

Profile Summary
Future Partner Apply CFO Education
Job Hunting
Information Senior Consultant Curriculum Vitae
Sales Director Managing Partner Calendar Online Production Director
CV Career Online CTO Research
GM **Director** Info Find
Speculative Introduction
Information Partner Research Apply
CIO COO Courses
Remuneration Managing Partner
Contact Development
CFO Schedule Future Training Information
Coaching Dream Job International Management General Manager Portfolio
CEO Country Manager Now Training Info IT Director Job COO
Directory Apply Country Manager Now Training Info IT Director Job COO
Information Apply Country Manager Now Training Info IT Director Job COO
Calendar Interview Simulation Information Profile Summary
Activities Interview Simulation Information Profile Summary
Member of the Management Board
Calendar Training Partner Find Search Job
Education Senior Associate Managing Partner Portfolio
Executive Placement
Job Senior Consultant Online Information CFO
Finance Director Production Director Schedule Partner Find Links
Production Director Find Links



Copyright

Job Hunting Director by Career Angels, Sandra Bichl is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/).

Publisher

Troaching Institute
ul. Wspólna 69/8
00-687 Warszawa

Author

Sandra Bichl

Title Page Design

Magdalena Łuczyńska

Co-Authors & Content Contributors

Magdalena Łuczyńska
Agnieszka Piątkowska
Joanna Wasilewska
Anna Zadrożna

ISBN 978-83-63172-07-7

Table of Contents

Foreword by Stephen Moroz.....	4
Co-authors & content contributors.....	5
Executives	6
Introduction.....	9
Part 1: The Job Hunting Process – Step by Step.....	10
Step 1: Managing Your Career Consciously.....	10
Step 2: Preparing an action plan.....	15
Step 3: The CV.....	16
Step 4: The Project Portfolio.....	19
Step 5: The motivation letter.....	19
Step 6: The cover email.....	20
Step 7: Your Online Presence.....	20
Step 8: Sending your CV.....	22
1) Online Job Ads.....	22
2) Executive Search Consultants.....	22
3) Speculative Introduction.....	27
4) Networking.....	30
Step 9: The interview	32
Step 10: The reference check.....	35
Step 11: The salary negotiations.....	36
Part 2: Conclusions & words of caution.....	37
Additional Resources:.....	44
Featured Interview with CEO of Alchem Grupa Konrad Kopyra.....	44
Featured Interview with former HR Director CEE Joanna Sztandur.....	47
FAQ with Sandra Bichl.....	49
Recommended Reading Compiled by Agnieszka Piątkowska.....	55
“Monster Careers: How to Land the Job of your life”, Jeff Taylor, Doug Hardy.....	55
“Pocket Mentor: Shaping Your Career”, James Waldroop and Timothy Butler.....	55
Harvard Business Review on Managing Yourself.....	55
“Ask the right questions, hire the best people”, Ron Fry.....	56
“What color is your parachute?” Richard N. Bolles.....	56
“Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters “, Jay Conrad Levinson, David E. Perry.....	57
The Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC).....	57

Foreword by Stephen Moroz

“Job Hunting Director” is an excellent professional overview of the “dos and don’ts” of the job search and general career management process. Not only is this book very useful, but also a pleasure to read. I particularly liked the fact that Sandra Bichl and her team went out and gathered a rich collection of feedback and advice from a diverse group, including CEOs, HR Directors, HR Consultants and job seekers. Many excellent points were raised in this study, not only in terms of tools and methodology, but also in terms of attitude and behavior. For example, the book covers the nuts and bolts of CV preparation, job applications and interviewing, yet also addresses critical issues such as planning ahead, controlling your ego, and keeping your interactions friendly, honest and human.

The fact that the various individuals interviewed often had conflicting views made this study all the more rich and useful. Essentially, this is not an exact science and much of it comes down to personal preference. I advise that you read through it all and develop your own approach based on the colorful mix of experiences and advice of those interviewed.

In sum, managing your career is such a critically important subject area, yet most professionals tend to spend very little or no time on this. I recommend that all business professionals (and non-business professionals as well) – not only executives – read this book and apply its principles on an ongoing basis -- not just when looking for a new job, but on a proactive basis throughout your careers. By taking the time to read through this material you are doing yourself and your career a great service.

Istanbul, Turkey, March 2012

About Stephen Moroz

Stephen knows all four sides of the recruitment process from the inside out. At first, he climbed the corporate ladder from Marketing Specialist to Sales Representative to becoming the Director of the American Chamber of Commerce in Turkey. Then, after being a District Sales Manager for Xerox Stephen decided to switch sides from employer and “jobhunter” to headhunter. He spent almost 9 years at Hudson Romania as their Country Manager and moved briefly to Amrop Turkey as a Consultant & Regional Project Manager. Since 2010 Stephen has been a Career Coach at the Sabancı University School of Management in Istanbul, Turkey where he has been able to take advantage of his diversified experience in the most synergistic possible way.

Co-authors & content contributors

In alphabetical order

Sandra Bichl, Founder & Career Angel

Sandra started her international career in recruitment in June 2002 in Budapest, Hungary at TMP Worldwide (now Hudson) in the Legal Recruitment Department that has now become Legalis. She has worked with executives in CEE while being based in both Budapest and Warsaw, Poland. After a brief break in recruitment, Sandra decided to change, though not moving in-house as most HR professionals from search firms do at some point of their careers, but to what she likes calling “the third side” of the recruitment process: supporting executives in their job hunting process. Sandra works in English, Polish, German and Spanish.

Magdalena Łuczyńska, Photographer

Magdalena joined Career Angels' sister company InternetFit.com in November 2011 as a photographer, specializing in photography for CV and online presence purposes which means that she closely supports Career Angels' clients. Magdalena ideally combines her previous work experience from being an Assistant to the Management Board at Assmann Ladenbau and a Recruitment Coordinator for the German market in the medical field with her photography passion. On top of that, Magdalena works in Polish, English and German which makes her the perfect fit to our team.

Agnieszka Piątkowska, Career Angel

Agnieszka is the CEO of the niche recruitment company Big Fish that operates solely in the field of purchasing and supply chain. Since May 2004 she has been leading “green field”, “pool search” and “executive search” recruitment projects in Central and Eastern Europe. At Career Angels, where Agnieszka works project-based, she is able to fulfill her passion that she discovered while completing her post-graduate studies “Career Advisory, Career Management, Coaching” at the Warsaw School of Economics. Agnieszka works in Polish and English.

Joanna Wasilewska, Assessor & Psychologist

Joanna combines experience gained in international corporations (Vattenfall, ING Financial Services) with skills acquired in top consulting companies in Warsaw, Poland and in Vienna, Austria. She graduated from psychology at the University of Warsaw with two specializations: Psychometrics and the Psychology of Work and Organization. She completed post-graduate studies “Training School for Group Trainers”. Joanna holds a certificate in both NLP issued by the Polish NLP Institute and in the application of Extended DISC®. In October 2011, she designed the “Competence Center” for Career

Angels. The tool allows executives for the first time in Poland to access Assessment and Development Center on the B2C market. Joanna works in Polish and English & speaks German well.

Anna Zadrożna, Career Angel & Assessor

While completing her Master Studies in Psychology at the Warsaw University, Anna started at TMP Worldwide (now Hudson) as a researcher in February 2001. After having recruited in sectors like pharma, (heavy) industry, construction, IT and FMCG, Anna left in October 2006 to first become a Senior HR Specialist at Polskie Linie Lotnicze LOT and then HR Manager at the Polish branch of the international accounting and audit firm BDO. In the meantime Anna completed two post-graduate studies at the Kozminski University: "Managing professional competences of employees" and "Professional Coaching". Anna joined Career Angels in December 2011. Anna works in Polish and English.

Swarm of Mini Angels

Last, but not least, we would like to mention and thank for the dedicated support we receive from our "Mini Angels". Mini Angels are the right hands of our Career Angels who, put simply, make our work easier in all possible facets from researching to formatting to making coffees and teas for our clients.

* * * * *

Executives

That participated in our interviews in alphabetical order by company name:

But before we start the list: Some Executive Search Consultants, CEOs, HR Directors as well as our former and current clients were so kind to share their knowledge and experience with us, although it had been clear from the very beginning that their corporate policies or professional situations would not allow for an identified statement. **A very special "Thank you" to all of you!**

A C C O R D G R O U P
Executive Search Consultants

Corinne Klajda
Senior Partner
Head of the Consumer Goods & Retail Practice Group
Accord ECE | www.accord-ece.com



Jerzy Potocki
CEO & Managing Partner, Poland

AIMS International Poland | www.aims-international.net



Konrad Kopyra
CEO, Poland

Alchem Grupa | www.alchem.com.pl



Artur Skiba
Managing Director Poland

Antal International | www.antal.com



Daniel Łupiński
Country Manager & Board Member, Poland

Devonshire | www.devonshire.pl



Magdalena Bucka
Managing Director, Europe

Edison Morgan | www.edisonmorgan.com



Żaneta Berus
CEO & Managing Director, Poland

Warszawski Centrum ExpoXXI | www.expoxxi.pl



Seamus Pentony
Regional Managing Partner

Headcount Solutions | www.headcount.pl



Kalina Karwańska
CEO & Managing Partner, Poland

HR Solutions | www.hrsolutions.pl



Piotr Kępka
Senior Consultant

Huberts Mozes & Partners | www.hmp.pl

human to business

Katarzyna Grzybowska-Tomaszek
Managing Director

Human 2 Business



Beata Bukowska
Partner

INWENTA | www.inwenta.pl



Andrzej Kensbok
Principal

Kienbaum | www.kienbaum.pl



Ewa Adamczyk
Chief Executive Officer
Head of Banking, Finance & Legal Services
NAJ International | www.naj.com.pl



Nelson Lamartine
Executive Search

Albina Woźniak-Fyda
Partner, Poland

Nelson Lamartine | www.nelsonlamartine.com



Dominika Ludwiczak
HR Director

Sage | www.sage.com.pl



Mark Hamill
Global Managing Director

SpenglerFox | www.spenglerfox.com



Joanna Sztandur
Founder

Successful HR | www.successfulhr.com



Sylwia Rzemieniewska
Managing Director, Poland

Target Executive Search | www.targetexecutivesearch.com

If, after reading this e-Book, you would like to contribute or have the feeling that your company logo is missing, please do not hesitate to contact Sandra Bichl at Sandra.Bichl@CareerAngels.eu directly.

