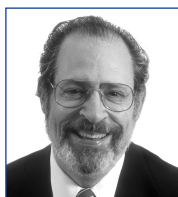


# CareerSmart Advisor™

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

## A Note From Dave

Are you on the fast track for not one, but two careers? It may sound a bit ambitious, but apparently it's a strategy becoming embraced by more and more professionals these days. According to a recent *Wall Street Journal* article, dual careers — as the article identifies them — are gaining traction for workers seeking both job flexibility and security.



The article profiles several professionals currently working dual careers, including Dr. Jeff Gold, who splits his time between his medical director post at a rehabilitation center and a role as medical director for a healthcare group. The two jobs enable Dr. Gold to devote time to patients as well as give him an outlet for his creative side, designing advertising for pharmaceutical products. "I've rounded out my must-have list of criteria for my career [and] if one industry suffers a downturn, I am still likely to be employed by the other," Dr. Gold told the *Journal*.

In today's uncertain economic climate, it's certainly smart to have your bases covered. Dr. Gold has the right idea. Plus, his employers are the recipients of the vast experience he brings to the table. I'm sure there aren't too many physicians in the workforce who practice both medicine and advertising.

I can see how these dual career paths can be beneficial to both employees and employers alike. Employees can create a fulfilling and perhaps more stable career, while this trend can actually help companies win the war for talent. Securing top talent — even in a part-time situation — can still be considered a victory. Could a dual career be a winning proposition for you?

Sincerely,

*Dave*

Dave Opton  
ExecuNet Founder & CEO  
[www.execunet.com/davesblog](http://www.execunet.com/davesblog)

## The Over-50 Career Marketing Plan

By Marji McClure

Opportunities abound for all of the participants in today's multi-generational workforce. Or do they? For years, many executives over the age of 50 have felt their age has not served them well when seeking new career opportunities. But has their perception — and the perception of recruiters and hiring managers alike — changed as more over-50 executives remain active in the workforce? Is there room in the C-suite for these workers among the emerging (and younger) Generation X and Y leaders?

For many executives over 50, the biggest challenge is their attitude, says Maggie Mistal, a certified career coach, radio host and speaker on career development. "Most find that their identity was so tied to their level and title (rightly so because of the number of years of toil it took to get to that level) that they feel an identity crisis of sorts during the transition," says Mistal.

"Couple that with the fact that many job seekers over 50 are job seeking mainly because they were laid off, and you have people whose confidence has been shaken dramatically when it comes to their ability to find a great job," continues Mistal. "They can't start over at the bottom, yet many were let go because of their high-priced salary and benefits. They've built a lifestyle around that salary and those benefits and now struggle to see ways to replace the job/career they spent so much time building."

Executives surveyed in ExecuNet's recently released *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report* confirm that uncertainty. More than half of the most senior-level executives (such as CEOs, presidents and chairmen) said they felt their age would affect their ability to land their next position. Only about 45 percent of executives in other CxO or senior vice president roles expressed the same concern, proving that age is still viewed as an obstacle on the career ladder.

A recent survey by executive search firm CTPartners provides a glimpse into the recruiting side of the equation. Fifty-three percent of the 158 senior executives polled said they would hire a 72-year-old CEO if the individual was qualified for the job, which illustrates mixed feelings about hiring older executives. (In its research, CTPartners notes that, if elected, John McCain would be 72 when he enters the White House.)

**Continued on page 4**

<b>Learnings From Landings</b> Building and Maintaining Your Network are Critical to Successful Job Search .....	2
<b>Insider Insight</b> Why the Left and Right Brain Need to Meet in the Middle .....	3
<b>Food For Thought</b> 10 Career Killers: Workplace Behaviors That Ensure Career Self-Sabotage .....	6
<b>Your Career Advisor</b> What's Good About Being at a Crossroad? .....	7

FastTrack Programs  
June 2008  
Hosted by Dave Opton,  
founder and CEO, ExecuNet

- 6/13 — **FREE PROGRAM FOR MEMBERS** — Prepare for the Client Meeting — Rochelle Togo-Figa
- 6/17 — **Market Your Potential, Not Your Past** — Karen Armon
- 6/18 — **Dealing with Difficult People** — Jean Walker
- 6/18 — **What People Want: The Defining Needs in Manager/Employee Relationships** — Terry Bacon
- 6/26 — **Advanced Networking for C-Level Executives** — Bill Belknap

