

CareerSmart Advisor™

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

A Note From Dave

You'll be receiving your copy of ExecuNet's 15th annual *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report* any day now, and in putting it together, we take a look back at our very first survey in 1992. Back in those days, healthcare, medical/pharmaceutical, high tech, environmental and manufacturing were identified by recruiters as the top five growth areas in executive hiring. In this latest 2007 report, three of the frontrunners have shifted positions, and environmental and manufacturing didn't even make the top five list.



Some of the issues that were at the forefront of our executives' job search journeys in 1992 are the same concerns they have today. Age discrimination and the length of time to find a new job are two issues that have been most prominent over the last 15 years, so we've combined them to get average benchmarks for how long each age group could expect to land a new position. We're happy to note considerable improvement since 1992.

For example, in 1992, a 41- to 50-year old executive could expect a search time of roughly 14 months, but in 2007 this has shortened to 9 months for this age group. Fifteen years ago, executives aged 51 to 60 could expect a 16 to 22 month job search. Now, those in this age range report that it should take under 11 months before they land a new position.

The biggest — and most encouraging — progress lies in what we've learned about the 60+ executive. In 1992, this group of senior leaders expected it to take 27 months to find a new position — more than twice as long as what the 60+ group is now reporting on average about their expected time in job search.

Sincerely,

Dave

Dave Opton
 ExecuNet Founder & CEO
www.execunet.com/davesblog

Job Search Strategies for the Transitioning Executive

By Marji McClure

Job hunting always seems easier when you already have a job. You're well-connected within your industry and business circles. Recruiters are impressed with the accomplishments you've collected while in your current position. You're in-demand.

But it can be a completely different story when you're unemployed. You may wonder if your network will still support you. You may also question whether recruiters and hiring managers will still consider you a valuable asset. While it might be difficult to admit, your confidence is shaken.

If you do find yourself out of work, you will certainly need to deal with many emotional issues as you polish your résumé and get yourself into a job-hunting mode. Perhaps the first thing you need to do is take care of yourself and use the time for some self-reflection.

"Take it as a blessing. Everything happens for a reason, including finding yourself out of work," says Maggie Mistal, a certified career coach, radio host and speaker on career development. "Take advantage of your new-found free time and stop and reflect on where you've been in your career and where you are going."

"Unemployed status is no longer a factor in hiring decisions."

| | Agree | Not Sure | Disagree |
|----------------|-------|----------|----------|
| President/CEO | 32% | 29% | 39% |
| CxO | 32% | 27% | 41% |
| Vice President | 27% | 27% | 46% |
| Director | 28% | 30% | 42% |

Source: ExecuNet's Executive Job Market Intelligence Report, 2007

Jump Back into the Water

It's certainly helpful to reassess your career, especially so you don't look for (and land) the wrong position. Yet while you will likely benefit from a little downtime, don't wait too long to get back in the pool, if strictly for the economic side of it. According to Paul Mathews, president and

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3/22 — **Palo Alto** — Linda Holroyd
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3/30 — **Detroit Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Marge Larsen
4/3 — **San Diego/Carlsbad** — Mark James
4/3 — **Orlando** — Jim Douglas & Mike Murray
4/4 — **Philadelphia Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Ed Kelleher
4/4 — **Philadelphia** — Ed Kelleher
4/4 — **New York City Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Judy Rosemarin
4/4 — **New York City** — Judy Rosemarin
4/4 — **Cincinnati** — Mike Lynch
4/4 — **New Haven** — Paul Mathews

Registration information can be found at members.execunet.com/e_network_results.cfm

Learnings from Landings Wide Net Catches Member New Position in Three Months

Casting a wide net is probably one of the most important things a job seeker can do. Reaching out to as many relevant people as possible in as many geographical areas as feasible just makes sense.

It's advice that member Tim Hackett firmly treasures. Hackett's three-month job search ended only after he realized that a local search was limiting his employment options, so he responded by expanding the geographical scope of his hunt. Once he widened the search effort, 50-year-old Hackett landed a position as director of global marketing for the \$250 million business unit of a \$10 billion international industrial products company.

