

# “Brand You” – Tips for Landing a Great Job

by Parley E. Acker



Parley Acker is a Career Coach and President of *CareerWon*, a firm based in Coppell, TX 214.295.8395  
www.careerwon.com

**I WAS RECENTLY** asked by CareerBuilder.com to provide on-site resume coaching at a job-fair in Dallas. It was an extremely busy day for colleague and me and I was very surprised to see the number of people who were willing to wait in a line for over an hour for resume advice (we actually could have used five resume experts that day!). Many of these folks were looking for a magical

resume—one that would help “get them a great job.” Over and over again, I found myself advising that the purpose of the resume was to get interviews (not to list every job, task, course, idea, skill, etc., regardless of relevance to the current job search). To be succinct: the resume gets you the interview; the interview gets you the job.

I was also surprised to see the large number of folks who did not have a clear idea of their “Brand” (who they are and what they offer) nor could they clearly convey their job search objectives. One of the most common job search mistakes is to present a resume and objective that is too general. This often results in being overlooked because employers are looking to fill very specific roles.

In my coaching practice, I help clients break down the job search process into four steps, all of which are important: Clarification, Packaging, Presentation and Prospecting. However, a typical job seeker often skips some of these steps and plunges directly into throwing a resume together and going on-line to apply for jobs. Instead, if you spend a little more time up front clarifying your objectives and determining your “Brand,” you will increase your chances of landing a better job, faster. Here are the four steps you should consider:

**STEP 1 CLARIFICATION** - DETERMINE EXACTLY WHAT YOU WANT Do you desire a better job, a different work culture or a complete career change? Are you merely running from a difficult boss or do you want more

balance, more money, more challenge, or all of the above? The answers to these questions will not only help you de-

termine your career objectives but also help you create your unique brand/marketing message. Prepare a strategy plan including types of organizations targeting, geographic locations desired and credentials needed. Determine the key information you will need to evaluate prospects (culture, size, financials, growth, etc.).

**STEP 2 PACKAGING** (“BRAND YOU”) – PREPARE YOUR UNIQUE MARKETING MESSAGE AND RESUME Determine what you have to offer to prospective employers. It is not only about your experience and education. What are your soft skills (e.g., interpersonal communication, leadership, results driven, etc.)? These are the skills that will help you stand out from other candidates with similar experience and education. Create a Resume – Targeted to jobs/industries desired that clearly and concisely communicates your Brand. Dress and Appearance – Haircut, conservative dress, no fragrance.

**STEP 3 PRESENTATION** – PRACTICING FOR INTERVIEWS Practice interviewing questions with family/friends. What are your accomplishments? What results did you get in the past? What feedback did you receive on your performance? Understand the organization you are interviewing with but no need to overdo it – spend more time on practicing for interviews. Convey your soft skills and what you offer – it’s not just all about your experience and education. Ask questions...Is this organization a good fit for you (culture, management style, financial health, etc.)?

**STEP 4 PROSPECTING** – WHERE TO LOOK FOR A JOB Networking – Networking – Networking! Use your network to tap into the *hidden job market* (75% of all jobs are never advertised). That means everyone you know! Being referred by someone on the inside helps get you noticed. Develop a short list of target organizations and apply directly. Use search firms who will know about open jobs and who maintain relationships with many organizations. Lastly, look through online job search sites (especially as you are trying to clarify what you want) – but don’t spend the majority of your time here. Networking usually yields better results.

For more information or advice, please visit our website at [www.careerwon.com](http://www.careerwon.com) or call us at 214-295-8395.