Register today! Call ExecuNet's Member Services at 800-637-3126 or visit [www.execunet.com/fasttrack](http://www.execunet.com/fasttrack)

Networking Meetings  
May/June 2008  
Hosted by ExecuNet Facilitators

- 5/27 — **Chicago** — Melody Camp
- 5/28 — **Denver** — Karen Armon
- 5/28 — **Toronto** — Martin Buckland
- 5/29 — **Los Angeles** — Eileen Hupp
- 5/29 — **Columbia, MD** — Ed Loucks
- 5/29 — **Dallas** — Bob Hueglin
- 5/30 — **St. Louis** — Ken Coleman & Randy Hove
- 5/30 — **Detroit Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Marge Larsen
- 6/3 — **San Diego/Carlsbad** — Mark James
- 6/4 — **Cincinnati** — Jennifer McClure
- 6/4 — **NYC Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Judy Rosemarin
- 6/4 — **NYC** — Judy Rosemarin
- 6/4 — **Philadelphia** — Ed Kelleher
- 6/4 — **Philadelphia Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Ed Kelleher
- 6/5 — **Stamford** — Linda VanValkenburgh & Bruce Hall
- 6/5 — **Southern Wisconsin** — Clara Hurd Nydam & Tom Senge
- 6/9 — **Detroit** — Marge Larsen
- 6/9 — **Miami/Hollywood** — Jeannette Kraar
- 6/10 — **Phoenix** — Fred Coon
- 6/10 — **Orlando** — Jim Douglas & Mike Murray
- 6/11 — **Cleveland Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Rick Taylor
- 6/11 — **Denver** — Karen Armon
- 6/11 — **Toronto Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Martin Buckland
- 6/11 — **Greensboro** — John O'Connor
- 6/12 — **Seattle Sr. Executive Roundtable** — Susan Stringer
- 6/13 — **Tampa Bay** — Gina Potito
- 6/13 — **Parsippany** — Linsey Levine
- 6/16 — **Boston** — Marg Balcom
- 6/17 — **Cleveland** — Rick Taylor
- 6/17 — **Irvine (Orange County)** — Mark James
- 6/17 — **Houston** — Michael Grove
- 6/17 — **Seattle** — Susan Stringer
- 6/18 — **Portland** — Jean Walker
- 6/18 — **Charlotte** — Merton Marsh & Michael Hall

Registration information can be found at [members.execunet.com/e\\_network\\_results.cfm](http://members.execunet.com/e_network_results.cfm)

## Learnings From Landings

# Building and Maintaining Your Network are Critical to Successful Job Search

When ExecuNet member Jonathan Meyer was in a career transition in 2002 and 2003, he may not have expected to be in transition again last fall. But Meyer definitely didn't forget all he learned about job search five years earlier, and it helped him complete this latest search in two months.

It took just that short time to secure a position as director of IT for a \$500+ million manufacturing firm with nearly 3,000 employees. "My search in 2002/2003 was incredibly valuable in preparing me for my latest search," says Meyer. "The importance of networking was very apparent in the earlier search; and while not perfect, I have maintained many of my relationships and understood how to manage a transition."

### A Complete Networking Effort

Meyer is definitely a serious networker. He says that a main key to his job search success was that he quickly let his personal network know that he was looking for a new position. "Networking with individuals I have considered friends and colleagues over the years has worked successfully for me," adds Meyer.

Meyer didn't rely solely on those friends and colleagues for assistance in his search. To broaden his scope of contacts, he aligned himself with networking groups as well. "I quickly became active in key networking organizations and took advantage of offers for assistance [and participated in] several one-on-one breakfast and lunch meetings," Meyer says. Both individual and group networking strategies were extremely helpful for Meyer.

Because he already had a strong personal network developed, Meyer says he didn't find it necessary to tap into the resources of large scale recruiters.

However, smaller, niche firms were still valuable contacts to communicate with. "In the relatively short time that I was transitioning, I really didn't establish any recruiting relationships with the major executive search firms," he says. "I have a network of regional IT executive recruiters that I've known to be successful with friends and colleagues, and reached out to them. Only one or two opportunities surfaced during my brief search — but it only takes one."

Meyer adds that because he was not relocating, he felt that regional firms/specialists were the best sources for him to tap into. "They had more to offer me in terms of local knowledge and relationships than the larger firms," notes Meyer.

### A Market of Opportunity

While his job search was very efficient and successful five years ago, Meyer was confident that the environment hadn't changed much since his last turn as a job seeker. He expected that he would find an even better marketplace this time. "Even though I was successful very quickly [in 2002/2003], I expected a much improved market in 2007, with more opportunities availing themselves," says Meyer. "I was a bit surprised to see the number of quality IT executives in transition that I did."