Room for Improvement

"I spent nine weeks in a local search, but gained success and even had a choice of four offers once I had widened the geographical area of search," says Hackett. If given the opportunity to start his job search over, Hackett says he would have broadened his search from day one.

In addition, Hackett notes that he also didn't limit the various job search tools he used during his quest for a new position. The Internet helped Hackett find available positions, but he found he had to expand his use of the Web before it paid dividends.

"I used the Internet unwisely before I made the decision to use paid sites," says Hackett. "ExecuNet was/is the most useful. ExecuNet changed the level

of discussion with search firms. I was offered a position through ExecuNet in less than one month."

A strong arsenal of job search strategies was the key to his success, says Hackett. It's a strategy he recommends to other executives, but Hackett warns job seekers against just relying on the Web as a resource. "Use the Web and ExecuNet as tools in the search; but networking is also important, as are professional/trade associations," says Hackett.

Remaining Patient

Hackett says he was pleased with the results he received from these resources, but adds that he was frustrated at times by the lack of response to his applications he received from some organizations. "I understand that résumés are shot around the Web, but in executive positions, I would have expected some level of response."

However, Hackett kept his composure and remained focused on the end-goal, which helped him secure a suitable position. Pursuing every job lead was critical, Hackett adds, as well as the ability to readjust his résumé to emphasize his key attributes. Hackett also stresses the importance of not allowing a sense of panic to enter the equation. "Fear sets in early, and you need to keep depression at bay," says Hackett. "Do normal things, as tough as it may be. I halved my normal outgoings and still lived normally." ■

Tim's Job Search Tips

1. Focus on the job at hand. Work eight hours a day in diligent targeted job searching.
2. Don't lose sight of success. Keep the faith in achieving a new position. Be selective, if possible.
3. Revise your résumé according to the emphasis of the position.
4. Follow up and focus. Keep notes.

Insider Insight

Three Simple Things You Can Do RIGHT NOW to Make Your Next Presentation Your BEST Presentation

By Jeanette Henderson

Let's face facts. You don't have to be a great actor to be a great presenter, but you do need to know something about the tools of the presentational trade. To be an actor, you need to have about 50 or 60 tools in your presentational toolbox; and you have to know how to use them in a whole range of venues, which may take years to master. To be a good presenter, however, you only need to know about 10 or 15 of these tools, in fairly predictable venues, which, theoretically, should be much easier and take a lot less time to learn to do. This is why Ronald Reagan earned the moniker "The Great Communicator." Even though by most accounts he was only a "B" actor; he understood those 10 or 15 presentational elements cold. Here are a few of those tools:

Eye Contact

You have to make good eye contact with your listener in order to be believed. If you were standing at a party with someone who refused to look you in the eye, you wouldn't trust him as far as you could throw him! Why should it be any different in a group? Yet when most of us get in front of a crowd, we splatter our message around the room, talking to THE ROOM, rather than to anyone in it.

Jeanette Henderson is author of the recently published book, *There's No Such Thing as Public Speaking*. A top speech coach, consultant, teacher, writer and speaker, she is special correspondent for the public radio talk show *Viewpoints* in Tennessee, and cofounder of Podium Master, a nationally recognized presentation consulting firm. She may be contacted through PodiumMaster.com

Our listeners will only trust someone who looks them in the eye and won't trust those who won't, so it becomes a simple matter of using a specific presentational technique. Simply look at just one listener for a complete sentence or two, before moving on to another person. Make solid eye contact with that next person, and complete a sentence or two to them. It takes discipline, yet it's the only way to capture the appearance of trust that proper eye contact provides.

Gestures

We make gestures all the time, and almost never think about them when we are having a one-on-one conversation. But once we stand up in front of a group, suddenly we don't know what to do with our hands. If we have a lectern, usually we solve the problem by leaning on the lectern, which gives us a lovely no-neck fallback posture (very attractive... NOT!)