* * * * *

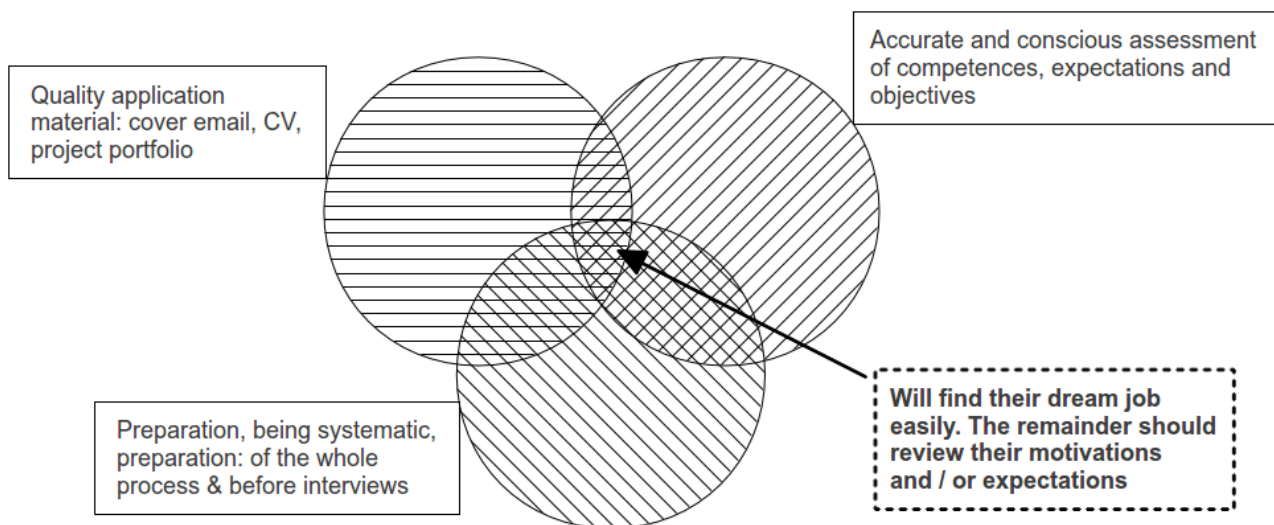
Introduction

“There are Directors and Directors. Sometimes a Director is more like a manager and vice-versa. We do not get hung up on the name of the position. We are very aware of the fact that the terminology of positions varies a lot. We always look at the scope of responsibilities and carefully verify them,” says Dominika Ludwiczak.

For those directors who value their time, these are the three main tips of the whole book which in itself is a summary of pieces of advice of CEOs, HR Directors, Executive Search Consultants, Psychologists and, of course, Career Angels:

- 1) Before you start looking for a job ask yourself, “What am I looking for? What is my motivation? What are my competences? What are my key skills?” The clearer you are, the better you can communicate that to a headhunter or potential employer.
- 2) Invest up to five hours of your time to prepare a professional (!) CV which includes a well-written professional summary, your work experience that includes achievements and your education. If you decide to include a photo, make sure it's a professional one.
- 3) Before meeting with a potential employer or a headhunter: prepare, prepare, prepare!

Graphically, we would express it like that:



If you are surprised by the obviousness of these three points, let me tell you, we were too. When we started writing this book, we dared to foresee about 90% of the answers of the interviewees, because we, Career Angels, are former headhunters or HR Managers or psychologists and we have been working with job hunting executives for over ten years. To be honest, we did expect slightly more sophisticated advice. It seems that the overall awareness of the Polish top management candidate looking for a job is still rather low.

However, consider this first edition a beginning. We want to and will continue updating the content and provide advice for career-conscious executives. So, please check back with our website to download the newest edition or email me at Sandra.Bichl@CareerAngels.eu, if you want to be among the first ones to receive it.

Enjoy reading,

Sandra Bichl

Part 1: The Job Hunting Process – Step by Step

Step 1: Managing Your Career Consciously

As Corinne Klajda puts it, “There are two groups of executives: those with a job and those without one. If you belong to the former, count your blessings and wait for a better economic climate and improved job market.” Or as Seamus Pentony says, “We are not pre-2008 anymore. Opportunities are not as frequent anymore. So, stay if you can before you start looking. It's easier to get a job when you are in a

job.”

“If you've lost your job, and given you can afford it, take a vacation for a month or two, so you can consider what to do next. By all means: do not panic! If you have been with your previous employer for a long time, it means that you have to be good. Take the time to re-connect with friends & family and ask yourself: What do I want to do next? Maybe it's time to start my own business? Spending some time in a foreign country gives us the opportunity to think differently and to notice things we haven't before”, says Artur Skiba. “If you have a job, don't change it until you have a new one”, suggests Jerzy Potocki. Anonymous Source has a different view, “Don't wait and relax. You can start right away. Sow to be able to harvest half a year later.”

“When an executive tells me about their intentions of wanting to change their job, I try to help them realize what “being realistic” means, what to expect from the whole process and that it might take quite some time,” says Piotr Kępa.

There might be different motivations as to why you would like to change your job:

- you were or are about to be made redundant
- you are bored of the monotonous work load and need new challenges
- you work in a company that has an unhealthy atmosphere
- you disagree with the Management Board or your superiors or with the new direction the company is taking
- you feel stuck because you have been with your company for more than ten years
- you face a glass ceiling
- you want to make more money
- you would like to relocate which is impossible with your current employer
- another industry might seem more interesting

“Many have been looking for the past 12 months. Stay active. Put aside your ego and take a smaller job. Be more flexible, even if it is less money”, advises Corrine Klajda. “If you have no other options, get in touch with search companies that operate in the interim-project sector. It keeps you busy, buys you time and it might turn into a permanent position,” says Mark Hamill.

Albina Woźniak-Fyda observes, “Although we work for firms, we see every client as a human being with different needs. Now, it is our job as executive search consultants – exercising a profession of public trust – to dig deep and ask both parties a lot of questions to ensure that both their expectations and needs are met. It is not all about completing a project as fast as possible. What we want to prevent is that a candidate accepts an offer not because they really feel it's the right match, but because they want to get out of the current one. Making a premature, hurried or superficial career decision may have serious consequences that are difficult to reverse. It is not in our interest to “sell” every candidate at all

cost, as we have a guarantee period and would have to repeat the search if we allowed such situations to happen.”

Questions you might want to ask yourself & answer (!) prior to embarking on the job hunting process:

What do I want to do next?

Why do I want to change? Is the underlying drive a feeling of frustration or motivation?

Where do I want to work? What companies?

How does the next step fit into my overall career plan?

What do I expect from the new position & how realistic are my expectations?

How does my professional SWOT-analysis look like? What are my strengths & weaknesses?

What makes me stand out on the job market?

How much do I want to earn?

What corporate culture do I want to work in?

How should my scope of responsibility look like?

What am I open to? Where are my limits?

How much time can I realistically dedicate to the job search?

What are my key competences?

Am I willing to relocate? Is my family?

If you don't deal with the above questions thoroughly, you will have difficult and very likely unsuccessful interviews with headhunters or potential employers. The main tool in the recruitment process used by both headhunters & HR professionals to assess your competences are in-depth competency-based interviews that are usually interwoven with biographical questions regarding your career.

Kalina Karwańska suggests, “Find an accomplice from the very beginning of your job searching process; As the market climate is dynamic – with on-going consolidations and mergers – it is wise to have somebody who will advise you. Therefore, additionally to your own network, you should have somebody you can talk to who knows the market: a headhunter or a career advisor. You have to confront your notions with what the market has to offer and determine the resultant.”

During our research we also found that a few Executive Search firms apply other methods as an integrated part of the process or only at the request of the client. The majority relies on the experience and judgment of their consultants. Here's one Managing Director's reaction from one of the Executive Search firms when asked if they used AC/DCs (recruitment lingo; short for Assessment/Development Center) in their evaluation: “AC? What does that stand for?”

The most often used tests are: Extended DISC®, Facet5, ProfileXT®, NEO-FFI, SHL tests, as well as tests by Peter Saville. Shortlisted candidates might also be asked to take part in an Assessment Center.

We asked all Executive Search Consultants how accurate, in their experience and opinion, executives

were in assessing their own competences. “We can answer this question, in part, very precisely. An element of the candidate's competences is their professional personality model. One of the tests we use is Facet5 – a tool that evaluates the psychological profile of the candidate – requires the assessee to intuitively grade themselves at the beginning of the feedback session prior to receiving the report. Hence we know that executives usually evaluate three out of five main dimensions correctly. That gives us an accuracy of 60-70%,” summarizes Kalina Karwańska.

The majority of respondents concurred with that answer, but we obviously had everything from “the awareness is generally very low but it's getting better” to “if somebody is a CEO they have to know themselves.”

Seamus Pentony finds that the most successful executives tend to be modest and to understate their skills. An Anonymous Source gives the following as an example, “Most executives believe that one of their key competences is “change management”, although that is very often not true.”

That's how Dominika Ludwiczak sees it, “There are candidates that lack auto-criticism. And then there are candidates that very openly address their strengths and their Achilles' heel. That kind of person is much more valuable, as they have better insight, show maturity and are able to honestly say, “that part of business or my responsibilities doesn't really excite me, but this is what I've been doing about it.”

So, ask yourself, “Do I assess my competences objectively?” If you are not sure, find out!

If you are familiar with Assessment, Development & Competence Center as a method, you may skip the next section.

* * * * *

Assessment Center, Development Center, Competence Center by Joanna Wasilewska

Assessment Center is the most reliable and valid of all presently used selection methods. It significantly increases the accuracy of candidate selection in comparison to recruitments processes based solely on interviews and is therefore gaining more and more popularity for candidate selection purposes, especially in case of top- and mid-level positions, where the cost of potential recruitment mistakes would be great. High assessment validity results from the possibility to observe candidates' real behavior in professional situations, in contrast to a diagnosis based on declarations during interviews. Other important aspects are the opportunity to include various diagnostic methods and to use the assessments of many observers, which guarantees higher objectivity of the results.

Assessment Center is a multi-dimensional competence assessment method based on the observation of participants' behavior in specially designed tasks by a team of qualified observers (assessors). The method uses various techniques enabling the observation of behavior in simulations of real-life

situations and tools such as questionnaires, psychological tests, interviews and case studies. Based on the results of these exercises, a description of the candidate's functioning in relation to the company's expectations put forward in the competence model is formulated and the fit between the candidate's competences and the position requirements is assessed.

Development Center is different from the assessment center mostly because of its goal, which in this case isn't recruitment but defining strengths and development areas of participants in order to plan their further development and choose adequate measures. A Development Center may proceed just as an Assessment Center or it may include individual feedback for the participants after each exercise, which allows the initiation of the learning process already during the session.

Competence Center, the method used in our company, combines elements of an Assessment and a Development center, depending on the client's needs. Except from the diagnosis of strengths and weak areas, as well as immediate feedback, it also offers tips regarding future career choices that fit the participant's competence profile. By using an individual approach and orienting the diagnosis towards development, we are able to lower participants' stress levels usually associated with such assessments and thus enable them to fully present their competences.

We especially recommend the participation in Competence Center to persons who:

- 1) Are planning a **radical change of the direction of their professional development**
- 2) Aim at a **managerial position despite relatively little management experience**
- 3) Are searching for **new paths of professional development**, which will enable them to fully use their potential
- 4) Would like to gain more insight into their competence profile before participating in a recruitment process
- 5) Are considering applying for a top management position

The participation in a Competence Center allows candidates to save time and other resources used when participating in recruitment processes for positions which they would never succeed in anyway. Let's imagine a situation, in which an Operations Manager – a good specialist in his field – decides to aim at a Board Member position. He or she meets with a coach to carefully develop a strategy for achieving this goal not being aware that in spite of having high specialist competences, he or she has little managerial and influencing skills. Diagnosing this competence gap will enable him or her to develop the skills needed before undertaking further steps or to revise his professional plans to better suit his profile.

* * * * *

Summarizing: Knowing where you are currently at & where you are heading to is key. Without that you should not take the next step.

Step 2: Preparing an action plan

“Finding a new job is a job” said the majority of Executive Search Consultants in unison. Treat it like a project and define time line, budget and allocated resources, because “changing your job is not like changing your car,” compares Albina Woźniak-Fyda.