Even so, Meyer says that he landed his new position more quickly than he anticipated. He had prepared himself for a six-month search, and landed his new position in only one-third the time. "The speed with which this opportunity presented itself and came to fruition was a pleasant surprise," Meyer adds.

Meyer credits online networking resources, such as ExecuNet, with supplying helpful job search tools. He says

**Continued on page 6**

## Insider Insight

# Why the Left and Right Brain Need to Meet in the Middle

*ExecuNet was invited by global executive education organization HSM to create a series of articles based on the presentations at its World Innovation Forum in New York City in early April. HSM delivered the articles to the senior business leaders who attended the two-day Forum of innovative thinking, and we are pleased to also share them with our ExecuNet members.*

By Robyn Greenspan

New business challenges demand new ways of processing information and force us to cast an expansive net to develop creative solutions. Author Daniel Pink is an admitted left-brain thinker; but, he says, a tilt toward the right hemisphere can help create the essential innovation to compete in an increasingly global marketplace, where artistry is as important as analysis.

“The left side of the brain enables logical, linear abilities that are 100-percent necessary, but they are no longer sufficient,” says Pink. “The right brain allows you to determine context; processing all at once instead of sequentially; understanding synthesis instead of analysis; and empathy, all of which are now becoming more important.”

“This is not wishful thinking; this is an argument,” continues Pink. “I am a very analytical, data-driven guy; but you can’t just take only that approach to life.”

Pink points to the three new business challenges of the 21st century — abundance (especially in North America), Asia and automation — to make the case for cultivating enhanced right-brain thinking.

While it may seem counterintuitive to consider abundance a problem, Pink explains that when there is scarcity, there is no need to differentiate. Abundance is exemplified in the growth of the self-storage business. “Storage facilities proliferate, even though homes have gotten bigger and households have gotten smaller,” Pink notes. “Self-storage is a \$22.6 billion per year business — larger than the motion picture industry.”

In this era of abundance, where there are more automobiles than drivers and

“

Companies are creating tales around their products to distinguish themselves.

”

consumers have countless choices, there is more pressure to innovate. “There is a premium on design as a differentiator, and a premium on story as a differentiator,” says Pink, referring to how brands are connecting with consumers in emotive ways.

Using India as the embodiment of Asia, Pink notes that if just 15 percent of India’s population of one billion has the talent, education and skills, it will surpass America’s workforce. “Last month, 146 million Americans worked to power the world’s biggest economy,” Pink notes, and India will be even more powerful by 2010, when English becomes the most spoken language.

Offshoring is not an immediate threat to U.S. jobs, but Pink says it is an example of how we overestimate the impact in the short run and underestimate in the long run. “Workers making \$65,000 per year in the U.S. make \$18,000 in Asia with the same skills,” says Pink, adding that any kind of routine work that is just a series of steps will disappear in the U.S. and race toward the cheapest mass provider. However, he also notes that as those lower-cost workers begin to see the abundance at hand, the cost to keep them rises, and thus they become more expensive workforces.

“Even certain kinds of white-collar work that our parents said we ‘could fall

back on’, like accounting, is becoming routine,” and Pink says that his “fall-back” profession — law — is also becoming automated. “Uncontested divorce is routine paperwork, reduced to lines of code. You can now go to a lawyer, or go to [CompleteCase.com](http://CompleteCase.com) or [123DivorceMe.com](http://123DivorceMe.com) for affordable solutions.”

“Automation has replaced muscle, and now computers are replacing our left brains,” adds Pink; but he identified six abilities that are difficult to outsource where American companies can capitalize:

### Design

“To be in business today, you must be literate in design,” says Pink, and General Motors is a prime example. Since we now have more cars than drivers, cars have become mobile sculpture using design as the differentiator.

### Story

Companies are creating tales around their products to distinguish themselves and make them more memorable than their competitors. Pink cites a Dole banana campaign whereby stickers with numbers appeared on each individual fruit. “The buyer goes online, puts the number into the Dole site, and learns where the banana was grown along with information about the farmers,” explains Pink.

### Symphony

This is the “killer app,” according to Pink, which is going to be very difficult to outsource. It’s the ability to see the big picture, connect the dots, and combine into a completely new hybrid. In a study Daniel Goleman conducted of peer-identified star performers, the one correlation they all had was pattern recognition and big picture thinking.