Often when we do gesture, it's because we've thought about it, planned it, and stuck it in when we felt the time was right. Unfortunately, when we do

that, it inevitably ends up being late, because a natural gesture ALWAYS precedes the words the gesture is to accompany. When you think about them, they become add-ons instead, so they are always late.

NEVER plan gestures, period. Wait until you have an overwhelming urge to gesture, than give yourself the freedom to gesture when that urge hits you. It's the only way to avoid late (and repetitive, and fake-looking, unnatural, knuckle point and karate chop) gestures.

Vocal Range

When we talk naturally, we use a very wide range of vocal pitches, running up and down many octaves of the pitch scale willy-nilly. When we start reading, or regurgitating a well-rehearsed script, we almost always fall into the grade school "reading-out-loud" cadence, where we begin slightly above a monotone pitch and then slide ever so slightly down to just below a monotone pitch (think "I pledge allegiance to the flag"). To be an effective presenter, you must be able to deliberately recapture the much wider vocal range that comes naturally to us.

These are just three of the simplest tools a presenter must understand, and anyone who achieves any or all of them will, without question, quickly become known as a better than average presenter. And when the bottom line of your business or career depends on your ability to make a presentation better than the next guy or gal, it's well worth the effort to master them. ■

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founder of Connecticut-based Hire Aspirations, standard search times are one month for every \$10,000 of salary. And you also don't want to give the impression that your skills are stale.

Linda Dominguez, CEO and executive strategist for Executive Coaching and Resource Network Inc., recalls a client who left her position, took a trip around the world, and began her job search one year later. "The perception of that gap was difficult to address," says Dominguez. "Employers and recruiters alike sensed a lack of commitment to career and worried that she had lost touch with her skill set. So take the time you need and plan your job search campaign to include leveraging the 'gap' that shows you to be energetic, flexible and still on top of your game."

Mistal also had a client who took a year off to travel, but this individual was able to maintain her edge. The time away helped her figure out what she wanted to do and how to present herself to potential employers. "She not only came back refreshed, but with a renewed sense that international work was the right next step for her," says Mistal. "Her travels positioned her well for this new niche, and it also made for fascinating interview conversation."

Cultivate Your Network

Before you get back into interviewing, you have to find the available opportunities — many of which come from networking. It's natural for out-of-work executives to think this isn't a path they can take. They may feel that they no longer have a network, but they will likely realize that their most loyal contacts will not desert them.

"Networking is about giving, not receiving," says Mistal. "As an executive, your network should contain people who are not just contacts, but friends of all levels whom you've helped along the way." Mistal recommends keeping in touch with these individuals in the same manner you did when you were employed (such as through industry meetings, social

events and phone calls). "Don't hide just because you are out of work," says Mistal. "Rather, be honest about your situation and share that you are exploring opportunities. You might be surprised to find that several others in your network have been through the 'out-of-work' experience."

ExecuNet member Ferdinand Reinke says individuals in his network haven't necessarily known when he was out of work unless he revealed it; and his activity within his network always remains constant. "I am always asking them what they need, giving them information for their use and soliciting information I can use, regardless of my current employment status," says Reinke. In fact, Reinke says he has found it easier to network when unemployed "because I was, in essence, working for myself," says Reinke. "[There were] no conflicting meetings for my employer to pre-empt a networking meeting."

Make time for plenty of networking meetings because your network is perhaps larger than you think. Meg Montford, executive career coach and president of

Kansas City, Mo.-based Abilities Enhanced, suggests tapping into contacts such as vendors, peers who have moved on to other organizations, as well as professionals in other industries (including attorneys and financial advisors). Involvement in professional associations can also help keep executives connected to their industry.

"Even if you have only four or five people in your network, milk it. Grow it," advises Dominguez. "Ask the people you know to be on your 'advisory board' and see if they'll agree to help you out with information and introductions occasionally. Then, on a regular basis, ask for information on two or three companies, including requests to be introduced to people who work there."

Accentuate the Positives

It may seem intimidating to interview for positions when you're out of work, but don't let your career status prevent you from getting a job. You do need to be honest, though, when explaining any

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The Consulting Conundrum

When you're out of work, one of the first things you want to do is get — and keep — busy, especially within your industry and line of work. Oftentimes, executives decide to launch a consulting business while they look for their next position. You may wonder if this is the right next step for you. Expert opinion varies about whether consulting can help or hinder your job search.

