I wonder if they are sticking to their guns, denouncing the career services office as an insult to the integrity of a liberal arts campus.

I hope they are still alive and kicking. The ads in *The Chronicle* scared me, as they seemed, taken as a whole, to prove that modern-day academia is rife with marketers perhaps far more cut-throat in their marketing efforts than any Madison Avenue advertising agency. I hope that I am just misunderstanding the ads, and that, when the interviews take place, such qualities as serious scholarship, love of teaching and the ability to connect with students will be the most important attributes of the successful candidates, because if even the backwaters of the American university system have been flooded by the tide of marketing, I'm afraid that the liberal arts virtues will be washed away in the fast moving currents of "the latest thing" in marketing.

21st Century Jobs Seminar



The "21st Century Jobs Seminar" gives you access to the practical advice of Institute President Jarda Tusek, who has more than 27 years of experience in helping people get jobs that correctly match their skills, abilities, interests and goals with the right business or organization.

This seminar uses our newest book, 21st Century Jobs, as its workbook.

We aim to help you, the job seeker or career changer, to identify your unique set of gifts, talents, skills, interests, accomplishments, values and dreams--and then to find ways to make those dreams into reality, bringing all of your potential to the job which will use this potential to the fullest: ***the job that you can love, and do best.***

The next "21st Century Jobs" seminar begins in January 2010, in Lake Mary, Florida. Please email Jarda at jbt@ili.cc for more details.

Careers is back!

We started publishing this newsletter in 1985, at St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY. In 1987 it migrated south to The University of the South in Seawee, TN, where we published it till 1993.

After giving it a 16-year rest, we're reviving Careers, in response to the needs of people to find a career in today's challenging job market.

We want to help you find the job you like and can do best!

Careers

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