

Information Overload

Employment Services Edition

Issue 82, September 2008

Welcome:

As we continue to see the changes emerge from down-sizing, right-sizing, head-cutting and redeployments organisations are going through at the moment, there are some important things to remember.

- Organisations – if they are to survive and grow need the right kind of people and
- Our attitudes determine what happens to us.

We would like to thank you in advance for forwarding this edition onto friends, colleagues and other interested readers. Please note that all back issues of this edition, as well as our main edition can be read and/or downloaded from the publications pages of our web site – <http://www.iea.com.au> should any of the topics be of interest and use.

Kind Regards

Lorraine Bradshaw
Marketing Coordinator & Projects Officer

In this issue we will look at:

- Age is not a barrier to getting (or keeping) a job, your attitude is:
- Keeping the job you have
- Your formal education has a very short shelf life
- A Thought to ponder.

Age is not a barrier to getting (or keeping) a job, your attitude is:

A friend's sister lost her job recently. She'd worked in the banking sector for more years than she would care to admit, but if there was one thing she did admit to – she hated her job. And it showed.

When she was given her redundancy notice and her final package of payouts you'd think she would be over the moon. She was given the equivalent of 18 months worth of money – tax free. But no. She might not have to go to the place she hated every day any more, nor did

© IEA 2008. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd
Unit 4, Upper Level, 201 High Street, FREMANTLE WA 6160
Tel: 08 9335 2533 Fax: 08 9335 2544 e-mail: training@iea.com.au

she have any particular money worries (hers was a second income and her husband's job was secure), but she still wasn't happy. The problem with Jenny* was simple: her attitude sucked, and she wasn't willing to admit it – not even to her sibling, even though she was told in no uncertain terms that was the problem. It wasn't her age, colour, creed, size, shape or ability – it was her attitude that said – I'm never going to get another job because insert all of the above reasons.

(*Name changed to protect the innocent)

If you were given two people to interview who appeared to have the same set of skills and appeared to be the same “kind of person” on paper. Who would you give the job to – the one who hated life and everything in it, AND thought the world was being unfair, or the one who wanted to work and had the attitude that went with it?

It's really a no-brainer question isn't it!

An employer wants people with the right attitude as well as the right skills set.

The differences between the two people don't just appear at the interview, they're evident to those people watching. Imagine these two people – made redundant on the same day – the organisation simply could not sustain both jobs any more, so were cutting back – the one who hated her job was also the same person who hadn't upgraded her skills in the last 10 years, whilst the other person had.

If you were an employer looking to hire a new person what would you do?

Apart from the usual advertising, reading, short-listing and interviewing – what happens when you have what appears to be the same skills set and abilities between two candidates? Like we have already said – it comes down to attitude.

1. Did your candidates arrive on time?
2. How professional was their appearance?
3. How did they greet the person on reception?
4. What did they do with their time in the waiting room / reception area?
5. How did they greet the interviewers?
6. What was their body language like?

Some of this can be learned over time. We can wear the right suit, the correct shade of socks to match the trousers, make sure our shoes are brushed and we caught the right bus that got us to the interview on time. But there will be times when we act completely naturally – and it is these key areas that a potential employer is looking for – when we think no-one is watching.

- Did you treat everyone professionally?
- Were you polite?
- Did you play with your mobile phone, fiddle with your clothes, eat your lunch while waiting, or did you take an opportunity to read the literature in the waiting area or review the application that you sent?

Can you imagine what would happen if after leaving the offices after your interview you walked outside, ripped off your tie, took off your jacket and slung it in the back seat of the

© IEA 2008. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd
Unit 4, Upper Level, 201 High Street, FREMANTLE WA 6160
Tel: 08 9335 2533 Fax: 08 9335 2544 e-mail: training@iea.com.au

car – you flipped on your phone and spoke in it – well that was a waste of time... you didn't know the window was open and the interviewer was staring at you, or that someone from the office had followed you into the car park.

