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Selling smarts

If you are a small business owner thinking of selling your company, you need to be realistic on how the sale will get finalized. "A seller needs to be optimistic about their expectations but realistic as well," stated Ron Hottes, president of the California Association of Business Brokers. Hottes recommends sellers answer the following questions to determine their expectations of the sale of their business: Why are you selling? What are your expectations of the sale? What does your ideal buyer look like? Who is going to help you?

healthcareers

A Band-Aid

The continuing recession will contribute to an easing of the current registered nurse shortage, as older nurses delay retirement or return to work and part-time nurses seek full-time jobs, according to a study by Health Affairs. However, as the Baby Boomer generation's health needs increase and the economy rebounds, the nursing shortage will intensify again in the next decade, according to the study.

landthejob

All is fair

If you are attending a job fair soon, take time to polish your presentation skills — first impressions count as much during a job fair as they do during a job interview. Also make some of the preparations you would for a job interview, including learning about the companies that will be present at the fair. "What impresses me about candidates during a job fair is their approach and how interested they are in the position," says Theresa Hubbard, community relations supervisor for Minneapolis-based United Healthcare.

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Laying off the layoffs?

Job seekers around the globe can expect more of the same sluggish hiring pace seen during the first half of the year in the third quarter, but a greater percentage of employers are saying they will hold on to the staff they have, according to global Manpower Employment Outlook Survey. "Compared to three months ago, a greater percentage of the world's employers are telling us they will make no changes to their workforces. In the U.S., the cautious hiring pace will remain a challenge for job seekers as employers continue to adjust and align their workforces and prepare for growth on the other side," said Jeffrey A. Joerres, Chairman and CEO of Manpower Inc.

Better business relationships

Lean economic times do not appear to have harmed work relationships, a new survey by Accountemps suggests. Eighty-seven percent of professionals interviewed said they have a good rapport with their supervisors, and 95 percent get along well with coworkers. In fact, slightly more respondents today described their work relationships as "very good" than did participants in a 2005 survey. "In good times and bad, building strong relationships with peers and supervisors is a priority for most professionals," said Max Messmer, chairman of Accountemps and author of "Motivating Employees For Dummies" (John Wiley & Sons; \$21.99).

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Political careers take years of legwork for big emotional payoff

YOU WANT UNCLE SAM

In a patriotic twist on paying the bills, public service may be the new "it" career. "The government is the employer of choice right now," says Michael J. Smith, owner of Virginia-based Michael Smith Business Development. "Uncle Sam is kind of Fortune one of the Fortune 500."

Yet unlike many private sector jobs, politics is not just a career; it's a lifestyle — one that sometimes includes volunteering during vacation time. For those who want it badly enough, though, Tony Wilson, who was the director of scheduling for the Office of the Vice President in the Clinton White House, believes opportunities abound.

Practice stumping

"If you feel it in your belly and if you want to do it, you just tell everybody and their mother you want to get into politics. And then you just work your way up," Wilson says.

Find a mentor, he suggests, volunteer to work on a campaign, be willing to move anywhere, work hard and, regardless of how far along you are in politics, networking is everything.

"Most of us folks, including Rahm Emmanuel and the community organizer, Obama, did some crazy stuff when we were young," says Wilson, who packed his car and drove to Iowa to knock on doors for his candidate and sleep on people's couches for six weeks when he was starting out.

"Just go do it. First thing, finish school," Wilson says. "Then you just have to talk to everyone. I don't care if it's Rahm Emmanuel. If you run into him on the street, you go up to him and say 'I want to get into politics. I live in Chicago. Who can I talk to?' Because Rahm used to be one of those guys, too."

Get involved

John J. Pitney, Jr., is the Roy P. Crocker professor of American politics at Claremont McKenna College in Claremont, Calif., and has three words for his students: "Get practical experience."

He suggests taking one of three paths to a political career, none of which, he said, are mutually exclusive. One, climb the ladder of elective office, first by becoming a valuable member of the community and starting with entry-level offices such as school board or city council, eventually working your way up to national office. Second, go the political staffing route by starting as a low-level staffer in a personal office and work up to community and leadership offices. Third is political consulting, where academic backgrounds in statistics or social psychology lend themselves to careers in polling.



Tips on breaking into politics

- **Learn how to write, articulate issues** — forensics/debate classes are a good place to start.
- **Volunteer.** Get involved locally. Make yourself a valuable member of your community.
- **Talk to everybody and make friends everywhere (and get a mentor).** Tell people you want to go into politics and eventually someone will be able to help you do so.
- **Work with candidates you admire.**
- **Go to Washington, D.C.** Work on the hill as a congressional page as early as age 16, spend a college semester in D.C., do an internship or clerk for a judge if you're out of law school.
- **Once you're in D.C., engaging in the social scene is critical.** You must go out after work.
- **Have a good attitude.** Do the work, no matter what it is, and do it happily.