How much time should you reserve? In our experience, it should take you no longer than 2-3 weeks to get all documents & your online profiles ready. Everything after that is a matter of being systematic. An excellent tool to track all your activities is a simple Excel spreadsheet. You should ideally reserve 80 – 100 hours over a period of 3 months and additionally an average of 20 hours per month for the remaining time until you find an offer that you are satisfied with.

The following activities should be included – we will discuss all of them in detail throughout this book:

- answering key questions about yourself and your path (done above)
- preparing your documents: CV, Project Portfolio, online presence
- networking
- researching & contacting headhunters
- researching & contacting potential employers
- monitoring the market
- keeping an eye on job portals
- preparing yourself: interview simulations, salary survey, etc.

How quick do the offers come rolling in? That very much depends on:

- a) the market
- b) your level of experience & proven track record
- c) the effort, consistency & regularity you put into the process

In the experience of the interviewed Executive Search Consultants a job hunting Director should reserve on average min. 6 months. If you do not look for “a job out”, but your “dream job”, factor in 12 to 24 months. Some might think, “24 months?!” Yes, if you are e.g. a Regional Managing Director and you relatively actively, but cautiously look for an ideal offer in an ideal company with ideal conditions or if you operate in a niche and cannot or are not particularly interested in changing your branch.

What you should remember at all times: the higher you are up, the lonelier it gets which means that ideal career opportunities are few and do not come along frequently.

Seamus Pentony summarized the second phase perfectly for us, “If you fail to prepare, you prepare to fail!”

Step 3: The CV

"Some candidates believe that the CV is an administrative or bureaucratic requirement," shares Andrzej Kensbok.

This element of the job hunting process is probably, surprisingly to us, the most controversial one. We have selected the most interesting answers to our question, "How important is the quality of the CV?"

Seamus Pentony, "It's not an issue for me. I will discuss it anyway. Additionally, the 2-page rule does not apply to executives, especially, if they have moved cross-functionally."

Mark Hamill, "The quality of a CV is pretty important. A poorly prepared CV raises question marks. As to the length, we are in a world of information overload. Better short than long. A powerful 1-pager."

Beata Bukowska, "All documents that are submitted to a potential employer are the candidate's business card, irrespectively of the position they apply to. The quality therefore is very important."

Katarzyna Grzybowska-Tomaszek, "The quality of a CV is very important for me. It should tell me about the candidate's business awareness, their successes. It should be synthetic and concrete. If, let's say, a PR or Marketing Director sends me an untidy, incoherent CV, they are automatically out of the process."

Andrzej Kensbok, "It's nice to receive a nice CV. Though most importantly, we look for the right human being with an appropriate competences and not somebody who is a professional CV writer."

Ewa Adamczyk, "The quality of CVs is getting better. The font, grammar, spelling, tabs are important elements, but not everybody has to be an expert in formatting. When writing a CV, the candidate should remember who they write it for. Who will read it? Candidates should remember that the headhunter usually cannot dedicate more than three minutes to each document. [...] The approach "I am a star. Everybody knows me on the market. Guess what I meant with that sentence!" is arrogant and very negative."

Albina Woźniak-Fyda, "When preparing the CV, remember that a junior researcher with little experience might be the first person to read it which might mean that because there is too much lingo or it's too dry, they will not be able to understand it and you are excluded from the recruitment process."

Sylvia Rzemieniewska, "The quality of submitted documents is very important, but it's not the most important thing. The most important element is the interview. Top Executives often do not have the time to prepare their material. You cannot base your opinion on a document, especially if it's the headhunter who is approaching the executive. More important are the telephone conversation and the in-person

meeting.”

Kalina Karwańska, “The quality is very important because we have very little time. We always tell our candidates that they are not allowed to assume that a potential employer will correctly guess which part of a four-page CV is the most important one. I often read verbose CVs; they are superfluous with non-relevant information: they start with the high school and so on. The person behind such a document is either not very creative or lazy and decided to send such a representation of themselves onto the market. I don't treat such CVs seriously.”

Piotr Kępką, “The more sloppy the CV, the sloppier the candidate. We look at aesthetics, the lack of mistakes. It should be saved in a .pdf format. Remember that a researcher is often not able to read between the line. The CV is the virtual dress code of the candidate. How seriously do you treat your career?”

Magdalena Bucka, “It is obviously easier for the recruiter, if the CV is of good quality. It allows a candidate to make a better first impression. However, if headhunted directly, it's the recruiter's interest to motivate the candidate and then documents become of less importance as everything is verified and confirmed during the interview.”

Jerzy Potocki, “The quality is very important. The documents must not have errors and spelling mistakes. [...] It should be written in a way that I can match the candidate with an on-going recruitment project in 20 seconds or less.”

Corinne Klajda, “The CV is very (!) important. It could define whether I want to speak with this candidate or not. Some executive search consultants see on average 8 candidates per day. It is more difficult to remember candidates with „blend CVs” . Your CV is like your passport as it grants you better chances to get a meeting with an executive recruiter.”

Daniel Łupiński, “What we receive from the candidates is very often irrelevant. What counts is the person and not the paper. It is our role as intermediaries to prepare the documents for our corporate clients accordingly.”

* * * * *

As you see, the answers are very, very different. But having to choose between two equally well-qualified executives, “details” like the quality of your CV might make a difference. On the other hand, with some recruitment companies a sloppily prepared document would mean the disqualification early on anyway.

As a headhunter and now as a Career Angel, I have yet to receive a CV that truly impresses me – the only exception being resumes prepared by marketing specialists of law firms. Their documents are

flawless, though we don't include them in our statistics. Additionally, they do not communicate the personality of the person, but reflect certain corporate standards.

We do not take on clients that will not allow us to prepare their application documents, unless they come e.g. only for an interview simulation. The documents we prepare for our clients must be perfect. I do not tolerate sloppy material. I am allergic to even minor mistakes that 95% of readers would not even notice. We have an internal quality control process which means that there are always one or two or sometimes even three consultants that check and double check everything. We stop working on a CV when the client is satisfied and identifies fully with it and when I am satisfied – and believe me, I'm harder to please.

Even if you do not want to become a professional CV writer, these are guidelines you should consider following:

Prior to putting your CV together, answer those three questions:

- 1) Who will read my CV and what information will be essential and relevant to them?
- 2) What do I want to communicate? Usually these are 3 things that make you unique.
- 3) What are the key words: in the job ad or for the company?

Now to the structure. You will find hundreds of formats on the Internet. We are sometimes asked to provide with some to what we answer, "Find them on Google, because we do not use them." Every CV is prepared from scratch retaining the job seeker's personality, but the structure is similar:

- 1) **Contact details:** ideally placed in the header to save space.
- 2) **Profile summary:** the quintessence of the professional profile. It tells the recipient if it's worth to continue scrolling down. If you must include a picture, please add a photo that is up to date and professional. Pretty please.
- 3) **Career path:** starting from the most recent position. A description of main responsibilities with an element of selected achievements that are best expressed in concrete numbers and figures.
- 4) **Education:** does not include kindergarten to high school. Might sometimes include relevant and significant trainings.
- 5) **Others:** any other information that might be relevant to the reader (!) not to you. That's the place to include your hobbies. They give an additional personal touch to the whole. Remember to only enlist those that you actively practice and can have a meaningful conversation about.

Avoid:

- writing in the first person. It makes the whole text more difficult to read. We know that there are career

coaches that claim otherwise. We've verified with HR Directors and CEOs.

- enlisting your character traits or soft skills like "I am a creative person." You are an executive and not a student! The entirety of the CV should perspire with your personality, which agreeably is very difficult to achieve. But there is no need to spell it out.
- and we cannot underline that enough – avoid writing irrelevant information such as your birthday, marital status, number of children, all trainings you have ever attended, unrelated work experience as having been a TV technician or waitress, etc. etc.

Other hints:

- ideal length: 2-3 pages. Additional, relevant information that does not fit onto that 2-3 pages, should be placed in another document that we call Project Portfolio. More on that later.
- check and double-check: formatting, grammar, spelling, etc.

How do you add a personal touch?

- by adding a meaningful picture that, to achieve such an effect, must be really good. I searched for almost 2.5 years to find our photographer.
- you can experiment with the font.
- you can very subtly (!) play with colors.

Statistically speaking, our respondents shared that on average only 15% of CVs would be considered top notch, almost 30% fall into the category "good", 35% are average and the rest should be deleted. Where will your CV be?

To be on the safe side and not to allow a piece of paper to decide upon your entire career, better be well prepared than not. It's only up to five hours of your time. Is that really too much to ask?

* * * * *

Step 4: The Project Portfolio

As noted earlier, the project portfolio includes additional relevant information that did not fit into the CV. We recommend describing on average three selected projects of either high complexity or spectacular successes. A well-structured add-on furthermore sets you aside as a motivated, well-prepared candidate, communicates your work style and train of thought. It shows your reasoning abilities, analytical skills and business acumen. The formatting should be coherent with your CV.

* * * * *

Step 5: The motivation letter

Don't bother. Nobody reads it.

* * * * *

Step 6: The cover email

Žaneta Berus tells us that she receives two to three CVs per week and reacts only to those who write meaningfully, convincingly and to the point, “Tell me in the email why I should take my time and meet with you. The candidates' approach should definitely be individualized.”

“Whenever I get an email that starts with “Dear” and then my name is not there, I delete it. It's Spam. Somebody did not even take the time to check who they are writing to,” says Mark Hamill.

Jerzy Potocki advises, “If you send your CV to a headhunter, make sure to exactly communicate what you are looking for.”

“No information about your career objective might lead to an obvious, but wrong assumption based on previous positions. It's very easy to pigeonhole the executive,” adds Daniel Łupiński.

* * * * *

Step 7: Your Online Presence

Have you ever googled anyone? Yourself? Every detail on the Internet can work in favor of or against you. You want the former.

While you are reading this information headhunters are searching the Internet for candidates. Why haven't they contacted you yet? Prior to your first meeting, your potential employer or their assistant will very probably google you.

I run a company under the brand “InternetFit.com” that specializes in, as we call it, helping professionals get “a second chance for a first impression”. We know that Poland is by no means as internetized as the UK or US, but the trend is definitely there. Anna Zadrożna, “I have received phone calls from UK recruiters who verify my written recommendation on somebody I have endorsed on LinkedIn.” Corinne Klajda observes, “In Poland Social Media as a category of assessment in the recruitment process, especially for executives, is not important. We know from our colleagues in the Netherlands that online profiles are important and checked to obtain a bigger picture, a more holistic view on the candidate as a person.”

Only two Executive Search Consultants of those who we have spoken to thoroughly check also the Internet presence of their short listed candidates. It has happened that candidates on such an advanced stage where eliminated from the race based on the findings. Approximately 50% claim to review the various LinkedIn.com or GoldenLine.pl profiles but that they do not get influenced by it. It

serves them as an additional source of information that helps them to ask the right questions.

Based on our experience from both CareerAngels.eu and InternetFit.com, we know that on a logical level the respondents believe in their answers, BUT: that would be like saying: “Oh, it's not important how somebody dresses to the interview. I do not pay attention to that.” If we like or not, on an emotional subconscious level, the profile we see of a candidate does trigger something in the observer. We cannot help it.

* * * * *

A picture says more than a thousand words by Magdalena Łuczyńska

In Poland, 75% of online profile pictures and those in CVs are disadvantageous. Choosing an appropriate photo for your business profile or CV is an element which is often omitted and underestimated by people who are looking for a job or for clients.

