

The Word for the 2021 Job Search is “Fearless”

By Amy Soricelli

Back in December, 2020, we were asked by our Chairman to come up with “a word for the coming year”. I gave some thought to the job search process, the challenges the next graduating class faces, and the uncertain and changing times in which we are living. After reviewing what is needed for success in 2021, I landed on the word “Fearless” and believe that is the ‘word to live by’ when faced with almost anything.



What does it mean to be ‘fearless’ in your job search? Does it mean throwing caution to the wind and picking up the phone and asking to speak to the CFO? It does not. Does being ‘fearless’ suggest that you should reach out to every recruiter on LinkedIn, send a direct message and attach your resume? Once again, No.

“Fearless’ job searching is a process which involves introspection, curiosity, research, goal setting and action.

Starting with introspection: What does it mean in the job search? Are you aware of how you look for jobs; what method do you use when researching new opportunities? How often do you actually ask yourself if your job search is going in the correct direction? Are you still as interested in the same job titles/functions as you were when you started the job search? What have you learned from the ‘search bar’ that has enlightened you? Maybe you discovered a different aspect of the industry you weren’t aware of and that now sounds more appealing; change and growth is a natural process and it occurs in the job search regardless of whether one looks for it or not. Ask yourself (often), if you are still looking for the same job, title, function as you were when the job search was initially started.

Be curious. What types of companies, industries, organizations, associations, people, are involved in the types of things you are? Google often and with reckless abandon. Look at company websites, study executive profiles, research initiatives that worked for your company of interest – look for initiatives that failed. Find out who the competitors are of the companies you have an interest in, and become an expert on them as well. Ask questions, make connections, join conversations (that are appropriate and relevant) attend webinars, and be generally present.

We all know what ‘research’ entails. We’ve done papers, worked on projects, created narrative in support of, or against something. How is your research different when it comes to being “Fearless”? First of all, curiosity needs to drive your research. You must approach the ‘search bar’ with a renewed sense of exploration – things must be done differently and with a new set of eyes. What can you look for that is related to the industry you have an interest in – what are some of the complimentary industries or organizations that can add scope to your job search? Try searching for “competitors of” the organization you have an interest in – connect to some of the influencers associated with it. Oftentimes, it is easier to start with Brand B, gain some accolades, and then move to Brand A.

The next step is where the real “fearlessness” comes in. Goal setting. We have all been victim to the dreaded New Year’s resolutions or daily, weekly, monthly ‘to do’ list. That is not the type of goal setting needed here. Vision, confidence, creativity must determine your goals. Where do you REALLY want to be – what steps can you take (each and every day) to get you closer to the ‘prize’? What can you accomplish on a daily basis? Perhaps there a month to month plan works better for you. What is the ‘end result’ of these small, individual goals? Whether they include revising your resume, enhancing your LinkedIn

profile, connecting to 10 industry professionals, joining three professional organizations, creating a LinkedIn group dedicated to Junior's in your major, asking for three recommendations, applying to 6 jobs in a new town, they must be created with an 'end result' in mind or they are not really goals. You need to write them down somewhere and then take joy in crossing them off.

Action is the best part of "fearlessness" it means you have taken the next step and all the plans in your head, can become a reality. Pick up the phone and speak with a recruiter in your industry of choice. Ask the recruiter for suggestions regarding tailoring your resume to the clients they service. Ask a recruiter (who makes a living at this) for help in obtaining your 'goal job'. Speak to your career services department for leads, association events, resources. Apply to every job that sounds interesting, and then take copious notes for follow-up. Do the follow-up; send the thank you to those who rejected you because one day they may not.

It is important to be "fearless" but it must be coupled with optimism. The job search is not easy (actually, the hardest job you'll every have) and each day must be met with enthusiasm and hope. Part of "fearlessness" is also knowing when to ask for help, so don't be concerned about doing so.

Each day can be a positive one in the 'fearless' job search and it's up to you to make it happen.