



IS A GROUNDHOG GUIDING YOUR CAREER?

Today is Groundhog Day and millions of folks all over the country will be looking to see if there will be 6 more weeks of winter by watching the antics of a groundhog named Punxatawney Phil. You know, if he sees his shadow, we get six more weeks of winter, if not, then spring is right around the corner. As if, somehow, you would not have to wear your gloves and hat much longer, if only that little critter comes out of the ground at just the right time. In many a long winter, even the least superstitious of us has hoped that he doesn't see his shadow and we can get on with spring already. Let me just ask you, are you waiting for a mythical creature like that to help guide your destiny in your career?

This is the second installment in the Career Boot Camp series I promised. Last issue's assignment was to get self-actualized about what you like and don't like in your job so you can be sure you're looking for the right new one. Just like you can't "get fit" if you don't know what that is, you can't get a "compelling opportunity" if you don't know what that is either. Did you do your homework from last time and create your two lists? One list of all the things that you love or want in your new job and one of all the things you don't want in your next job. If you didn't, then you'd better hope that Phil doesn't see his shadow or you're in for many more weeks of wintery, career hell because if you aren't clear about what you want, you might as well have put your career search in the hands of a mythical groundhog.

This week's Boot Camp exercise is about appearances and visualization. I'm not talking about "Dress for Success" like in the 70's or some kind of new-age chanting. You need to present yourself like the job you want. Remember your mother saying that you only get one first impression? It's true in your job search too. While Bill Murray got to replay the same day over and over in the movie Groundhog Day until he got it right, you don't get that chance when you're applying for a new position. You get only one chance and you need to demonstrate to a potential employer that you have the ability to do the job you want. I'm sure many of you have heard me say that you can do anything you want to – you're all smart folks. The issue is – do you look like a person who can do the job when someone sees your resume? Can the interviewer already see you doing the job when she reviews your resume?

Your resume is like your 15 second elevator pitch. Who are you and what can you do? Resumes must be personalized, tailored to the specific job you're seeking – not a catch all for everything you've ever done. It's your calling card, not your autobiography. Yes, that means you'll probably need to tweak your resume constantly so it fits the very specific job you're interested in – especially if you're making yourself available for a variety of jobs.

Keeping with my Bill Murray and small animal theme, in Caddyshack he said you've got to BE the gopher. Think like the gopher ... er, I mean interviewer. What you say on your resume should answer the questions every interviewer has to answer to bring you in for an interview. What has this particular candidate done that specifically demonstrates that he can do the job I need him to do? If the interviewer has to guess how you fit, or wade through a lot of unrelated data, you minimize your chances of getting an interview.

A great example for you – I'm presently recruiting for a private equity firm that is looking for a business development person – a real sourcing genius. Last week, I reviewed almost 300 resumes of candidates interested in this position and the vast majority of them touted their wonderful transaction skills. They told of the many deals they had closed and the due diligence they did, they told of their skill as managing directors and as analysts and very few of them told me about their exceptional skills at **sourcing** – the very thing the job description demands. In fact, the resumes that had sourcing on them usually had it as the last bullet in their job descriptions, if it had it at all. However, there were a few candidates who really, clearly love sourcing – their resumes said things like these lines:

- **Successfully sourced 3 new clients in the past 12 months.**
- *Developed best practices for the firm's biz dev and the team accounts for 50% of the pipeline of new deals.*
- Source deals through network of contacts, conferences, and general industry exposure (sourced over 150 potential deals, 31 qualified, 3 Term Sheets submitted, and 1 deal closed) since joining the firm.
- Develop relationships with intermediaries and senior managers in targeted industries.
- Presently in contact with 500+ companies and 50+sector specific intermediaries.

Now **those** were the things that got those candidates interviews for this job. It made them stand out from the rest in a big stack of applicants and made them look focused on doing this specific job. You might be thinking that this sounds like a lot of work and makes it hard to send out a lot of resumes. Both true. But, why send out a lot of resumes that don't get you interviews? Why not spend the time to get the job you want? Otherwise, you're leaving your career path up to the wind, hoping it will carry your generic resume onto the desk of someone with enough time and interest to plod through it and understand why your transaction oriented resume should make you a great biz dev guy or gal for their firm.

This week – start by listing everything you've ever done in your current or past jobs or hobbies that is related to the tasks in the job you want. Then get all the other unrelated things off your resume that don't specifically show how you can do this job. Don't do it in a cover letter – cover letters get separated from your resume, and usually they don't get read anyway. If your resume doesn't say how you fit, you need to either revamp your resume or get real about whether or not you're the right candidate to be applying anyway.

Practice it right now – look over to the right at any of the jobs listed there, or look at the ones on our website (www.pinnaclegroup.com). Find one that interests you. Break it down into its components. What is the hiring manager or recruiter looking for? What do you have that shows those skills and traits? Specifically! Do those things shine in your resume? Do they clearly stand out in bullets? Are they the first bullets or are they hidden in there where the interviewer needs to fish them out? And, as always, are the things that the company is looking for what matches the things you want to be doing from your list in Week One? If not, change your resume or pick a different job to apply for, or reconcile yourself to being like Bill Murray in Caddyshack “pool or a pond, all the same to me”. The way to get what you want is to do the work you need to do with your resume so it shows you are a strategic thinker and don’t just need to be stuck in a job crawling on your belly trying to outsmart a gopher.

Kindly,
Denise