



A 212-Careers “Think” Note: Only an “A” Game Counts!

If you’re job hunting right now, read this carefully. It’s a little bit detailed and theoretical – but it’s critical that you understand the concept behind this – and its importance for your successful job search. You cannot get by in today’s job market without an “A” effort.

Traditionally, many human resource professionals, facing more applicants than openings, used some variation of a relatively simple “sorting” system that more often than not resembles “A-B-C” grading. 100 resumes received for one opening were quickly sorted into “C’s” – candidates clearly not qualified for the position, “B’s” for maybe’s, and “A’s” for the real possibilities. The goal of most professionals (and the admitted result from 100’s of professionals) was to get approximately 10% of the resumes into the “A” pile, maybe 10-15% of the resumes into the “B” pile, and 75-80% into the “C” pile. It’s not too hard to tell that the overwhelming percentage of people hired are going to come from the “A” pile. In times of rapid job growth, or for companies that don’t have very good hiring practices, the “B’s” and “C’s” got selected.

While this relatively simple sorting process emphasizes the important to job applicants of making sure they don’t make simple mistakes that land them in the “C” pile – or create a weak resume that doesn’t clearly describe their accomplishments and lands them in the “B” pile, today’s technology and today’s economy create an even more challenging environment for the job seeker.

Technology has had a major impact on this dynamic for many years now. A hundred resumes received in the mail from a Sunday classified ad has become a thousand applicants received electronically through an organization’s website or applicant processing system. I know of one employer that, almost a decade ago, was receiving 35,000 unsolicited job applications every month. If the resumes are hard copies or paper applications, the preliminary “sort” has to eliminate an even higher percentage of the applicants – again to quickly get the “A” pile to an easily manageable number of 9-10 “A” candidates.

The power of internet search has created a different version of the “A-B-C” sort. With searching tools, a recruiter can now “just look for ‘A’s’” And the “A” pile is created electronically, not by scanning each resume personally but by “selecting” resumes with certain keywords or eliminating resumes without certain key words. The “B” pile is only created if necessary and even then it is also done electronically. With today’s applicant tracking systems, it is relatively easy to narrow the one thousand resumes down to 10 or 20 candidates with very sophisticated, but “electronic” screening measures.



www.212-Careers.com

info@212-Careers.com

Add the current economy into the equation and it's complicated even more – HR professionals are reporting two to four times as many applicants for positions. If an organization takes the “job fair” route, hundreds may show up for a limited number of positions. A recent job fair, offered by a single company, produced over 600 in-person applicants for 20 positions. The high jobless rate is adding other factors to the equation, one of which is applicants misstating qualifications, “dumbing down” according to one recent article.

If the selection process weren't difficult enough already, a perfect storm has made the job hunting process **harder than it's ever been**. And in this perfect storm, you'll also find an explosion of “career” and “job hunting” advice. A lot of this advice is very good – it's “B” quality what to do and how to do it. Some of it is not very good – maybe even dangerous. And some of it, unfortunately less than there should be, is “A” or “A+” material.

Got it – think about it. It's not just economic factors -- it's the economy, the technology, changing jobs, changing markets, changing needs...

I would argue in the best of times that individuals wanting the best jobs in the best organizations need to bring their “A” game to their resumes, to their e-mails, to their applications, to their interview responses. But the reality just a few years ago was that people easily got to “suit up” for the game with “C” qualifications and job hunting skills. Today the “C” game isn't even going to get you into the parking structure, the “B” game may not get you onto the playing field – it takes an “A” game to just to be considered – it's going to take an “A+” game to get the job you really want.

212-Careers.com is a website devoted to providing only “A+” information about your job search. We don't have “everything,” we don't recommend dozens of resources. We recommend the best in “achievement-based” resumes. We have “performance-based” answers' for even the worst of typical interview questions Type “resumes” into Amazon and you'll get over 300,000 hits – narrow that down to “resume advice” and you'll still get 1000. Our 212-Careers Amazon store has less than a dozen books for all career topics.