Paul Mathews, president and founder of Connecticut-based Hire Aspirations, says that out-of-work executives should seek consulting work. First, see if there are any opportunities with your previous employer; then create a sole proprietorship or LLC, advises Mathews. "Consulting arrangements can often lead to full-time work, or your new business can take off," says Mathews.

Consulting assignments can also serve as a boost to your self-esteem. "It is not just about making the gap look pretty," adds Mathews. "It gets you to brush your teeth in the morning, out of the house, builds confidence, gets the swagger back in your step, and provides opportunities for networking and developing business." But it's still debatable whether consulting gigs impress recruiters and potential new employers.

Meg Montford, executive career coach and president of Kansas City, Mo.-based Abilities Enhanced, says executives should consider consulting for financial reasons only — if they really need the income. "Everyone's onto the consulting thing. Sure, it fills gaps; but unless you can prove it to be a profitable venture, it doesn't fool anyone," says Montford. "Your time might be better spent networking in your industry and/or volunteering in the right circles to make the contacts you need. Gaps in employment are not as uncommon as they once were; and with more mergers and acquisitions anticipated for 2007, gaps will continue to appear on executive résumés."

Executives need to individually examine their financial picture and have a clear understanding of their career goals in order to determine if consulting should be the next job listed on their résumé.

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lapse in employment. Mathews suggests describing what you do each day, so recruiters and hiring managers can understand how you are still connected to the workforce. “Make sure you talk about trade associations you belong to, time you are volunteering with non-profits, consulting arrangements, and other things like a career campaign you have launched,” says Mathews, also an ExecuNet meeting facilitator. “In other words, tell them how you are spending your days.”



As you work on all of the typical job-hunting activities (from résumé writing to networking to interviewing), it's important to keep a positive attitude.



Mistal says that you need to consider yourself a viable candidate in order to communicate that effectively to others. They won't believe it unless you do. “If you have any self-doubt, it has to be erased from your mind,” says Mistal. “To do that, it's best to look at the sum total of your career to date. What have you done in your career that makes you most proud? Who have you helped or impacted in a positive way with your work? How has the larger community benefited from the work that you've done?”

Expert Resources:

- Linda Dominguez, Executive Coaching and Resource Network Inc. (Executive-Coaching.com)
- Paul Mathews, Hire Aspirations (HireAspirationsusa.com)
- Maggie Mistal (MaggieMistal.com)
- Meg Montford, Abilities Enhanced (AbilitiesEnhanced.com)

Creating a Support System

Out-of-work executives are faced with many feelings and emotions that are foreign to them. Lack of confidence, lack of motivation and lack of inspiration are just some, according to Paul Mathews, president and founder of Connecticut-based Hire Aspirations. To combat those feelings, Mathews suggests that executives continue to remain engaged through meetings, interviews, consulting work, volunteering and networking groups.

“You are not alone, and people really do help people,” says Mathews. “Have you ever helped anyone going through a transition? If you help people to help you, they will receive an emotional, as well as a potential economic, benefit. Let them help you, egos be damned.”

Mathews adds that executives need to include as many people as possible in their support system. Tell these individuals what you are looking for (your career objective, what you want in a target company), so they can be better positioned to help.

If your self-esteem has really taken a hit, you should consider consulting with a career coach or counselor, says Meg Montford, executive career coach and president of Kansas City, Mo.-based Abilities Enhanced. A coach can provide unbiased support as you work to get back on track, notes Montford. Those closest to you may or may not be as helpful under these circumstances.

“Family and friends can be supportive or not, and after a while they will get tired of your story,” warns Montford. “Your spouse may take on your stress and make it his or her own. Yes, it helps when family and friends are supportive. Just remember that they will view your situation through their own lens — how is your situation affecting/going to affect them?”