An inadequate photo, its low quality, an inappropriate outfit or background can spoil a perfectly written CV or a professionally prepared Internet profile. Although extreme cases such as party pictures or photos taken by yourself with your mobile phone should not happen, I often find them. I do see more and more photos which are quite proper and of good quality, yet, they do not attract the observer, they do not have that something that helps you communicate that you do care about your image and that you encourage others to get in touch with you.

So, how should an appropriate professional photo look like to build your professional branding on the Internet? Aside from the basic elements such adequate dress code, a well-selected place and background, and good quality, you should not forget about adapting the character of the photo to your position, industry and personality. A professional photo will not only supplement your business profile, but might also be one of the first factors that will help you to additionally invite the right target group.

* * * * *

To avoid writing a manual here on “How (not) to prepare your online profile”, I'd rather refer you to our website InternetFit.com where you'll find a substantial amount of completely free information and exercises. The only thing I'd like to stress: Do NOT copy/paste your CV. That's a big no-no!

If you already have a well-prepared CV, read our tips and follow them. Within only a mere hour, you will have a flawless profile. It might take you another 30 minutes to update or delete other outdated information that can be found on you on the Internet.

Frequently asked questions by our clients:

Q: Do I really need to be online?

A: Yes.

Q: Won't my employer think that I am looking for a job?

A: No.

Q: What business social media sites are appropriate?

A: Definitely LinkedIn.com, maybe GoldenLine.pl (for the Polish market), rarely XING.com. It always depends on your target market.

* * * * *

Step 8: Sending your CV

Had you followed the above steps “in real life”, you would now be some two to three weeks into the job hunting process. Who do you send your CV to?

Let's start with the least effective:

1) Online Job Ads

Applying to hundreds of job ads is one of the least effective job hunting methods, but one that must not be left out. Our dear friend Vilfredo Pareto knew that 20% of efforts generate 80% of results. At CareerAngels.eu 80% is not enough. As you will probably want to ensure you receive the BEST available job offer, you should not exclude online ads, though you should spend the least time on it. So far, only 5% of our clients have accepted a job offer that was generated directly by an online job advertisement.

The best strategy for that source of potential job offers: register with the most popular two to three job portals, set an automatic job search that provides you with links once a week, reserve 30 minutes in front of the computer with a cup of your favorite beverage and click through the links. Again, remember: the higher up you find yourself on the corporate ladder, the less suitable offers you will find. Do not apply to everything that seems even partly interesting.

2) Executive Search Consultants

90% of on-going recruitment processes on an executive level lie in the so-called hidden job market which are processes conducted by either the companies themselves or by Executive Search firms.

How do headhunters work? I have two headhunter friends. Isn't that enough?

The recruitment market is corporate client driven. Here's a simplified structure:

Step 1: Company X needs to hire a new manager.

Step 2: It decides that their internal recruitment resources are not adequate or maybe previous attempts were unsuccessful, and therefore hires a recruitment company.

Step 3: Based on the requirements, the recruiter does – mostly & ideally – the following in no particular order:

- a) search the internal database
- b) publish an online job ad
- c) contact people from the market (networking)
- d) research competitors & contact potential candidates
- e) research the Internet

Step 4: Potential candidates end up on a so-called long list.

Step 5: After an initial telephone screen, the best candidates are invited to interviews and the best 3 – 5 are presented to the client, Company X, in the form of a so-called short list.

Step 6: After interviewing the candidates, Company X, chooses one person & signs a contract with them.

How much does that cost? Depending on the recruitment company between 10 – 33% of the gross annual remuneration, paid either based on success (which means that if Company X out of those 3 does not hire anyone, no money is paid) or in usually 2 – 3 installments (at step 2, 5 and 6). So, if you have one or two headhunter friends, how big are the chances that when you need to find a new job, they have an open on-going recruitment process? Small. In order to maximize those chances, we recommend to find the best 20 headhunters. Best means a combination of expertise in your industry and experience in recruiting at your position level.

* * *

“No Executive Search company has a monopoly on an industry, even if they operate in a niche. It's always an oligopoly of at least four to five players. Check which of the recruitment companies are offlimits, meaning that they are contracted by your current employer. Find out who the most relevant consultant within that firm is. Never ever send your CV to a general email address like office@. Find them on LinkedIn.com and engage in a meaningful dialogue. The chances that you'll find a new position via a headhunter is probably around 10-20%,” suggests Mark Hamill.

Daniel Łupiński puts it bluntly, “We are not a charity. For us the most important party is our client. Of course, if I receive a CV that does draw my attention, but does not fit to any of our on-going recruitment processes, I do meet with the executive as I know that long-term there might come up something interesting.”

Mark Hamill reminds, “Be honest with your headhunter. Tell them if you are in another process. We are here to help. Maybe it does not work out this year. Maybe it will in 3 or 5 or 7 years.” “If you are contacted by an Executive Search Consultant and for some reason not interested, don't ignore them. Don't burn bridges. You do not know when you will need them. Your situation could change over night,” warns Anonymous Source. “Some executives want to make the impression that they do not care about the job offer we have presented to them; that we should be thankful for being allowed to 'sell them'. On the other hand they expect their headhunter to be a career advisor who paves their way on the market,” tells us Kalina Karwańska.

“Window-shopping candidates are, honestly, annoying. They should be sincere about their agenda from the very beginning,” says Seamus Pentony.

When do Executive Search companies send your CV to a potential employer even though they do not have an open recruitment process? Either if it is within their corporate policy and then they charge their standard fee – and that's very, very rare – or if it is in the strategic interest to build a relationship either with a former or a potential client. In such situations the introduction is on a very informal level and no fees apply.

We did hear the phrase “Today a candidate, tomorrow a client”, but our experience in CareerAngels.eu has shown something different. Here are the statistics:

1. Group: Job seeking executives that send their own cover email and documents to their own list of headhunters, usually have a response rate of 10% or less. A response is an email that at least acknowledges the receipt of the CV.
2. Group: Job seeking executives that send their own cover email, but our documents to our list of headhunters. Response rate: approx. 20%
3. Group: Job seeking executives that send everything prepared by us: 30-40%. After the follow-up usually 50-70%.

To give you an example:

One of our clients, a high-level executive, decided to start her job hunting process with meeting Executive Search Consultants from her industry. Once she got a better understanding of the market, she wanted to proceed with directly contacting those companies that she had not discussed with the

recruiters. We selected 30 headhunters for her:

93% responded (28 out of 30) – please note that this is an absolute exception and we did have to follow-up with 15 firms once or twice before receiving a reply.

33% invited her to an interview which makes it 10 meetings (so far).

I asked her, “After 10 completed meetings, what are your impressions?”

“There are definitely no market standards. I had very formal encounters with two recruiters at once and very informal ones in coffee shops. Some lasted an hour and a half, one took five minutes.”

“Which ones did you like the most and why?”

“I liked one meeting in particular: we met at their office. It was very concrete. I had the feeling that the recruiter was truly interested. He asked very challenging, not-standard questions. We brainstormed and discusses various possibilities. That was a very nice meeting.

I remember another headhunter positively: we met at a coffee shop. She originally came from my field which gave her the necessary insight. On the one hand she made a sincere effort to get to know to me as a person and on the other hand she verified my background checking which of the current processes or clients would suit best. Additionally, she managed my expectations skillfully which I appreciated a lot.

There was one more meeting that was first class: I met with a gentlemen from one of the Executive Search firms. He was calm, intelligent and asked thought-out questions. He made the impression of pursuing a long-term strategy.”

“Which meetings would you say where less impressive and why?”

“I had a very long meeting – lots of standard questions – with a lady that was very friendly, but the first thing she said when we met was, “Nothing's really happening on the market. Stay where you are.” I had been on other meetings, and I obviously know about the mergers and changes. That is not super secret information. You can read about most of it in the newspaper. Her statement led me to think, “Hm, she cannot be good as nobody wants to contract her although there *is* work.”

I would label one of the meetings I had “strange”: the recruiter had me 15 minutes waiting. Once we started I had the feeling she did not really know how to talk to me. And I thought, “I took a day off for this?” However, at some point she got going – maybe she remembered a project? She asked very interesting, good questions. So, after all, it was not such a big waste of time.”

“Is there anything else you remember particularly?”

“One gentleman told me during the meeting that I should stay where I was because I had a really good job. And then he sent me a list of other headhunters I could get in touch with. He might have had good intentions, but I definitely felt he wanted to get rid of me in a civilized way.”

“Doing the maths, 50% of the meetings you had were average. What could those Executive Search Consultants have done to be perceived in a better way?”

“Well, firstly, don't discourage your potential and decided candidate to stay where they are referring to the slow market. Even if they contact me again, I know I will probably not want to speak with recruiters that lack market-awareness. Secondly, what set the best aside, was the interest they showed in me as a person and as a professional. With the others it seemed they just wanted to close their projects as soon as possible without any interest of building a relationship. Additionally, shouldn't recruiters also assess the candidate's interpersonal skills not only focusing on professional competences? Make a sincere effort or at least feign interest. Thirdly, if you decide to choose a public place, which is absolutely fine with me, have the decency to select one where it's calm and we can speak discretely. Having people walk up to the table greeting you every 10 minutes is irritating. And last, but not least: if you have an office, that you know is difficult to find or where parking is scarce, tell the candidate so. I like being professional and punctual, but arriving at a seemingly easy to find address, and encountering a building without signs and multiple entrances to choose from, getting lost in the process... not only was I late, I was also frustrated which doomed the meeting to a worse start than it could have had.”

* * * * *

The majority of our clients concur with the above comments. Summarizing, here's the advice for headhunters in a nutshell:

- 1) Be a competent partner that is conscious of the market
- 2) Ask challenging, intelligent questions
- 3) Remember that today I'm your (potential) candidate, tomorrow I can be your client. Make an effort to build that relationship.
- 4) The devil is in the details: communication, logistics, punctuality

What other clients, who are the recruitment companies' candidates and at the same time potential clients, criticize the most is

- a) the lack of reaction. According to our clients, they do not expect 100% invitations to interviews, but simple emails that acknowledge the receipt. They want to be sure that they are at least in the database.
- b) the juniority of the consultants. We do agree with those who say that so inexperienced professionals on the recruitment companies' side should not sit in front of seasoned executives, let alone decide whether they are fit for the job at hand. Yes, it's ridiculous. When we asked how you should react, we

got the following answers:

“Candidates should refuse to attend such meetings.”

“As unfortunate as such situations are, these are a very good opportunity to demonstrate your maturity and elegance. Help the junior through the interview. Show how professional you are.”

“We have heard of such situations from our candidates. It mostly happens with companies that do fill executive positions, but focus heavily on monthly or quarterly sales targets which leads to a high rotation of personnel. Usually only highly motivated junior people work in such an environment as they treat it as a unique career opportunity.”

“If I were in their position, I'd immediately walk out of the room.”

In the words of our former client, “Behave like when at the dentist: with dignity.”

We recommend, “Be nice to the less experienced. Do not burn bridges. You never know what might come out of it.”

Summarizing, headhunters work for their corporate clients, not for you. At the end of the day, it's them who pay their bills. So, how do we put headhunters to work for you? We don't. The recruitment market is driven by companies as that is where the money lies. Prepare a list of 20 headhunters with relevant (industry) expertise as they have access to insider information. A handful will act upon an excellent CV.