### Empathy

This a characteristic that is hard to routinize and automate. Companies that demonstrate

Continued on page 7

## Over-50

Continued from page 1

### Broaden Your Thinking and Your Horizons

The worst thing over-50 executives can do is hide when trying to overcome the age hurdle. Getting out of their comfort zone is a must. They need to possess the initial courage and confidence they had that made them successful earlier in their careers.

“Older executives are very narrow in their focus because they have been programmed by years of employment to think that way,” says Rich Gee, a Connecticut-based executive coach. “Because of that they are quite scared of the process and don’t take those educated risks that might deliver incredible gains in position, stature and salary.”

Put simply, these executives can’t do what they have always done. A new strategy is required. “They must present themselves differently than they have in the past,” says Karen Armon, creator and founder of Golden, Colo.-based Market-One Executive. “Many use old tactics, learned almost 20 years ago, and they don’t work anymore.”

“Executives over 50 need to broaden their scope and concurrently the way they communicate who they are, what they want, their skills, and the results they have achieved,” agrees Frank Slugaski, an executive coach at Connecticut-based Hire Aspirations. “Many of us have never had to look for a job before because jobs have found us. The job market has changed and evolves daily. Any potential employer in any industry is looking for the best candidate for the job — [someone who] knows how to take all of that experience and talk about it — and feels comfortable doing it.”

That’s the point that experts feel is one of the most important to the over-50 executive. They need to realize that there are opportunities for them in the workforce. In today’s war for talent, companies are looking for the very best executives to lead their operations.

If these over-50 executives can illustrate that they are, in fact, the best, they will find many career paths open to them. Thus, the true challenge is how to most

### Getting Your Career on Track: Tips That Span the Generations

Regardless of whether you’re an over-50 executive seeking your next career opportunity or you’re a bit younger — we all need help to kick-start our efforts when we’re in career transition. Kathy McAfee, president of Connecticut-based Kmc Brand Innovation LLC, offers the following suggestions for transitioning executives:

- Relax and realize that you are more than what you do and what you make.
- Rejuvenate your body. This is the perfect time to get in shape and energize your physical strength and well-being.
- Reconnect with your network — people in your past and present circles.
- Re-engage in the community. Volunteering on boards and committees and doing service work can bolster your sense of value.
- Re-examine your career values. What is important to you in your work and why? Rarely is it just about the money.
- Release any and all limiting decisions and negative emotions that don’t support your desired goals.
- Re-invest in yourself. What courses have you always wanted to take, but had too many meetings to attend? Perhaps there are new systems, technologies and knowledge that have been developed while you were focused on your last position.
- Rebrand yourself. Write your executive profile as if it was a mission statement. Give them a sense of who you are and what you care about.
- Re-invent yourself. You don’t have to stay in the same line of work that you’ve always been doing. There are many ways in which you can transfer your skills and apply them in exciting new ways.

effectively market themselves.

Many over-50 executives fear that their age will hurt them in their quest for a new position. Slugaski says it concerned him too when he found himself searching for a new position for the first time in 20 years after serving as the CEO of a holding company.

“Every interview had that possibility in the back of my mind,” he says. “Sometimes your fears are justified, but you’ll never know when for sure. The key is to be better prepared to deal with solving the needs of the company you are meeting and communicate who you are with a rapport-building bend. Whether you’re 55 or 35, a company wants a good fit before anything else. Economics will always dictate when companies hire. I don’t believe they dictate who they hire.”

“If you buy into the belief you’re a victim of age discrimination, unfortunately you will subconsciously attract situations in which it will appear you are a victim of age discrimination,” says Janet White, author of *Secrets of the Hidden Job Market: Change Your Thinking to Get the Job of Your Dreams*. “As a result, you’ll believe there is no other reason you’re not getting hired except for your age.”

### Marketing Yourself: Handling Résumés and Interviews

Jean Erickson Walker, EdD, author of *The Age Advantage*, stresses the importance of first taking a step back to assess what you’ve done before you begin your job search. Don’t immediately get on the phone with your network, she advises. “Take time for a thorough assessment that includes not only what you have done, but who and what you are, where your real strengths and talents are; not just the roles you have filled and the tasks you have completed,” says Walker. “People hire people, not lists of companies, job titles and functions.”

