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## ***Permanent Jobs vs. Self-Employment***

### **The trend toward nontraditional employment is putting a new spin on conventional careers**

When we look at how the majority of people earn a living, the 20th Century, in retrospect, was the century of the full-time, permanent job. The 21st Century, for an increasing number of people, will be the century of self-employment. Recent figures show that, depending on the industry sector, 25 to 40 percent of the workforce is employed in nontraditional roles - as temps, part-timers, contract workers or self-employed consultants. And their numbers are growing.

Which means that today it makes more sense to look for WORK, as opposed to looking for a JOB. But because our society is still centered on the full-time job, most people don't know how to implement this new strategy. Many are psychologically unwilling to accept the notion of earning a living outside of the traditional full-time, permanent job model that's served us for about 100 years.

Looking for work is a much different challenge than looking for a job. Since most people don't understand that, they do exactly what they would have done ten or twenty years ago. They don't understand that even if their ultimate goal is still to find a job, one of the most effective ways is first to pursue work.

#### **Unrealistic Expectations**

Today, most of the employment opportunities are to be found in small companies. But if you approach these companies with a mindset that the only thing you'll accept is a full-time, permanent job, you might be shooting yourself in the foot. They may be able to use the skill set you have, but be unable to commit to hiring you on a permanent basis.

There's also the question of your expectations. If you're looking for security, that's something the business owner and their staff probably can't provide. The only security they typically have is the firm orders they have for their products or services over the next several months. The most common approach used by people seeking employment is to solicit potential employers with a traditional resume. Nick Corcodilos, a headhunter with over twenty years experience, feels it's less than an effective tool. "A resume leaves it up to employers to figure out how you can add value to their organization. That's no way to sell yourself," contends Corcodilos.

#### **Focus on the Future**

The general theme of most resumes is "Here's what I did yesterday." To be effective in the Twenty-First-Century workplace, the theme has to be "Here's how I can help you today."

In yesterday's world you could get by with a fairly passive approach to looking for work. If your resume and cover letter were generic in their layout and composition, that was perfectly acceptable to the personnel or human resources department that typically processed them. Today, there's a good chance that there won't be a personnel or human resources department in the company you're applying to. The application screening function is often handled by the business owner or a senior manager.

So your communication has to be very focused on their needs and how you can help them. What can you do for me today? That's what decision makers are most interested in. Not what your title was in your last job or what you've been doing for the past twenty years. Most people looking for work are uncomfortable selling themselves and they rarely understand what effective selling is. While potential employers won't be swayed by a slick sales presentation, you better be ready to describe in a businesslike, persuasive manner what you can do and how that will benefit them. Good communication skills are more important than ever.

#### **A New Paradigm**

The workplace is going through some of the most significant changes to occur in the past 100 years. There is work available, but a lot of it is not packaged in the form of a job, as we traditionally understand that term. The onus is on those looking for work to find the employment opportunities that are out there or, in some cases, create opportunities of their own.

Those who are unable or unwilling to adapt to these new employment realities will find themselves competing for a dwindling number of "conventional" jobs. Work seekers who can adapt their job-search strategies and market themselves effectively will have more options, offer more value to employers, and best position themselves for 21st-Century success.

By Rob McGowan      [www.jobjournal.com/thisweek.asp?artid=528](http://www.jobjournal.com/thisweek.asp?artid=528)

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