* * * * *

3) Speculative Introduction

If you could work where ever you wanted, where would that be? What are your TOP 20 companies?

Why not contact the decision makers there directly? Sylwia Rzemieniewska warns, “An executive that sends his CV to a lot of companies themselves will not be well perceived. They will definitely make a better impression when going via a headhunter.”

Other voices raise the question of retaining the candidate's confidentiality, especially when operating on niche markets. Sometimes the executive's ego plays a crucial role that prevents them from contacting the HR Director or a Member of the Management Board.

Dominika Ludwiczak shares, “I have a very positive attitude towards personally receiving speculative introductions. It means that the executive is resourceful and motivated as they had to make a certain effort to at least find the appropriate person and contact details. If we have an open recruitment process

and the person fulfills our requirements, we include them. If we don't, I hold onto the CV for future projects.”

What Konrad Kopyra told us in the interview “If the person that sends me their CV has something to offer that is interesting to me, I will definitely remember them. We have employed three people that way.”

At CareerAngels.eu we recommend the following: As strategic positions are rarely discussed publicly & can almost entirely be only found in the hidden job market, we do suggest going directly to the source. While observing the media, we know that once news appear on the market, it's usually already too late.

We definitely prefer the proactive approach and we advice our clients to adapt it as well. To give you a few examples:

Case 1: CFO

A Chief Financial Officer, who had been looking for a new position for 9 months passively and for the most recent 3 months actively without major successes, contacted us in February 2012. The outplacement support from his former employer had not been helpful either. We asked him to prepare a list of potential employers of his first choice. We call that the “TOP 20”. He reluctantly prepared it enlisting 29 firms, then researched the contact details of their CEOs. After re-doing his CV with us, he proceeded to contact them. Here are the statistics:

Response rate to date (end of March 2012): 62%

Invitations to interviews: 2 + several re-directed his CV internally

Case 2: Managing Director

At the end of November 2011 we started a project with a very seasoned Managing Director who had a dream, “Before I retire, I would like to set up a subsidiary in Poland for a major company from the DACH region.” Due to the confidential nature of the process, we are not (yet) able to release more details on the sector or size, but for illustration purposes, we would like to share with you what we did step by step in terms of TOP 20:

- a) prepare first class application documents & online presence in German, English and Polish
- b) diligently research the target markets
- c) carefully select in total 30 firms that could be interested in entering the Polish market
- d) identify decision makers and their contact details
- e) contact them using our clients email account
- f) wait & follow up where suitable. The texts of all emails were beforehand approved.
- g) correct course where necessary by targeting different executives at those organizations
- h) handle the email exchange

Statistics to date after 4 months:

Response rate: 40%

Invitations to interviews: 4 out of which 2 have declared the intention to enter the Polish market. At this point, I'd like to share a little anecdote that our client told us,

"I went to the fourth interview, knowing that I would choose company #3, so I was more relaxed. The meeting was extremely interesting and at some point they asked me how I had found them. So I told them the truth about Career Angels and that I had decided to outsource everything including the documents and cover emails, and so forth. One of the interviewers told me the following, "Please tell the lady who prepared your cover email, that she did a fantastic job. When we read it, we knew immediately that we wanted to meet you." To what our client replied jokingly, "But I did help a bit!"

It is extremely rare that we receive feedback directly from the final recipient in such a form, but then it's twice as nice!

Case 3: Media executive

A media executive was reflecting on changing industries, so we had two parallel processes that are still on-going. The statistics to date:

Overall response rate: 50% (43%+ 57%)

Invitations to interviews: 8 which is an equivalent of 12%

Case 4: Lawyer

During a lecture at an LLM program, I met a lawyer who had been looking for a job for about eight months without even being invited to a job interview. "Now I understand why nobody replied last year. I had a wrong CV structure, wrong information and a wrong photo. [...] As you know, once we started, I did almost everything myself under your guidance. At the beginning of the process I was able to create a better picture of myself as a professional. And once I started applying your advice, I secured 10 job interviews out of which I have so far met with 6 that led to one job offer; 4 are still outstanding. I learned to answer tricky questions or how to tell them about my strengths and weaknesses or my maternity leave. Before your consultations I was not aware of the motives behind certain questions. Now I know how to properly and comfortably talk about myself and my achievements. Oh, and I got exactly the salary that I wanted."

* * * * *

To be realistic & transparent: obviously, not all of our clients have such successes. The main reason being that they handle their own correspondence and are not as systematic as they should be. The most common source for that is the psychological phenomenon "self-handicapping" which is described by Anna Zadrożna in Part 4.

* * * * *

4) Networking

"Key elements in the job hunting process are on the one hand active networking and on the other hand so-called public activities: attend conferences, write articles," Andrzej Kensbok.

"I discourage executives from using networking as their *only* means of generating job offers as based on my experience it usually ends pitifully. Networking should be supported by a smart strategy," Kalina Karwańska.

Virtually all of the professionals we have interviewed did not mention the downsides of networking, so why is Kalina Karwańska the only person that raised that issue? To be perfectly honest, I did not ask for clarification because the answer seemed obvious to me. So, what follows is neither Kalina's opinion nor my speculation on what she meant. It is entirely my opinion and both my personal and professional experience. At this point I cannot refrain from mentioning that since early 2006 I have been researching and studying the field of "Networking and Relationship Building" and that I have written a book on that subject in 2011 under the title "Building Business Relationships in the 21st Century".

When does networking fail?

I'd like an extract of an article that I wrote in 2010 to serve as an introduction.

* * *

Under pressure to find a job?

When under pressure, we often behave emotionally. We do things, we'd normally not do. And not having a job puts, at least most of us, under **tremendous stress**. [...] If this panic shows through in your job search you're in trouble. Nobody wants to interview a frustrated and scared candidate.

Don'ts

- **Send out not well-prepared CVs** to as many people as possible
- **Start chaotically calling people**, "Hi Bob, how are you? I know, it's been a long time! [...] By the way, you know, don't you know if anybody is hiring?" The person who you called wonders, "Moron, you did not reply to my email a year ago, but now, when you need something, you call. Well, let me tell you something, you are the 5th person that has given me a call and freak no... I'm looking for something new myself." but says, "Sure, send me your CV, I'm thrilled to hear from you and are pleased to be able to help (idiot)."
- **Include the phrase "looking for a job"** or "looking for new opportunities" in your online profile

[...]

Contacts, contacts, contacts

Yes, at least 60% of jobs are found through personal contacts. What if you have neglected making **meaningful connections** with all those collected business cards? Well, remember for the next time Harvey Mackay: “**dig your well before you are thirsty.**” In the meantime:

- **Be considerate** when calling people you haven't spoken to in a long time. Do not be pushy. Do not burn those bridges. Take the extra 2 emails to reconnect.
- **Put yourself on the market** by **attending** or **speaking at** industry-oriented events or even better, organize one yourself!
- When speaking to people you have worked for or with in previous jobs **ask whether or not they'd be willing to give you a recommendation** on LinkedIn.
- Ask your friends *skillfully* for their support.

Remember that looking for work is the hardest job you're going to have. You'll get out of the search exactly as much as you put in.

Happy shoveling!

* * *

Networking, in our case meaning contacting people we know in order to find new employment, fails due to the following:

- A lack of grace and tact when approaching others.
- An attitude of “You are my friend. You have to employ me.”
- Hiring an acquaintance for all the wrong reasons: not because they are qualified, but because we e.g. have a feeling of obligation.
- After employing a friend, especially if it is a close one, the new employer-employee relationship may become awkward at best and in the worst case scenario might lead to inadequate and harmful business decisions. The fine line between friendship and business relationship can become a vast gray area of questions marks and uncertainties.
- Only when you start working with somebody, do you get to know to their real selves. You can easily become disappointed in them and it's then very difficult to undo your hiring decision or the recommendation, especially as we speak of executive positions.

- If you were hired by a friend or thanks to a friend, resigning from the new job (whatever the reasons may be) can become uncomfortable as you might feel that you are in debt with them.
- It might happen that employees find out that the outside hire was purely motivated not by qualification but by relationship. Even worse, if somebody from inside the company that would have been more competent, was passed over. Conflict can be expected.
- Recommending a friend you hardly know might put you in an uneasy situation, especially if the person turns out not to perform as expected.

I, personally and professionally, do recommend “networking” as a channel to generate leads that might result in job offers always when the job hunting person does it skillfully and gracefully. At this point I'd like to quote an Executive Search Consultant who declined our invitation to participate in this e-book, “[...] For that you need life experience, emotional maturity and a whole set of soft skills from all involved parties.” While “that” refers to the recruitment process, I believe it to be true for the entire job hunting process, including and especially, networking.

* * * * *

Step 9: The interview

We asked, “What should executives especially pay attention to during the job interview?” Most of the answers we received were very similar. In order to demonstrate the importance of the theoretically obvious answers, we have opted for enlisting almost all of them. In no particular order:

“The relationship between the candidate and the headhunter is one of mutual responsibility. The headhunter represents the candidate. The candidate represents the headhunter. We often ask ourselves, 'Do I want to be responsible for this executive?'. Junior consultants approach that process often too “by the book” inquiring artificially about strengths and weaknesses, etc. On the other hand executives forget to adapt their corporate slang to their audience. [...] I've been doing my job for 15 years, the best advice I can give an executive for an interview is to be themselves,” Piotr Kępk.

“Be confident, but not arrogant. We sometimes hear from our candidates: why should I even meet with you? I want to meet directly with your client. It is important for them to remember that we are the first touch point. They should trust us,” Daniel Łupiński.

“It might seem too obvious, but experienced managers do not put enough emphasis on it: 1) Adequate auto-presentation as a mature and reliable manager, 2) Being well-prepared, and able to share not only information about their own experience, but common knowledge of the market, business sector, or organizational processes they are involved in, 3) Good communication skills and honesty while speaking about their goals and expectations when it comes to their future position,” shares Beata

Bukowska.

"I look for coherence and integrity. Does the candidate really walk their talk? I look for the skill of admitting their own mistakes. I look for structure in the answers. I look for business acumen," Katarzyna Grzybowska-Tomaszek.

"That might sound silly, but the chemistry starts with a firm handshake. Be honest. Be very well-prepared," recommends Żaneta Berus.

"I try to keep the first meeting rather informal. Have a chat over coffee. That gives me a good context to dig deep and inquire about the underlying motivation of the candidate. A new job is like a puppy. It's not only for Christmas," compares Mark Hamill.

"Listen to the questions and answer them precisely giving concrete examples. Be authentic. Have an honest goal and motives," Andrzej Kensbok.

"Answer the questions you are asked. Be concrete. Be honest, because a professional consultant will be able to easily decipher a candidate's real nature or motives," Albina Woźniak-Fyda.

"Although there is so much information on the Internet on that topic, candidates are not able to prepare themselves properly for an interview: they cannot discuss their strengths and weaknesses. Prepare! Get to know to the potential employer. Be honest, because bending reality does not help in the long-term," Sylwia Rzemieniewska.

"The most inappropriate approach during an interview is the "I deserve this job"-attitude. I have also observed that executives have challenges having to talk about themselves, their achievements and key competences. Some feel uncomfortable when being in the weaker position while negotiating," Kalina Karwańska.