Montford agrees that executives need to exude confidence in their abilities. They must not position themselves apologetically or as less than a valuable resource. “They have huge value to offer potential employers. They need to own that value, position it, and leverage it to get what they want,” says Montford. “A lapse in employment is just that — a temporary period of unemployment, while they choose their next career path.”

If leaving was a mutual decision between you and the organization (such as the job was relocated or the company decided to move in a new direction), be honest about the circumstances, advises Dominguez.

When the Lapse is Involuntary

If you've been fired, you need to be able to explain your departure from the company; and Dominguez suggests working with a coach to formulate a response that puts an executive in a more positive light.

Dominguez recalls working with a

client who made a large mistake on the job and was fired. “After several successful interview rounds, the potential employer was concerned that the executive would make the same or similar mistake — and the risk of this potential error seemed greater than the potential benefits of hiring this executive,” says Dominguez.

“We worked on carefully constructing completely honest statements to explain the departure, allowing the hiring manager to discover everything he needed to know about the executive, the departure situation, and the lessons learned — leaving a reduced risk-perception and increased benefits-perception.”

Think Long-Term

If you do find yourself out of work, try not to focus entirely on your next career move. Use this opportunity to instead consider what you would like to accomplish for the rest of your career. “If you are planning to work for another 15 years, until the kids are done with college, then focus on work that provides satisfaction and also the most earnings,” says Mistal. “But after those 15 years are up, you may want to explore other aspects of your life and career. Plan for that now, too. It will not only give you something

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Your Career Advisor

How to Bring Out the Best in Those Who Act the Worst

“No one makes you feel inferior without your consent.”

— Eleanor Roosevelt

By Dilip G. Saraf

In your work-life it is not uncommon to encounter colleagues, associates and those around you who are unpleasant, even obnoxious, to deal with. Some display this trait overtly and others do it in more “subtle” ways. Such people have a tendency to bring out the worst in you and to even overtly or covertly demean you in every interaction that they have with you.

You know within yourself that you are a decent person who is willing to make an effort to get along with others harmoniously and to ensure that amity is a much better option than enmity among colleagues working toward a common cause.

The Incurribles

Difficult people operate on a principle that defies this expectation of civility. Their “operating system” is vitiated by their own imprinting and a self-centered yet cynical view of the world around them. The mantra that drives them is to get ahead at all costs and to take no prisoners in the process, especially if it entails trampling your sensibilities. Their modus operandi is to bully you, intimidate you, and to manipulate others to get what they want without so much as even lifting their finger, taking credit for what goes well, and having a ready outward-pointed finger when it doesn't!

The worst part is that most people tip-toe around them so as not to raise their ire. Difficult people take delight in this response and treatment from those around them; they have the tendency to desiccate an environment that is otherwise full of life. Often, they get away with this obnoxious behavior primarily because of how they interact with their own chain of command, winning brownie points. They are

often masters at knowing how the superiors respond to their own unctuous charms; charms that are mobile only upwards!

As you retreat home after a typical day when encounters with such people infuriate you, you begin to wonder what you are doing wrong. As you are reaching home gnashing at the teeth and reflecting on all the things that you should have said and wondering about the hopeless inadequacy of your own vocabulary to express with civility how you feel about these people, the same person is perhaps having a drink with your boss, talking about you, planting seeds for your removal from the scene!

“

Difficult people operate on a principle that defies this expectation of civility.

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This scenario is played out too often throughout the corporate world regardless of the size of an organization. It is estimated that nearly 10 percent of the workers are difficult to work with — incorrigible — and of them, once again, nearly one-fourth are diehard incorrigible! The interesting fact is that it takes only a few to create a toxic environment at work.

What is the Remedy?

One reason for the continuing nature of such objectionable behavior is that it is tolerated. Once uncivil behavior goes unchallenged the person exhibiting such behavior continues to behave in that

manner because they enjoy being the bully; they may even amp up their incivility and the frequency with which they continue to abuse others.

Abusers get what they want, primarily because others abet this behavior and even perpetuate it by acquiescing to their ongoing abuse of others. Often, they rely on the fact that those who are subjected to such abuse often blame themselves. Abusers rely on the insecurities of their victims to take their abuse and to rationalize it by somehow finding something that they must have done wrong to deserve it.