No matter which path you choose, budding politicians almost always start out working for free.

"There is zero way around internships. If you want to work for pay, you will work at first for free," said a senior political and official aid to a Republican in Congress who requested to remain anonymous.

He started as an unpaid intern lobbying the state legislature on student interests for a university and worked his way up through internships with the state legislature, the state Republican Party and eventually

moved to Washington for his first paid internship with a lobbying firm. After another unpaid internship, he went to work answering mail for the congressional representative to whom he's now a senior policy adviser.

The payoff

"I do what I do because I passionately believe that the ideas I'm fighting for are the right ones and that the ideas the other side fights for are the wrong ones," the senior aid said. "I'm not getting rich in this occupation — it's not a bad living — but I enjoy it every single day."

According to the U.S. Department of Labor's Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2006, the highest-paid 10 percent of all legislators earned more than \$75,270 a year; the middle half earned between \$13,530 and \$38,690; and the lowest-paid 10 percent earned less than \$12,190.

The work is arduous and pay meager at first, but if you stick with it, upward mobility can be lightning fast compared to the corporate world. A little more than four years after knocking on doors in Iowa, Wilson went from making \$18,000 a year to making \$80,000 working in the White House.

Smith, a Huffington Post blogger with a background in lobbying, said at the heart of a good politician, there must be a drive to serve that outweighs the drive for amassing wealth.

"You're in service to others. In terms of why people do public service, at the heart of it, they really do care," Smith says. "You have to agree and believe that offering public service is a priority for you and not always get the financial reward you would in the private sector."

Intense interests

However, politics may not be for everyone. For some, the constant pressure to be "on" may be too intense.

"If you screw up your job, it's a really freaking big deal," said the aid to a Republican in Congress. "You could screw up a call with a constituent, and that could ruin your candidate's re-election. We treat the smallest things as potentially the end of all of our careers because it could be."

With so much on the line, how aspiring politicians can bone up before joining the public sector is debatable. Some may choose to take the academic path, with a political science major in undergrad or an advanced degree in public policy or law. Others swear by experience.

"I am not a fan of institutionalized learning. A textbook is going to tell you what campaigns ran on four years ago. If you want to go work on a campaign, just go knock on a door and say 'I want to volunteer for the campaign.'" Wilson says.

Resumes revised: Just what exactly is missing from your submission?

You've looked at your resume a hundred times. Your smartest friend, granny, dog walker and piano teacher have all given it their seal of approval. You're sure it's free of spelling and grammatical errors. What could possibly be wrong with it?

It's not what's on your resume that could be holding you back — it's what's not there.

"Resumes are most likely to lack value," says Jay Hofmeister, vice president of The Resume Bay, an Ohio-based career advice Web site. "A resume in this economy has to be a great piece of marketing collateral that within five seconds can grab attention."

What is value? Hiring managers are looking for the same thing your current and

past employers are looking for — results and accomplishments.

Numbers: "Most resumes are full of vague generalities and lack numbers, facts, figures, dollars and percentages to prove claims," says Kevin Donlin, co-author of "Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters 2.0" (Wiley; \$19.95). "No results equals no dice."

John Nicholson, CEO of Resumes that Jump, a Washington D.C.-based resume writing service, agrees that numbers add credibility to a resume. He said they also prove that you value business results.

Accomplishments: "People go on and on about all of their tasks and duties without ever making the point about how all of their hard work resulted in benefits to

the company," says Donna Flagg, founder of The Krysalis Group, a management consulting firm in New York.

Nicole McAninch, a career adviser with Waco, Texas-based Baylor University Career Services, agrees.

"Most resumes focus only on 'duties and responsibilities' of a position and fail to discuss the skills learned," she says. "The resume is neither a job description nor simply a chronology of work experiences. The purpose of the resume is to demonstrate viable skills, which should include accomplishments and above-and-beyond experiences that show who they are as unique employees."

Dates: "Dates of employment,

specifically month and year, missing from a resume imply too much negative," says David Lewis, president of the Stamford, Conn.-based human resources outsourcing company Operations Inc. "Date references as a whole are important to establish level of experience, expertise, career growth — or lack thereof."

Volunteer experience: "Many people fail to view course projects, volunteer experiences and other similar types of activities as viable experiences to include on the resume," says McAninch. "The academic and personal work they have done should be outlined on the resume along with other experiences as these are a good measure of their learning and ability."