"Be yourself. There is no need to exaggerate or play or pretend. Sooner or later the truth always comes out. Present the most important elements. The worst thing a candidate can do is, often wrongly, assume what the headhunter is looking for in an executive. That leads to a misrepresentation of themselves. Depending on the market and the company we might be searching for a democratic or an autocratic leader," Ewa Adamczyk.

"The phrase "sell yourself" has a negative connotation, but I mean it in the most positive possible sense. Be yourself. Be authentic. Be confident, but do not overdo it. You might be the only candidate, but you might be one of 20. Answer the questions sticking to the most important thread. Be well-prepared," Anonymous Source.

"Important elements are: dress code, clear communication, attention to detail. My philosophy is: expect

nothing and never assume anything. At a certain level of executives hard skills are not as relevant as character, maturity, views and perceptions,” Seamus Pentony.

“First and foremost is the ability to communicate. If an executive is unable to establish a relationship with the headhunter, he or she will not be able to do that with the employer either. Be confident and pay attention to details as eye contact, where you sit, and a firm hand shake. Remember that the interview is not an inquisition but a dialogue between partners,” Magdalena Bucka.

“Talk about your achievements and not about your tasks. If you currently do not work, do not allow your desperation to show. And above all else, be honest,” Artur Skiba.

“Try to get into the shoes of the interviewer. What answers would *you* like to hear? Stick to the topics that are relevant. Run interview simulations,” Jerzy Potocki.

“Number one: be very honest. Number two: talk about your achievements and failures, because somebody who can't talk about his failures and what he learned from them is not always a valid candidate. Number three: be well-prepared. Number four: focus and talk about what is relevant. Number five: answer the questions that are being asked,” Corinne Klajda.

The biggest three faux-pas:

#1 Over-confidence bordering with arrogance

#2 Lack of preparation

#3 Doesn't listen

Joanna Sztandur observes the following on gender differences, “During interviews, women are often more modest than men in presenting their achievements and highlighting their qualifications and skills. Women also ask more questions about the culture of their potential new employer, composition of teams, and offered benefits. Whereas men seem to be more interested in the levels of independence they would have, strategic plans of the firm and internal competition they may have.”

* * * * *

What helps our clients the most is to stick to the STAR technique when answering questions. It helps to focus and remember every stage of a project:

S = Situation: give a brief context / background / introduction

T = Task: explain what your responsibilities were

A = Action: describe what you did

R = Result: share the result

There is not much that can go wrong when applying this method. Practice with your children or role play with your spouse. Our motto in very colloquial terms is, "Screw up at the simulation, so that you can nail it during the real interview." In our experience, our clients are ready after three interview simulations.

We've observed that those who have not been "on the other side of the recruitment process" for a very long time, meaning that it is them who recruit others, have the most challenging task. It's especially tough for CEOs: there we have a 40 or 50-something year old successful Managing Director sitting in front of us during an interview simulation who usually bombs with the very first questions, "Can you please tell us a bit about yourself?" or "Why have you decided to accept our invitation to come to this meeting?" or "What makes you stand out on the market?" It is not so much about teaching them something new but rather helping them get used to the "new side" of the table taking advantage of what they already, inherently, know and have been doing for many years.

In the words of a client, "What I appreciate the most, is the help preparing me for interviews. Thanks to that the recruitment process does not end after the first meeting. I'm aware enough to pick up on signals I did not see before and can react accordingly."

* * * * *

Step 10: The reference check

A well intended quoted referee can backfire if you think you knew what they were going to say. But your references are not only checked with the people you mention on your CV or during the interview.

Once an Executive Search Company starts working on a new assignments, one of the channels to generate candidates is by asking their contacts on the market who they would recommend for X position. From the very first day the Consultant listens to what "the market" has to say about you. The moment the best three to five candidates have been selected, a more thorough process starts. That thoroughness depends on both the Executive Search Firm's standard procedures and the requirements of the corporate client. We did find out that there are recruitment companies that do not check their candidates references, "The majority of people quote their friends as referees. It's obvious they'd say something nice, isn't it? We prefer to rely on our assessment." We know from experience that just because somebody is your friend does not mean that they will provide somebody with a positive endorsement. However, companies that follow the above described philosophy are a definite minority.

The remainder usually does the following to at least some extent:

a) check with the people you have mentioned

- b) ask for additional sources: your superior, your peer, your employee, your client, a business partner
- c) inquire subtly (!) with reliable, trustworthy contacts
- d) activate other channels with or without your knowledge and/or consent

However, at all times the well-being, confidentiality and reputation of the candidate is imperative & extremely well-guarded. I do believe that that was the only point that everybody agreed upon unanimously due to its sensitivity.

* * * * *

Step 11: The salary negotiations

What is the worst thing that can happen during salary negotiations? That you quote too little.

There are actually two strategies to approach that question about your salary expectation:

- Strategy # 1 says: Do not avoid answering this question. Be prepared. Think beforehand what salary realistically would satisfy you. If you do not want to give a concrete number, you can always give a range. It is worth knowing the market level of remuneration on that position
- Strategy # 2 says: Avoid quoting your „price“ at all costs at the first meeting. Why? Because you do not want to sell yourself cheap or extremely expensive. The first meeting is a getting-to-know-each-other. And that is it. You should reserve yourself the right to learn more details about the position, meet more people at your future potential employer, understand what they have to offer, and then once you see their offer, take position. In negotiations the most important rule is: never ever be the first to quote a number. The first one loses always.

We asked Joanna Sztandur what the differences between men and women were when negotiating their salaries, “Women usually come across as less aggressive when negotiating their salaries, and often after the negotiations regret that they did not ask for more. There are of course exceptions, i.e. women who from early on in their career adopted a so-called stereotypical “male” approach to negotiations. These women almost overdo it by coming across as being too aggressive and not flexible. Men usually prepare better and know their market value well and are not shy to express it. The best way to negotiate remuneration for anyone, a man or a woman, is to know their market value. And this should not be a problem with market surveys available for the majority of countries.”

Depending on your career level we either recommend Strategy #1 or #2. We would advise our executive clients to follow strategy #2. However, we agree, you should always know your market value for negotiation purposes. If you want to earn above market level salaries, be ready to back your expectations with strong arguments.

* * * * *

Part 2: Conclusions & words of caution

Some comments on the overall job hunting process:

Seamus Pentony, "The key is preparation, communication, attire, punctuality."

Piotr Kępa, "Some believe in spreading an aura of importance and diva-like behavior as not showing up or canceling last minute. [...] The really good candidates are the most friendly ones. General savoir-vivre is in order. And it's definitely worth it to prepare."

Anonymous Source, "The three biggest mistakes are: being too passive because of a "work will find me"-attitude, being arrogant, a lack of preparation."

Ewa Adamczyk, "Candidates often use a very colloquial language when dealing with us as they believe that they will get in through the back door. Some contact us three or more times per month: respect your candidacy, don't be desperate."

Sylvia Rzemieniewska, "The most important part in the whole job hunting process is the first stage: skillfully matching the person to a company and position. Don't take just any job. Sooner or later you might receive "the" offer which means that you may run the risk of being incoherent in developing your career. It can damage your image which makes it more difficult to successfully participate in the recruitment process."

Andrzej Kensbok, "The most important factors are: a diligent evaluation of your views, a consistent level of communication with all involved parties, a realistic take on your financial expectations and avoiding "stardom"-attitudes."

Katarzyna Grzybowska-Tomaszek, "Communicate your sincere motivation: don't play "I'm a star". Sometimes it simply pays off to show that you care. Additionally, do not change your financial expectations in the course of the process. An overall unsound integrity results in your loss of credibility."

Beata Bukowska, "Job hunting executives can be divided into three categories. The first group is very aware of their own competences and develop themselves continuously. They are usually familiar with the techniques of promoting themselves on the market. The second and at the same time the largest group are those who have just entered the process of assessing and evaluating their strengths and weaknesses. And then there are those who form the third group: these executives do not submit themselves to auto-analysis and have therefore the biggest challenges in finding new employment."

Żaneta Berus, "Individualize your approach. Be transparent. And remember, the market is a small place which means that everything you claim can be verified easily."

Mark Hamill, "Remember, the recruitment process is never just one way. Use an interview to probe if that company is for you as well. It's a two way communication. It's not only them interviewing you, it's also you interviewing them. Observe how they treat and respond to you. Is that a place where you want to spend the next five to seven years? It's two sides engaging. It's not only the company that can say no." When asked how Polish or CEE executive candidates compared to Western European ones, Mark shares, "There are very little differences in terms of experience. It is now very different than only five years ago. Poland is an early mature economy. A strong economy. There's a tremendous value on Polish candidates who are comparable to their Czech or Hungarian counterparts. The only difference is that candidates from Central and Eastern Europe are more modest as they are not yet as confident, although they do have international experience. Humility in the recruitment process *is* important. It's not about beating your chest in a macho type of way which candidates from more mature market sometimes do. You do not want that anyway."

Dominika Ludwiczak, "[...] There is a very fine line between frustration and motivation. Refrain on the one hand from showing negative emotions towards your current or former employer/s, and on the other hand from letting your frustration shine through because you have been looking for a long time."

Daniel Łupiński, "[...] Look for a job with class. You can ruin a very good first impression from the interview with the actions that follow right after it: calling constantly to check up on us. We do understand your situations, but don't exaggerate. It is enough to send us your CV once. We do have a lot of very good CVs in our database. So have other recruitment companies. If we have something for you, believe me, we will call you."

Corinne Klajda, "I would say that there are two main things to avoid. Firstly, have clearly defined objectives, what are your true strengths and realistic professional aspirations, because a "I can do everything"-answer does not help a candidate looking for the next step. Second, avoid looking desperate ."

Jerzy Potocki, "It's good to be flexible. We see certain trends coming from the USA as for example: working from home or leaving big corporations and their rat race to set up an online business to be able to spend more time with family and friends."

Joanna Sztandur, "Women tend to be more loyal to their employers and probably change jobs less frequently than men. Before deciding to change, women carefully think about pros and cons of staying vs. leaving, e.g. they check if the potential new employer has other women partners and how they are treated or whether there are any better career development opportunities for them. Men more often change either to gain more power or to have a higher remuneration."

Artur Skiba, "You should observe the market that you are interested in. What kind of new investments are being undertaken?"

Magdalena Bucka, “Based on my experience, the most important pieces of advice an executive should follow when trying to secure a new position are: courtesy gets you further than arrogance; don't use your own corporate jargon when talking to a headhunter or potential employer; and don't talk too much - quality over quantity when you speak.”

Irrespective of your career level, changing your job is never simply adding a new company onto your CV, especially if you have worked for your employer for a long time. A lot of emotions and psychological defense mechanisms are involved. We want to discuss the most common one here.

* * * * *

How (not) to find a job by Anna Zadrożna

A person, who is looking for a job, has one main goal: to find one. It would seem that they will do their best and will put the maximum amount of effort in the seeking process to achieve that goal.

However, paradoxically, it is precisely the essence and the importance of the goal that result in sometimes preferring not to take any action, and – on the contrary – sometimes taking actions that do not bring us closer to our goal, but make it even more difficult to achieve it. This strategy, called self-handicapping in psychology, allows us to preserve the positive image we have of ourselves, but does not necessarily help us achieve our goal. How does it work?

Let's imagine that our aim is to find a new job. If we have more than ten or twenty years of professional experience it is usually *us* who recruit, who assess and verify the candidates' competences. But now, *we* have to face feedback on *our* skills being compared to others that might be better than us.