Once your assessment is completed, the next step is to prepare your marketing materials. Résumés are meant to showcase your vast experience. But many over-50 executives are concerned that if they present too much experience, and even reveal their age via dates of employment, they will be considered overqualified by potential employers. Opinion is mixed on whether to include age-revealing dates, but experts do agree that illustrating your vast experience is a must.

“Put dates in parentheses at the end of your last ‘success story’,” suggests

Continued on page 5

## Over-50

Continued from page 4

White. “When you put your dates like this, you put the focus on *what* you did, not *when* you did it,” she explains. “Include the year you graduated from college. Yes, they’ll know you’re not 25, but they’ll figure that out fast once they meet you.”

However, Jennifer Rue, vice president of StarPowering LLC, suggests not including age references, such as graduation dates. “I generally recommend presenting 15 to 20 years of experience and then summarizing any additional experience,” she says. Adds Slugaski: “I learned the hard way that it’s never a good idea to refer to actual numbers of years of experience in your résumé or in an interview. Leaving someone with an impression of you as ‘Father Time’ is never a good thing.”

Dilip Saraf, an executive, career and life coach at Fremont, Calif.-based Career Transitions Unlimited, says it is critical, regardless of your age, to have a clear and compelling unique selling proposition when you’re in career transition. Individuals must communicate how they create value and be able to differentiate themselves from others in the marketplace.

“Without that differentiated value proposition, you become part of the crowd,” says Saraf. “In an interview process, the older applicant should not show concerns for the interviewer’s youth or even suggest possible problems. At a human level, this must be managed by setting aside your egos and pride.”

Judy Rosemarin, founder and

president of New York City-based Sense-Able Strategies Inc., says that executives must remember that interviews are about the interviewer, not the candidate. “Older workers should know how to answer the stumper, the statements that sit there like a lead balloon,” says Rosemarin. If an interviewer says “you may be overqualified,” he or she may be masking underlying concerns they don’t want known.

“Try to tease it out of them by saying, ‘If you are concerned about my becoming bored, let me tell you that I am a born troubleshooter always on the lookout for continuous improvement.’ That way, you tease out the concern,” notes Rosemarin. “If you are right with the guess, the interviewer will be pleased. If you are wrong, the interviewer has to surface the camouflaged concern.”

Show interviewers how your age and experience will be assets to their organizations’ operations. “Sell your age and experience as an advantage,” says Walker. “Never hide or lie about either. Flaunt them. After all, it took you this long to get this good.”

### Where Should You Look?

When trying to find the next stop on your career ladder, a place where your experience will truly be valued, you have to do your homework. Research is key, and Rue says that AARP identifies top employers for workers over 50. “I always recommend that people looking at job transition research prospective employer diversity,” says Rue. “By looking at the profiles of company and board leaders,

a candidate can get a look into age diversity at the decision-making level.”

Finding such companies may actually be easier than you think. Rue notes how many organizations are experiencing a talent shortage, especially at the senior level, and need individuals with the skill sets that over-50 executives typically possess.

“As executives leave their organizations to retire, many organizations don’t have succession plan candidates ready to take over at the senior level,” says Rue. “Finding these gaps in the marketplace is an opportunity for executives in transition to provide strategic leadership to fill these gaps, while preparing the next generation of workers for more senior-level leadership roles.”

Rue says that healthcare is one of the industries that is experiencing a talent shortage, and therefore, could provide viable opportunities for over-50 executives. Terry Bacon, PhD, president and CEO of Durango, Colo.-based Lore International Institute, concurs that there are opportunities in healthcare as well as industries such as computer manufacturing, education and software/software development.

Overall, many Baby Boomers continue to delay their retirement plans; and as a result, many older executives are beginning to feel increased competition for job openings from workers in their generation. In addition, they are also feeling the need to compete with Gen X and Y workers for positions. But there is a steady demand (and need) for older-50 executives in the workforce. They’re even seeing support from an unlikely source, notes Amy Dorn Kopelan, co-author of *I Didn’t See It Coming: The Only Book You’ll Ever Need to Avoid Being Blindsided in Business*. “The mid-20s group has a strong relationship with the plus-50 group,” says Kopelan. “It’s not the same relationship they have with the over-30 group.”