Sometimes it's not just a case of interviewing better than your fellow job seekers, but being a better person that can swing the job interview in your favour.

Keeping the job you have:

We seem to focus a lot on the getting of a job rather than the keeping of them. But there are some similar fundamentals.

Employers need people who:

- Are good at what they do
- Don't waste time, money or resources
- Keep up to date with what is happening in the industry
- Offer solutions not just problems
- Are polite to customers
- Deliver what they say they are going to deliver, when they say they are going to deliver it.
- And if you are in a position of power, you treat that with the respect it deserves too.

None of this is rocket science, just common sense. People who spend all their time chatting, surfing the net and reading emails are not going to be very productive. They may land the biggest order of the entire year, but the resentment from the rest of the staff is palpable.

My biggest bug bear is appearance. If you are likely to be meeting with clients or customers – then you should wear something appropriate. You are after all representing the company and would your current outfit do that – or would a potential customer run a mile if they saw you, or taking it one step further how you sounded on the telephone?

I have just received a phone call from a large company who wanted us to upgrade one of our products. Unfortunately the person who called us sounded like he didn't know what the product was, the benefits of doing so, how it differed from what we were already doing, and because it was past lunch time in the Eastern seaboard – it also sounded like he had had a liquid lunch. I said no. But his last line reinforced my belief – “we can't force you to ...” No you can't – goodbye.

Your formal education has a very short shelf life:

I'm not sure who said that – but it's true.

Take Law and IT as two very good examples of constant change in the workplace. If you were in the IT sector and took your degree when DOS and C++ skills were THE ones to have, but you were so engrossed with your day-to-day job you didn't pick up another course or a trade journal in the 15 years since – you'd best hope you never lose your job and you'd also better start praying the organisation doesn't upgrade its systems or you're going to be in a mess.

© IEA 2008. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

The example may be a little extreme, but the comment is an interesting one. How many people are still not tech savvy? I know of people who don't know how to format a word document or write an application. I also know someone who has a stand alone computer that is not connected to the internet, and doesn't use email because of viruses (all true – I'd give names, but they'd probably kill me !!) .

In today's technologically driven world we cannot afford to let technology pass us by because we say we don't have time to read the journals, go on training courses or play with the programs that sit on our computers.

We are completely responsible for where we are and what we say we want to achieve. Even Tony Robbins once worked as a janitor so he could get the money he needed to do what he wanted.

Whilst it could be argued that an organisation should pay for your learning and development opportunities – sometimes we have to take the initiative and do it ourselves. There are a any number of free articles and journals on the web today. There is everything from the Directory of Open Access Journals to Find Articles. We can subscribe through RSS feeds to the news journals and blogs that cover our topics and there are any number of courses we can take online – some free and some for a fee – which we can claim back on our tax if management can't or won't pick up the bill.

When it comes to our future – we have to be willing to know where we want to go so we can plan accordingly.

With many thoughts

Lorraine

A Thought to Ponder

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."
~Anne Frank

If you would prefer not to receive this newsletter, please send an email to training@iea.com.au with "unsubscribe newsletter" in the subject line, or use the link provided in the email message.

If you would also like to receive the main edition of IEA's Information Overload, please send an email to training@iea.com.au with subscribe client newsletter in the subject line, we have covered a wide variety of topics from record keeping to search engine optimisation of your web site – back issues can be found on our web site – <http://www.iea.com.au>. If you have any suggestions as to what should be included in future editions, then please send an email to training@iea.com.au.

© IEA 2008. All rights reserved. You are free to use material from the Information Overload newsletter in whole or in part, as long as you include acknowledgement of source.

Information Enterprises Australia Pty Ltd
Unit 4, Upper Level, 201 High Street, FREMANTLE WA 6160
Tel: 08 9335 2533 Fax: 08 9335 2544 e-mail: training@iea.com.au