People who subconsciously apply the self-handicapping strategy will take whatever it takes to undertake any activity that is not related to the achievement of the goal – e.g. instead of preparing for the interview they get their holiday pictures organized that were sitting on the memory card for 8 months, or instead of spending one hour every day to find a job, they begin to read overdue books. Thanks to that, potentially failing an interview or not even being invited to one will be well-justified: sure, there are no effects, because I haven't been doing anything in that direction - I had other "important things" to do!

We shift the responsibility onto an external situation, circumstances and fate. We still need to cope with our failure of not receiving any job offers, but our positive opinion on ourselves as well as our self-esteem remain intact.

And what happens in a situation when despite of watching a boxing fight till 3 a.m., we do achieve our goal (getting the job) during the interview that was at 9 a.m. the same day? In that case, we are convinced about our exceptional capabilities and skills. We think, “Although I have not done anything, I

still got the job. I must be exceptional!" Even though this statement does not have to necessarily be true, our self-esteem remains intact.

Based on our observations at Career Angels, this strategy is popular among our clients, who decide to do parts of the tasks themselves. They often push away activities as e.g. sending emails to potential employers, and at the same time, they worry that nothing is happening, that they do not receive any interview invitations at companies or headhunters.

Maybe you should abandon that precarious strategy and make every effort to maximize your chances of success? Only then do we have the guarantee that we have done everything that is possible to achieve our goal. We do not allow fate decide about our success.

* * * * *

What Anna described cautiously in the last two paragraphs, I would put (using my Austrian diplomacy), "Geee, why are you complaining? Have you followed up with the emails you sent a month ago? No! Have you researched the companies we discussed? No! Have you sent emails to all of the CEOs we discussed? No! Duh!"

Sometimes, in "acute cases", we intervene, sit down with our client, open their inbox and start emailing with them. The last time we did it, we generated four interview invitations, three by email and one by phone within only two and a half hours of emailing and following-up. Now imagine, where that client could have been, had they done that a month earlier. They could have already signed a contract. We'll never find out.

Such quick results as described above are fantastic, but frustrating: I have the feeling that often we suffer more than our clients, because we know exactly what they should be doing and what outcomes they could be having.

Don't get me wrong. I hear you, those of you who are paralyzed. Putting yourself "out there" makes you vulnerable and open to rejection, comparison and criticism. I get it. Scout's honor. And just this once I am not being sarcastic. BUT: at the end of the day, it does not get you where you are going – which is your dream job. Therefore, I invite you to embrace my most recent philosophy: F&%\$.. Forget F.E.A.R.! And that being an acronym of "False Expectations Appearing Real".

We asked our former client, a Projects Director from the IT/Telco sector, to share his sincere point of view:

* * * * *

Tabulae Rasae & Ego

“In August 2010, right after my return from vacation, I was made redundant despite – or because of – my successes and achievements. I guess, I became too expensive and a threat to certain colleagues. I started looking for a job on my own, but realized very quickly that that would not make much sense as almost no job ads of my level were visible. I remembered Sandra's session at our Executive MBA course and thought, “If something does not exist, I have to create it.”

Once we got started I observed the following: headhunters only showed interest when they had an active recruitment process they could try to fit me in. There was only one company that demonstrated proactivity. It did happen that a few executive search consultants met with me for future reference. Half of the recruiters replied, but overall, it did not generate any interesting job offers.

When it comes to speculative introductions, i.e. sending my documents directly to selected companies, I had a response rate of over 60%. Some CEOs probably only replied out of courtesy and politeness, though I was invited to 4 interviews. While meeting with headhunters and Managing Directors I slowly matured to the idea, that I did not want to carry on working for a corporation. One of those four meetings actually enabled the start of my own consulting business. I continued receiving invitations from both executive search consultants and from companies which resulted in two additional job offers that I kindly declined as I had already made up my mind.

Do I regret having paid for Career Angels services and not having found a job? No! Most definitely not. Thanks to thoroughly analyzing my current situation, constantly exploring what I wanted and challenging my expectations, I became very aware of what I *really* wanted to do next. On top of that, thanks to the Project Portfolio we prepared together, I had ready marketing material to pitch to new clients. It was the start of my own company. And it was never like “Sandra, here's my bio, do something with it.” I appreciated the learning process that enabled my realizing what the ideal next career move should look like. So, was it a waste of money? Definitely not.

This is what I would advise my peers: First of all, if a company fires you, it does NOT mean that you are a hopeless case. Corporations dismiss executives for many reasons. So, draw a line. *Tabulae rasae*. If you end up without a job, the least recommendable first reaction is to apply to every single job ad you can find. The best method is to meet with somebody right away and not after a while. I have observed that friends and colleagues that were made redundant do find jobs relatively quickly, sometimes even before their notice period ends under the false pressure that they have to immediately find a new source of income. I can say from experience that it's worth to spend some time on reflection. It is then easier to assess your goals and competences. After a while that picture of yourself might become blurry. Being in a hurry isn't the solution. You commit errors. Remember, *career* mistakes are not that easy to fix. It's very difficult to re-start your search three or four months into a new position when you realize that the new job was not what you were looking for.

I am sure some executives will never contact Career Angels because they believe “After all, I know so

many people!” They forget that they had those “good relationships” when they were in positions of power. Most of their acquaintances will not want to employ them. How many executive positions are available at a given moment on the market? It's a relatively small number. There are not so many new companies emerging. And replacements take a very long time. Therefore, knowing people personally is not enough – there is usually simply not enough space.

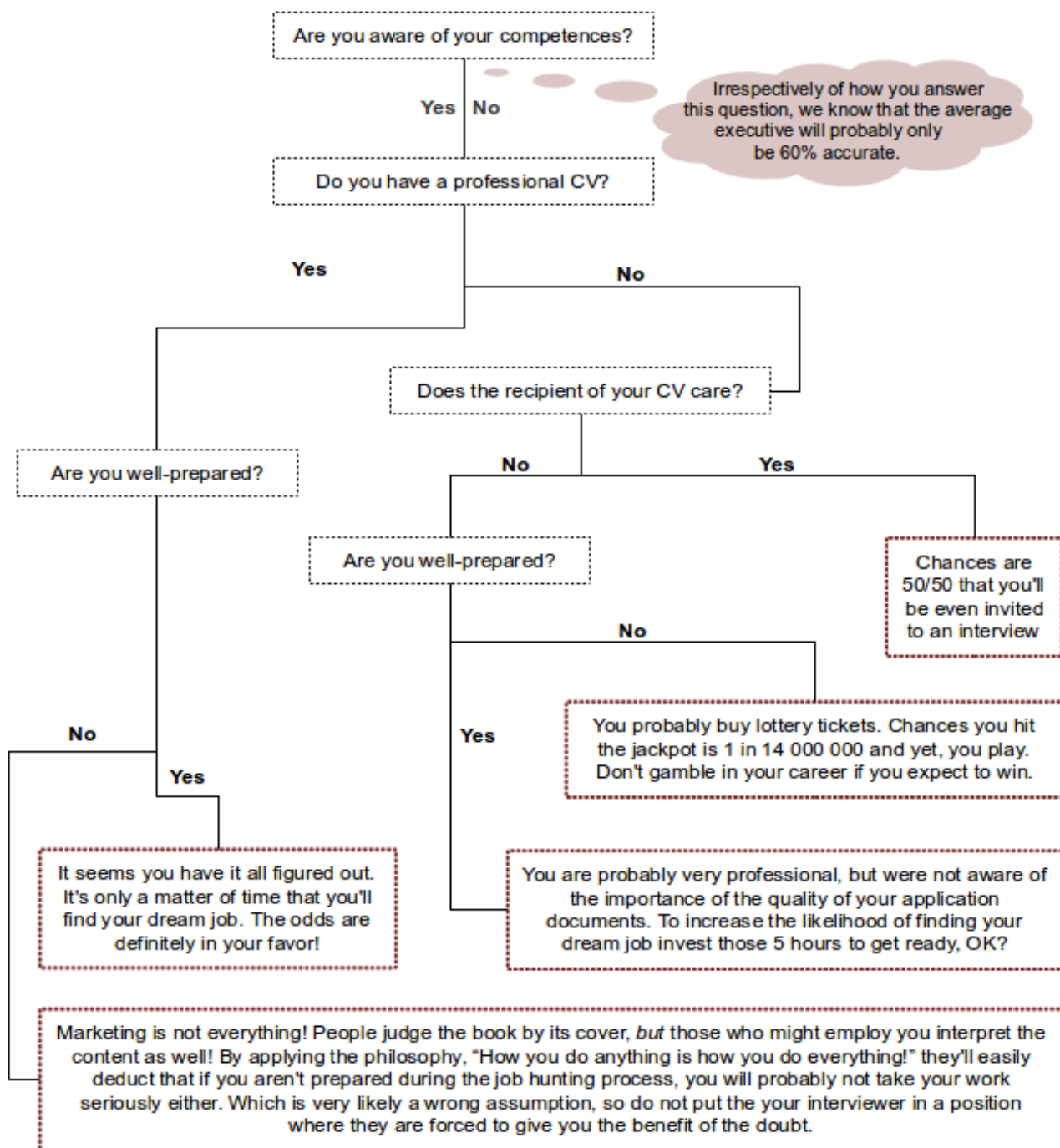
Should executives apply themselves? I would dare say that the CEO is an employee as everybody else and that the direct contact, in my experience, is the best one. Obviously, headhunters will discourage you from doing so, because they want their cut. It seems to me that if somebody applies personally and directly it gives them credit of being creative and determined which means that at work they will be the same. The ego of a job hunting director can also interfere when emailing decision makers, “He did not reply to my (first and only) email. What an asshole! I will never contact him again.” How often has it happened that *you* did not reply to an email because your inbox was simply swamped?

Summarizing, I'd like to stress two points:

- 1) It's OK to be surprised or temporarily disoriented when fired. Get over it.
- 2) Put aside your ego. There's nothing wrong with contacting somebody directly! The ego is the most expensive thing you'll ever have. “

* * * * *

We could not have said it better ourselves. Now here's a little test that will help you evaluate how ready you are and what the probability of finding a new job is:



Don't sit and wait for something to happen: a headhunter who calls you, a merger, a competitor who approaches you directly. Take your career in your own hands!

Additional Resources:

Featured Interview with CEO of Alchem Grupa Konrad Kopyra

Sandra Bichl: Konrad, thank you very much for your time to meet me and answer my questions.

Konrad Kopyra: The pleasure is all mine.

Sandra Bichl: **How do you look for candidates on executive positions? How often do the recruitments happen and how are they conducted?**

Konrad Kopyra: If we need to find an executive, we start with our own contacts and rely on word of mouth. If that does not work, we choose one of 4 executive search companies that we work with. Our expectation towards the candidates is: they need to have experience within the B2B sector in providing laboratory equipment supported by successes on posts like Sales Director or Business Development Manager. Education is not so crucial. If the candidate does not have experience in our industry, they will not be able cope with problems they will encounter. They have to understand and know the specifics of our branch. We have about 400 suppliers and over 20 000 products which rotate rather quickly.

Sandra Bichl: **How long does the recruitment process last?**

Konrad Kopyra: In an ideal world, such a process lasts up to 6 months. However, it happens – but really rarely – that it lasts only 2 months.