The underlying cause (if not the root-cause) of why some people behave in this offensive manner is that their communication style is one that others tolerate. Our communication style conveys to others how we wish to treat them and how we think of them.

The Four Distinct Styles of Communicators

Aggressive communicators are driven by either anger or hostility. This can be either internal or external. In either case it does not matter where it comes from, but the way that it manifests is through the way they communicate with others. Their tone is often demanding, abusive and demeaning, or sometimes, even condescending.

The person with whom they are communicating usually feels intimidated by their language and its tone, and, rather than confronting them about their behavior, they quietly truckle to their demands with the hope of avoiding any further interaction with them. Submissive people try to please those who abuse them through their ersatz alacrity and by extending their “friendship” in ways that ingratiate them to their abusers. Aggressive communicators often bask in this reaction.

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Often, aggressive communicators succeed in creating the perception that if the person refuses their request or challenges them that they might explode and get out of control. This often helps aggressive communicators to go unchallenged and results in their getting exactly what they want. In return, most of those around such aggressive communicators often shy away from them, keeping their distance in their interactions with them. This is not a positive relationship.

Passive communicators, on the other hand, do not express their views. They quietly surrender to the situation and go with the flow just to get along. Passive communicators are often shy, easily intimidated, but are often hard-working. They compensate for their inability to openly communicate by working harder than most and by not making any waves when things seem to go awry. Passive communicators end up being the time bombs that quietly tick away and unexpectedly explode in some insidious ways that surprise those around them.

Yet another flavor of passive communicators are those who feel uncomfortable speaking up in a group setting such as a departmental meeting. They often shy away from speaking up and articulating their ideas cogently in meetings. They often feel that confident participants are hijacking their ideas and that they themselves never get taken seriously. They often suffer in quiet resignation, silently blaming those who openly communicate without fear. In private they act out by being passive-aggressive communicators, especially when dealing with those who they think steal their ideas and take credit for them in meetings. The situation they create is thus a result entirely of their own communication insecurity.

For those looking for a prescriptive approach to improve their communication in today's frenzied world, the following may help:

1. Evaluate your own communication style and determine in which quadrant you dominate; it is not uncommon for a person to also visit other quadrants. Remember, communication is a two-way street.
2. Make a plan for moving into the Assertive quadrant. Evaluate why you are stuck in the less desirable quadrant and reflect on what is blocking you from making a move to the right quadrant. Start practicing your script to move to the Assertive quadrant.
3. Learn how to communicate with empathy. Practice how to formulate a cogent point of view and concisely deliver that in a group setting, starting with a one-on-one interaction. This is a learned skill.
4. Before you decide you want something from another person, find out ways of framing your request so that the other person sees the WIFM (what is in it for me?). Put that ahead of your needs and then formulate your strategy to approach that person.
5. Speaking effectively in groups is a learned skill. Join Toastmasters or other professional organizations that make you develop your communicating skills.
6. Keep taking risks in the way you reach out to others, by starting with those who are easy to work with and then by graduating to those who are more difficult to deal with.
7. When you are confronting someone for their aggressive style, listen first before you speak. You will find that those who are anxious to get their message out, often do so with flagrant inconsistencies of logic, erroneous assumptions and unreasonable expectations. Let them see how unreasonable they are and you will find that you have turned the tables. It is a wonderful feeling when you do!

Passive-aggressive communicators use manipulation as a means of getting what they want. Rather than coming out openly and stating what is on their mind, passive-aggressive communicators often play games in achieving what they want. They have hidden agendas; they usually get what they desire through insinuation, manipulation and deceit. To those whom they perceive as insecure, such communicators often use sarcasm to get what they want.

Assertive communicators are interested in creating win-win relationships. They first identify why the person with whom they are communicating would be interested in their proposal and then present it in a way that creates a positive opportunity for both. In such a dynamic assertive communication works even if the person "wanting" something from the other person is their superior and who does not need to use their positional authority to get their subordinates to

do what they want done. In such an exchange even the subordinate feels positive about the transaction!