### Adjust Your Expectations

While there are certainly opportunities for over-50 executives out there, experts agree that older executives must adjust their career expectations when they’re in transition, especially if they wish to shorten the time in which it takes them

### Shorten Your Search: Tips for a Quicker Quest

ExecuNet’s recently released *Executive Job Market Intelligence Report* revealed that over-50 executives are concerned that their age will affect their ability to land a new job. Karen Armon, creator and founder of MarketOne Executive, offers these six tips to help these job seekers reduce the time it takes to secure a new position:

1. Move away from perceptions of bias and barriers. Rather than expect them, do what it takes to exceed them.
2. Connect with power brokers and reach back into your history to reconnect with these individuals.
3. Learn what works today in a creative economy and what doesn’t (don’t stick to old tactics that don’t work).
4. Think about hiring a coach to help you see yourself differently.
5. Shift your presentation to your potential and thought-leadership — in print and in person.
6. Know that you must learn how to market and sell yourself in today’s world rather than rely exclusively on your past to set you apart.

Continued on page 8

## Food For Thought

# 10 Career Killers: Workplace Behaviors That Ensure Career Self-Sabotage

By John McKee

**Y**ou're fired! This succinct phrase strikes more fear into the heart of the working man than any other. Why is it, then, that many well-intentioned and reasonably astute professionals hear these words chronically throughout their career despite all of their best efforts?

Even with a small amount of insight, many aspiring professionals can learn how to maintain their good standing in the workplace and actually excel on the job rather than self-destruct. Employee turnover hurts not only those receiving their walking papers, but employers as well, since this is a costly — though avoidable — expense.

With this in mind, serial “labor losers” can benefit by knowing these 10 key self-destructive workplace habits sure to endanger one's longevity on the job.

### Not Keeping Your Skill Set Current

The business landscape is ever-changing and there is more demand for jobs than supply. Not staying on par with colleagues and those vying for your job will be a death knell.

### Failing to Deliver Results

Winners in business know that it's all about accountability. Those who harbor a sense of entitlement for simply having put forth effort, irrespective of the results of those efforts, are guaranteed to fall by the wayside.

### Learnings From Landings Continued from page 2

he found LinkedIn and Indeed to be valuable resources as well. But, he cautions, they should be used in moderation. “Do not rely on the Internet to do your work for you. Get out and network,” Meyer says.

That's truly the best advice Meyer

### Confusing Efficiency with Effectiveness

Those who think that communicating via email replaces the need to actually talk with people around them fail to recognize the importance of personally connecting with others in today's highly automated and technological environment. Communicating in person whenever possible is imperative for success-seekers.

### Believing You are Irreplaceable

There is no room for “divas” in the workplace. As soon as you convince yourself that you — and only you — can do the job “right,” your star will surely start to fall.

### Knowing All the Answers

The old adage remains true: knowledge is power. Professing to know it all can readily stagnate a career. Winners remain unceasingly interested in learning new ideas and approaches.

### Surrounding Yourself with “Brown-Nosers”

Some employees like having people tell them how smart they are, whether or not it's true, while successful managers and other professionals accept and encourage intelligence and creativity in others.

### Forgetting to Give Credit

Some people inappropriately take full credit for positive events despite the help or input received by others, while some

give credit where credit is due. Those who accept undeserved credit inevitably reap what they sow.

### Failing to Self-Promote

Bragging is one thing, but letting colleagues throughout your industry know of your success through case studies, promotion bulletins or other such tools is quite another. Some professionals fail to recognize the importance of letting others know about their successes, or go about it in entirely the wrong way.

### Losing Perspective

Intuitive business people recognize that, despite their best attempts to do everything right, they sometimes approach roadblocks, and they seek the advice and perspective of a respected friend, colleague or even a business coach. Those who fail to recognize their shortcomings are destined for the unemployment line.

### Failing to Have a Life Plan

All very successful people have a clear life plan, whether memorized or actually written down. They create it, massage it and refer to it often. ■

---

*John McKee, founder and president of [BusinessSuccessCoach.net](http://BusinessSuccessCoach.net), is the author of *Career Wisdom* and *21 Ways Women in Management Shoot Themselves in the Foot*. He can be reached at 720-226-9072, [john@businesssuccesscoach.net](mailto:john@businesssuccesscoach.net), or at [BusinessSuccessCoach.net](http://BusinessSuccessCoach.net) and [BusinessWomanWeb.com](http://BusinessWomanWeb.com)*

notes that he can offer other ExecuNet members in transition. He stresses the importance of being visible in the marketplace and among your network of contacts. “Get out of the house regularly,” Meyer suggests. “Build and maintain a network of friends, peer and associates that understand who you are and know how they can help you. Networking groups can also be a great resource.”

