

## BEING UNEMPLOYED DOES NOT CHANGE WHO YOU ARE

By Norine Dagliano  
ekm Inspirations

I recently met with a gentleman (I'll call him "Mack"), who had contacted me to have his resume written. I began our session, as I do all of them, by clarifying what he wanted the resume to do for him. "I want a resume that says to the employer 'This is a guy I really want to meet!'" No problem, I replied, that is exactly what a good resume will do. After all, a resume is, in part, a marketing brochure intended to get the attention of the potential buyer. After that it is up to the job seeker to make the sale.

Mack knew sales. Prior to our meeting, he had faxed me a rough draft of his resume. He had been in sales for over 20 years and he was good at what he did. His resume boasted of "growing a sales territory from \$200,000 to \$1M in two-and-a half years; opening new markets throughout the eastern US; achieving Presidents Club Status for two consecutive years; founding and building a retail business venture to over \$365K in sales the first year." His accomplishments were jumping out all over his resume, so what was the problem? Why did he think he needed the help of a professional resume writer?

Approximately three years prior to coming to see me, he was at the top of his career and going strong. He was in his fourth year as a Division Sales Manager with an international equipment manufacturing company. The VP of the Corporation had recruited him to launch a new sales program and forge new inroads for the company. His reputation in the industry had preceded him and he was delivering results beyond the company's expectation. Over \$5M in annual sales. Then the rug was pulled out under from him. He was "downsized", "RIFed" "Let go".

He shared the details of the last three years that he cleverly tried to disguise on his resume as "Consultant". Searching online and in the paper for jobs. Sending out dozens of resumes. Rarely getting calls or being offered jobs that paid far below what he was earning. Using up his severance pay, his unemployment, selling off personal items. Downsizing his life to make ends meet. Taking a job with a company that folded after six months. Taking another job that was far below his level of experience. Looking, looking, and still looking. The story was sad and one I had heard from hundreds of other job seekers.

"Let's talk about your career" I said. "Tell me to what you attribute your impressive success as a sales person and the fact that you were sought out and recruited to almost every job you held".

Mack made it all sound so simple: "I don't try to sell people anything. I get to know them and the sales process comes natural. I talk to them about what is important to them; I assess their needs and determine what I can do to fill them. I build rapport and help them to get to know me, to like me and trust me. I talk about features and benefits and boast of service and delivery. And I built a large network of people that know my product and know me." Like I said, this guy knew sales and I was certain that if I were in the market for his product, he would be the guy I would buy from.

We talked for over an hour about his career and I remained impressed. Something was wrong with this picture though...after all, he described nearly three years of frustration over not continuing that dynamic sales career he had experienced. Then his demeanor changed; the enthusiasm left his voice and his face; he almost seemed to be choking back tears of frustration, and he asked me "What do you think is the best way to find a job?" Wow, a guy with his background and he was asking me how to make a sale?!?

Something happened to Mack when he was downsized. He lost a job...but more importantly, he lost his sense of "self". He forgot how to sell. He approached the whole job search process as if it was totally foreign to him (after all, he told me earlier that this is the first time in over 20 years he had to look for work; the first time in his life he ever needed a résumé.) I simply reminded him of what he already knew, but on a more esoteric level.

First, he needed a change in his thinking. Mack saw himself as “unemployed” and was looking for a solution to that problem. He thought the solution lay with finding a company to hire him. And where would he find that company? Well, like most job seekers, he was sure that there was a company out there advertising that they needed him and all he had to do was find it. So, he read advertisements...in news papers, online, wherever he could find them. And he approached each potential employer hoping they would be the solution to his problem. I’m wondering how many companies bought his paint and equipment because they knew he needed the sale to pay his bills. I seriously doubt it.

“Mack”, I said, “you are a salesman and you are good at what you do. You knew your product well; not only its features, but its benefits and value. You sold products you believed in. You approached each and every customer with an attitude that you had something that would save them time and make them money. Further, you didn’t sit back and wait until someone placed an advertisement that they were in the market for your product. Not at all! Instead, you scoped-out the territory. You identified companies that could benefit from your product. You made cold calls and set up appointments to assess their needs and explore solutions to their problems (not yours). You networked, and used your established network to build a bigger network. You gave outstanding sales presentations and built the kind of rapport that convinced the buyer that you were someone they wanted to do business with. And, on those rare occasions that you did not make the sale, you never took it as a personal rejection. You never let it rob your self-confidence or used it as an excuse to settle for less than you wanted.”

What is the best way to find a job?

Mack already knew the answer. He just needed someone to point it out to him. As far as the résumé goes, I created an awesome “marketing brochure” for him to send in advance of his “sales calls” or to take with him when he made his presentations. My sense is that he probably won’t even need it!

---

***Norine Dagliano, of ekM Inspirations***, is an independent and nationally certified professional résumé writer (NCRW, CPRW, CFRW/CC) and job search coach. With more than 20 years experience, Norine has crafted powerful, achievement-focused résumés and provided logical and straight-forward job seeking tips and advice that has helped literally thousands of professionals in overcoming the anxiety of looking for working... and finding their ideal job. Learn more at [www.ekminspirations.com](http://www.ekminspirations.com); Phone: 301.766.2032; e-mail: [norine@ekminspirations.com](mailto:norine@ekminspirations.com)