

## Human Resources Leader Magazine Issue 181 Mynextmove – Brett Hewett, Consultant for the Melbourne Office of HR Partners.

- **I am an experienced HR professional, having been with my current organisation for more than 12 years. In line with the current market, my role is looking quite volatile and as such I was wondering what I should do to prepare myself for the job market?**

It is certainly an interesting time in the wider employment market, however there are a few things you can do to ready yourself in the unfortunate event that you are facing redundancy/unemployment. Below are some key points to keep in mind when preparing yourself for the current market.

### **Start Networking**

As much as it may not seem like it at the time, having an awareness of when you will/might be finishing with an organisation is a gift that should be taken advantage of.

If you have been formally advised or just have a feeling that you have a defined period of time left in your current role you should be taking advantage of this lead time to meet with as many people as possible. This includes Recruitment Agencies, Industry Bodies/Groups and probably most importantly (where possible) internal recruitment teams/consultants of organisation that you have identified as target organisations.

### **Be flexible**

The key word throughout this calendar year and beyond is 'flexibility'. With the market having moved in favour of the employer it is in the best interest of candidates to be flexible in three key criteria, which are:

- *Permanent Vs Contract* – Don't always be fixed on permanent roles as the only source of opportunity. In the current market a great number of employers are attempting to 'try before they buy' with many contracts being extended or converted to permanent once the candidate has proven themselves. Contracts are also a great way to diversify your skill set and experience, to put you in a much better position when the market does pick up again.
- *Salary* – Not that we are asking you to cut your salary in half, but based on the simple principle of supply and demand it is a natural assumption that employers are likely to get the quality of candidate they are looking for and be able to pay less for them. Simply being willing to look at roles at a slightly lower base salary can open you up to a great deal more opportunities.
- *Role Responsibility* – With an ever increasing need for organisation to squeeze more out of every dollar, there are many more instances of the responsibilities of two or more roles being merged into one. As such there are

many roles (especially senior ones) that will encompass the full gammet of both Strategic and Operational support, potentially requiring candidates to perform tasks which may be perceived as junior to their current capability. This is a reality of an ever increasing number of roles/organisations but in actual fact presents a great opportunity for new employees to experience and understand an organisation at all levels.

### **Be prepared**

This is an old adage but true now more than ever. In the current market one of the most consistent pieces of feedback that I receive from prospective employers is that they question the candidates commitment to the opportunity due to the seniority/complexity of their experience, this stems from the prospective employer having the view that you are potentially settling for an opportunity or looking at the role as a 'stop gap' until something better comes along.

The best way to negate this fear is to thoroughly investigate the organisation and more specifically the role itself so that you are able to answer the employer's questions in a relevant manner and in turn have quite specific questions you want answered with regards to both the organisation and the role going forward – giving the employer a level of confidence that you understand the intricacies of the role and are genuinely interested in committing to the opportunity in the medium to long term.

### **Update your CV**

Probably the most important step of preparing for any market is updating your CV. A great number of candidates underestimate the importance of a quality CV, not appreciating the fact that it is an advertisement of your suitability for a role and the only means by which a prospect employer has to judge you throughout the first round short-listing process.

Some key points to keep in mind when updating your CV are:

- Make it relevant – Use key words from the position description or relevant reference material to ensure you are 'speaking their language' which will force the hiring manager to make subliminal linkages between your suitability and the requirements of the role.
- Don't assume knowledge – avoid the use of acronyms or role titles to describe what you have done, as they can be misleading or confusing. The best way to ensure this isn't happening is to get someone to review your CV who has no knowledge of your industry or role – they will assist in identifying where you need to go in to more detail.
- Be outcome focused – It is one thing to list your responsibilities, but if you don't follow this up by also detailing your achievements (what you actually contributed to the organisation) you are only painting half the picture which can leave the hiring manager with a lot of unanswered questions.

In summary, although there are fewer opportunities in the wider market there is still a very strong value placed on quality candidates and the best way to ensure that your capability is best represented throughout the recruitment process is to be prepared.