Assertive communication takes an effort to evaluate why the other person would engage in a meaningful exchange with them and then developing a strategy that makes it a reality. Both parties walk away feeling positive in such a transaction. Assertive communication begins with an outward view of the need and not with an inward-focused (self-centric) view.

In any typical organization there is a mix of communicators who belong to all these four quadrants. Dealing with any particular type of communicator will depend on the preference that the person communicating with them will display. Also, one person can display different dominant modes of communication style depending on a particular situation. The trick is to situationally evaluate what is happening to you and to then take action so that you come out on top. This is a learned skill.

How to Adjust for Each Style

When you are dealing with an aggressive communicator, the best strategy is to

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Dilip G. Saraf is an executive, career, and life coach at Career Transitions Unlimited and is ranked #1 on LinkedIn from among 500 professionals globally. An author of five books, Dilip has changed four careers, and has helped more than 3,000 clients in their reinvention since the 2001 job meltdown. Dilip practices in the Silicon Valley and works with clients globally. Visit 7keys.org

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to look forward to, but you may find ways to get there sooner.”

Mistal says she once worked with a real estate executive whose hobby was creating metal sculptures. He didn't want to rely on his art for financial stability, so he instead focused on finding an appropriate real estate position. At the time, he began building a workshop in his home. But once it was completed, he realized he didn't want to put his hobby on hold. “He negotiated a deal and got out of real

estate and today sells sculptures to supplement his retirement income,” says Mistal.

Remain Upbeat

As you work on all of the typical job-hunting activities (from résumé writing to networking to interviewing), it's important to keep a positive attitude. In fact, Montford suggests not looking for a new job until you're emotionally ready. “If your self-esteem is shattered, get professional help (career coaching or counseling) before starting a job search,” says Montford. “No one will ever land a new job with low self-esteem.”

Mistal suggests combating self-pity by volunteering to help others through sharing your business knowledge and experience. “You'll not only get a fresh perspective on what being out of a job means, but you'll also realize how much you do have going for you,” says Mistal. She adds that executives shouldn't deprive themselves of fun because they are job hunting. She recommends taking a weekend trip with friends (economically) or enjoying community events. “Time spent on fun and interesting activities will fuel your job search by giving you new contacts and a new perspective on work and life,” says Mistal. ■

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confront them and to politely ask them in a language that you can deal with. If they are demanding or abusive, merely reminding them that there are better ways of asking what they are looking for and then asking them to repeat their request the way you expect is generally a good way to drive the point home. Smiling throughout this interaction always diffuses any ill-will the person may feel when you try this approach. Another way to get their respect is to expressly make them irrelevant in your sphere of influence. Sometimes, this is not that easy.

When you are dealing with a passive communicator, their body language speaks volumes on what they are really feeling about what is going on around them. Learning to read their body language and then confronting them usually works to your advantage. They typically

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do not expect anyone to challenge their thinking through the body language they unwittingly project.

Remember, in a typical exchange the verbal part accounts for less than 10

percent of the communication; the body language (nearly 50 percent) and the tone (about 40 percent) account for the lion's share. Despite this fact, we rarely use that knowledge to our advantage in the way we communicate.

Passive-aggressive people can be dealt with by looking at their past pattern of communication and behaviors and then by confronting them when there is a potential for a conflict between what you want and how you expect them to react to that need.

Once you begin to read how people communicate, it is not difficult to codify their preference and to then get them in the win-win mode by dealing with how you communicate with them. Open communication and getting into the assertive mode is a freeing experience. It also empowers you to take control of how things happen around you and to manage the stress level you feel from how you are being treated by others. ■

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Founder & CEO: David Opton

Executive Editor: Lauryn Franzoni

Senior Editor: Robyn Greenspan

Contributing Editor: Marji McClure

Copy Editor: Carol Hamilton

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ExecuNet
295 Westport Avenue
Norwalk, CT 06851
Phone: (800) 637-3126
E-mail: info@execunet.com



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