Still, there's even more that job seekers can do for themselves; something that a network — no matter what the size — can't accomplish. Having the proper mindset during an entire job search is crucial. “[It's important to] maintain a positive attitude and self-confidence throughout the process,” says Meyer. ■

## Your Career Advisor

# What's Good About Being at a Crossroad?

By Cliff Hakim

“I’m at a real turning point. How do I sort out my next move?” When you’re in transition, the big picture can be a little overwhelming. The reason is that you’re trying to figure it all out at once: What kind of work am I best suited for? How do I bring the different aspects of my personality together, to find the perfect job?

Sometimes it’s easier to despair than it is to look ahead. Sometimes clients do a bit of both. As one executive said, “Some days, I sit at my desk thinking about how disappointed I am in my career. Other days, I’m ready to move on. I want to use more of my intellect and passion and work with colleagues who are energized.”

Here is a three-step survival kit that will show you how to get the most out of your crossroad or turning point.

### Step One: Look for the Positive Message

Crossroads call for clarification, exploration and change. They are not a sign of failure, but opportunity. Lisa was a college tennis star, but she eventually stopped playing. “Now, I feel like a failure in business as well,” she said. “Even though I had outstanding reviews, I quit the job I had for seven years. I must be a quitter all around.”

“Can you momentarily suspend judgment?” I asked. “First, tell me what you were feeling just before you quit your tennis playing and your job.”

“In both cases, I was overwhelmed,” Lisa said. “My tennis coach wanted me to dedicate every waking hour to my game and not too long ago, my boss

started pressuring me to work late nights.

“Tennis wasn’t important enough to sacrifice my grades and social life,” she added. “And my work had become so routine, I dreaded the extra hours at my desk. What’s more, my heart was at home with my two-year-old son.”

“Can you appreciate that you stood your ground in both situations?” I asked.

“It sounds to me like your ideal job will pose some new challenges, yet offer enough flexibility to spend more time with your family.”

“So the message is to heed my inner voice and not be afraid of changes?” Lisa asked.

“That, and to allow yourself to leave those situations that no longer serve you,” I responded.

### Step Two: Get More Details

Remember, you are standing at this crossroad for a reason. Take some time to find out exactly what brought you here. Is it because your work has lost its spark? Just how did you lose your original confidence?

To find out, take a piece of paper and divide it in two columns. On the left, describe the parts of your job that are still challenging; and on the right, list the aspects that now feel boring and routine.

This will help you define the kind of work you value, and the kind of work that drags you down. Be honest, and your list will help to sharpen your vision of what it is you really want as you look for a better situation.

After gaining clarity, you can talk with your boss about how to refocus your role. You might also write a proposal to restructure your job in a way that satisfies your need for creativity at the same time you serve your clients and your company.

### Play

Inject laughter and games into life and work. Don’t make everything so serious.

### Meaning

Pink refers to Jim Collins’ 20/10 self-assessment and correlates it to innovation.

### Step Three: Use Your Edge

Describe the last time you took control of your career and made a positive move. What thoughts led you to make that change? What values influenced your decision-making? What actions did you take, and what goals did you achieve?

Note how many times in the past you have listened to your own inner voice, even when it clashed with the crowd’s insistent roar, “You’re nuts!”

List all the previous times that you chose to take a risk, and chose to use your edge. These positive models of change, harvested from your own life, will help you face your fears, and move ahead with greater faith in your own abilities.

### Rethink Your Work

When you find yourself at a crossroad, stop and ask yourself these questions:

- Who am I trying to please? Am I anywhere on that list?
- What price will I pay if I just stick with the status quo?
- What are the promptings and urges of my inner voice?
- What resources are available in my company and/or community to help me know myself better, explore my options and update my goals? ■

---

*Cliff Hakim is a Boston-based career consultant and strategist, the founder of Rethinking Work ([RethinkingWork.com](http://RethinkingWork.com)) and the author of the business bestseller, We Are All Self-Employed. His new book is Rethinking Work: Are You Ready to Take Charge? Hakim can be reached at [cliff@rethinkingwork.com](mailto:cliff@rethinkingwork.com).*

### Insider Insight

#### Continued from page 3

empathy can differentiate themselves as customer service leaders. Pink recommends the book, *Emotions Revealed: Recognizing Faces and Feelings to Improve Communication* by Paul Ekman.

“If you had \$20 million and 10 years to live, what would you do? Would you still be doing what you are doing? When you think about innovation, ask yourself, ‘Are you doing what you should be doing and the way you want to be doing it?’” ■

## Over-50

*Continued from page 5*

to land a new position.

“They need to be flexible,” says Gee. “Too many times, I have clients who want to get the same position they had before they were laid off,” he says. “They need to think more broadly. Times have changed, and they might not need to get the same position.”

This goes for an older executive’s perception of what his next salary should be. Those expectations should be tempered as well. “Older executives should not go expecting to ratchet up their past salary, just because they are getting their next job,” says Saraf. “It does not work that way. The salary for any position must be based on the value you create and the market for comparable positions. Selling yourself on value created and delivered is always a sound way to look at realistic numbers. The same applies to responsibilities.”

Bacon says that over-50 executives should be open to exploring job opportunities in other industries or fields. “They should do their utmost to demonstrate a solid track record as hardworking, loyal employees and capitalize on their experiences,” says Bacon. “It’s important for older executives, especially, to demonstrate solid experience in general management, which gives them a variety of options and makes them more attractive to employers looking for capable managers and leaders who can function in a variety of settings and situations.”

Armon cautions that while

### Expert Resources:

- Karen Armon, MarketOne Executive ([MarketOneExecutive.com](http://MarketOneExecutive.com))
- Terry Bacon, Lore International Institute ([LoreNet.com](http://LoreNet.com))
- Rich Gee, Rich Gee Coaching ([RichGeeCoaching.com](http://RichGeeCoaching.com))
- Amy Dorn Kopelan, TheGuruNation ([amy@bedlamentertainment.com](mailto:amy@bedlamentertainment.com))
- Kathy McAfee, Kmc Brand Innovation LLC ([MarketingMotivator.net](http://MarketingMotivator.net))
- Maggie Mistal ([MaggieMistal.com](http://MaggieMistal.com))
- Judy Rosemarin, Sense-Able Strategies ([Sense-AbleStrategies.com](http://Sense-AbleStrategies.com))
- Jennifer Rue, StarPowering LLC ([jenniferrue@starpowering.com](mailto:jenniferrue@starpowering.com))
- Dilip Saraf, Career Transitions Unlimited ([7keys.org](http://7keys.org); [Career-Transitions-unl.com](http://Career-Transitions-unl.com))
- Frank Slugaski, Hire Aspirations ([HireAspirationsUSA.com](http://HireAspirationsUSA.com))
- Jean Erickson Walker, EdD, OI Partners Inc. ([OIPartners.net](http://OIPartners.net))
- Janet White ([JobMarketSecrets.com](http://JobMarketSecrets.com))

opportunities can be available in other industries, older executives must be able to effectively communicate that they can truly make such a transition. “It’s up to you to connect the dots and make sure [the hiring manager] sees how one set of skills will work in another company, industry or community,” she says.

If you determine that you could be happier in a position with less responsibility than your previous role, be prepared for hiring managers to question it. “I think it’s harder to convince a hiring authority that you are willing to ‘step back’ to have a job than it is for an older executive to convince a hiring authority that they are ready to do the job that they’ve done in the past,” adds Armon. “It just doesn’t make sense, and it hurts the credibility factor — who really believes it?”

### New Role, Same Satisfaction

While career transition can be an uncertain time for over-50 executives, success can be achieved, and oftentimes these executives are happier and more fulfilled

once they do land. If you’re used to being the boss, you can still be satisfied with a less authoritative role.

Mistal recalls a few over-50 clients who made smooth transitions. One was a physician who worked with Mistal to transition from being the owner of her own practice to working for a local hospital system. “She’s even happier being an employee, because she no longer has all of the headaches of being the boss,” says Mistal. “She also makes more and gets more vacation time.”

The physician’s husband changed industries — from working as a business manager at her practice to teaching at an organization at which he had worked 20 years earlier. “Six months later, he too loves being an employee again; not having to do the books and billing,” adds Mistal.

A key point to remember is that you definitely have options. “Don’t give up and don’t panic because that disturbs solid judgment,” says Kopelan. “Don’t assume you have one path and that’s the only path you can be on.” ■

## CareerSmart Advisor

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

**Founder & CEO:** David Opton

**Executive Editor:** Lauryn Franzoni

**Editor-in-Chief:** Robyn Greenspan

**Editor:** Marji McClure

**Copy Editor:** Carol Hamilton

**Layout/Design:** 5050Design.com

A biweekly publication of ExecuNet, the premier executive job, career and networking organization for senior level executives with salaries in excess of \$100,000.

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



© All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying and recording, or otherwise without the prior written consent of ExecuNet.

[www.execunet.com](http://www.execunet.com)