Sandra Bichl: **How do you react to receiving a CV without an open recruitment process?**

Konrad Kopyra: It does not bother me, although I try to protect my „company privacy“. If a person who sends me a CV has something to offer, I will remember them. We have already employed 3 people that way.

Sandra Bichl: **How important is the quality of sent documents for you?**

Konrad Kopyra: I distinguish two kinds of qualities. The first concerns the appearance and layout; in other words: aesthetics. The second aspect is the quality of the content: projects and achievements have to be presented in a professional way and supported by concrete numbers. If somebody decides to send their CV with a photo, it should be of good quality and appropriate to the position they are applying for. The chronology is also important for me. The profile summary should be placed at the top of the page. Why? Because this is where I'd like to read about information that is relevant to me. It should include key points. As you can usually find more or less useful information in a CV, I want to know immediately if reading the whole is not a waste of my time.

I should be able to see at one glance if the person fulfills our expectations, so I do not have to search for that in the text. I am not interested in all the trainings. If I want to know something more, I will simply ask. Furthermore, having completed a training is not equivalent to being competent in that area. People confuse that often. Another important element is the style of writing. The whole should be organized reasonably.

Sandra Bichl: **How can a person demonstrate that they have something to offer?**

Konrad Kopyra: If it is a CV related to the ongoing recruitment process, I want to see that the candidate fulfills our requirements in the profile summary. I do not have the time to look for the information that somebody holds an MBA. If it is a CV sent without an open recruitment process, the person has to know who they are writing to, the company structure and product portfolio. They should also emphasize how they can be useful to the company.

Sandra Bichl: **People often talk about „transferable competences“. How does it look like when a candidate wants to change their branch?** Let's suppose that there is a Sales Director who has never worked in your industry, but since they were a child they had been interested in microscopes, pipettes, etc. What kind of approach should such a person have to convince you that meeting them is not a waste of your time although you are looking for employees only from within your sector?

Konrad Kopyra: That is a good question. The most important thing is for such a person to emphasize how they are related to my industry and what their motivation is. Before I open the CV, I want to also know something about their previous work experience and competences. Giving me this kind of information in a reasonable way is a reason for me to meet somebody like that.

Sandra Bichl: **What should executives especially pay attention to during the job interview? 3 tips?**

Konrad Kopyra: Preparation is the most important, the most difficult and at the same time the weakest element before the interview. It is worth spending 15 PLN to check the company at Companies House. Inquire about your interviewer if that information has not been shared with you. Secondly, I pay attention to the candidate's dress code. They will not have a second chance to make a good first impression. I expect professionalism in every aspect including: the way of speaking, mimics and the quality of answers. Sometimes, we pick up on a subject that the candidate boasted about. If someone cannot reveal the details because they are confidential, the person should say so, so that I do not have to wonder if they are being honest. Otherwise, I'll be pondering whether they are being straight with me or not. Each interview is an Assessment Center to some level. We observe and assess the candidate all the time. Sometimes it happens that we change the style of the meeting on purpose. Don't let anybody throw you off balance, especially if you are an executive. It happens that people do not know where to sit. Sometimes that decides whether a candidate will be taken into consideration or not. Do not

allow others to take you by surprise!

Sandra Bichl: **Do you google people before interviews?**

Konrad Kopyra: Sometimes yes. But I do not do detailed research because of the lack of time. However, we often run background checks on candidates via our network.

Sandra Bichl: **Do the Google results influence your opinion?**

Konrad Kopyra: Not really, although it depends on the candidate.

Sandra Bichl: **How do you go about reference checks?**

Konrad Kopyra: References are valuable, but it is difficult to check current references, because when somebody wants to quit their job there is nobody who we can ask – their boss usually does not know about their plans. I am cautious with reference from LinkedIn.com or GoldenLine.pl. But they are easily verifiable. However, I appreciate that it is possible to find certain information there. Nevertheless, I think that the best references are those that are obtained through our own contacts.

Sandra Bichl: **How do you evaluate the competences of your high level candidates?**

Konrad Kopyra: We use mainly Assessment Centers which test soft skills more easily than hard competences. We try to surprise candidates with questions about their opinions on subjects which are totally abstract and not related to the recruitment process, so as to observe their reaction and ability to manage their emotions.

Sandra Bichl: **How do executives assess themselves?**

Konrad Kopyra: Always higher than I would. Generally, those looking for a job boast whenever they can. But in my opinion, there is no point in lying about one's competences because the truth will sooner or later come to the light. I have yet to meet a professional who understates their competences.

Sandra Bichl: **What should executives especially pay attention to when looking for a job?**

Konrad Kopyra: Because it is a long process, they should be patient above all else. Insisting and pressing from any of the sides are not well perceived. They should not get discouraged. One of the traits of a good boss is being able to control their emotions. It often happens that people are stressed during the interviews and they should not be. Prepare diligently before the interview including potential questions about the company. But don't ask questions about e.g. the company's structure if you could have found that information beforehand. Not knowing the basics is a huge faux pas. Summarizing, I expect professionalism in every aspect.

Featured Interview with former HR Director CEE Joanna Sztandur

Sandra Bichl: **How do the international law firms search for Partners?**

Joanna Sztandur: Based on my experience, there are two main ways to recruit new Partners: (1) networking and (2) the databases, market knowledge and professionalism of headhunting companies.

The markets in CEE are relatively small and people holding such positions know each other from university, the Bar Training, industry-related events or participating in projects “across the table”, that is a situation when while representing their client another lawyer was on the other side. The last method allows us to assess the lawyer's competence, knowledge and experience most easily.

Knowing the competitors is invaluable when a law firm exactly knows who they would like to have among their partners and when – thanks to informal conversations – it is known that the person would be open to discussing moving to another law firm.

In particular situations, when a law firm does not want a potential candidate to know they are interested in employing them or when a candidate is expected to transfer with their whole team, the law firms seek the help of professionals, that is headhunters.

The second most popular method of seeking candidates is collaboration with recruitment companies. Good headhunters perfectly know the market and are in close relationships with law firms, Partners and Associates. A professional and efficient headhunter not only knows their clients and candidates, but is also able to encourage a candidate to change their job, even if they have not had such plans or intentions.

Sandra Bichl: **How long does the recruitment process last? From the decision to employ someone to signing a contract or the candidate actually starting to work?**

Joanna Sztandur: From 3 to over 12 months. It depends on many factors: whether a candidate is interested in the change or not, how long the negotiations last, how efficient the law firm that searches for a candidate is in terms of organization, whether the change concerns the whole team and client base, how long the notice period is and the non-compete clauses.

Sandra Bichl: **What is the difference between the CV of a Partner and of a Junior Associate? Is there any?**

Joanna Sztandur: A Partner CV includes brief information about the companies they have worked for,

how long and on what positions, and additionally usually one sentence about their achievements in those firms.

Attached to the Partner's CV is a transaction list that includes clients and cases they have worked on; It can include publications and e.g. other positions they hold outside the current law firm. This additional information can even be the most important element of a Partner's CV.

A Junior Associate's CV includes, depending on their work experience, similar information with the difference that the description of their responsibilities is often rather general, as e.g. preparing lease agreements. Because they do not want their CV to seem "poor", they expand the information writing about all their tasks in detail not mentioning their achievements.

Sandra Bichl: **How important is the quality of submitted documents when it comes to Partners?**

Joanna Sztandur: It is almost insignificant when the recruitment happens thanks to networking that was described above; under the underlying assumption that the law firm knows the candidate, their achievements and their market value. In such cases, the documents are needed only for the proper documentation of the recruitment process and, possibly, welcoming the potential partner. However, the quality of documents is crucial when the recruitment process is conducted via a headhunter and when e.g. the law firm searches for Partners in another country.

Sandra Bichl: **What should potential Partners especially pay attention to during the job interview? 3 tips?**

Joanna Sztandur: Firstly, tell the truth, all the truth and only the truth. Secondly, talk about yourself, your competences, qualifications without neither revealing information about your previous law firms nor judging them. Thirdly, do not overestimate the amount and value of your potential portable business.

Sandra Bichl: **What are the biggest faux-pas?**

Joanna Sztandur: The biggest faux-pas, "There are no women in my team, because they do not contribute any "added value".

Sandra Bichl: **Have you googled candidates before the interview? If yes, what kind of influence did search results have?**

Joanna Sztandur: I never googled.

Sandra Bichl: **How did you go about reference checks?**

Joanna Sztandur: In Great Britain and in the United States, official references are one of the most

important elements of the recruitment process. In CEE countries they are not indispensable.

Sandra Bichl: How do law firms evaluate the competences of their high level candidates?

Joanna Sztandur: The most popular method is the interview conducted by lawyers on various positions held individually or in the form of a so-called panel.

Sandra Bichl: How accurate do Senior Associates / Partners assess themselves?

Joanna Sztandur: They often overestimate themselves.

Sandra Bichl: From the HR Director's perspective, what should Senior Associates / Partners especially pay attention to during the whole process? 3 tips?

Joanna Sztandur: Firstly, always show respect e.g. by keeping deadlines and promises or by being professional. Secondly, do not engage in the process, if you know from the very beginning that you do not plan on changing and just want to learn about the salary levels at the competitors or to have bargaining chips at your current job. Thirdly, treat your potential employer like a client i.e. conduct a detailed due diligence by e.g. verifying their reputation, trying to find out why they have chosen you as a potential candidate, what their organizational culture looks like, and if it is for sure the best change for you and how it will influence your career.

Sandra Bichl: Joanna, thank you very much for your time.

* * * * *

FAQ with Sandra Bichl

We decided to add this section because while researching and when talking to executives we ourselves are asked many questions. These are the most common ones:

Q: How did you get started?

Sandra: Back when I was a recruiter myself, a lot of my friends would ask for my help or even demand, "Sandra, you are a headhunter. Find me a job!". Most would not understand that I specialized in lawyers or that recruiters did not really work "like that". However, very often I found myself formatting CVs, writing motivation letters and giving career advice. Aside from two of my friends who ignored my tips, all others found jobs very quickly. So, friends of my friends started asking me for help. In June 2010 I decided to test if anybody would pay for my support & immediately won my first client. He recommended me and I so I obtained my second client and started co-operating with another Career Angel on a project basis. And that's how it got started: very organically and naturally. At first, I honestly

treated it as a well-paying hobby. I did nothing and have never done anything to advertise the company. Till the beginning of 2012 90% of the people I know did not even know that I have this additional line of business. Why? Because I had to be sure that I can deliver. I had to be convinced that I had the right people on board that would fulfill my, admittedly, exorbitant quality demands.

Q: How effective are you?

Sandra: If somebody comes solely to get their CV formatted, we cannot say that they did or did not find a new job based on our CV. What we can compare is the effects they get with their own CV version which is not getting invited to any job interviews with the effects they get with their new CV: getting invited. In that case, we are 100% effective. Sometimes we have clients that only want to go through the interview simulation because they usually never get through the first round. Once they practice with us, they get to the second and third round and receive job offers. In that case, we are also 100% effective. The efficiency with our more long-term clients is more difficult to assess. Some start the process to verify if there is a better job than the one they currently have. It has happened that they decided to stay where they were, but continued working with renewed energy. Some decide setting up their own business thanks to the whole process. Some, obviously, have changed thanks to our support. It all depends on the kind of support they decide to seek from us. We are most effective when we run and control everything from A to Z, including and especially, the handling of the correspondence. That is the single most important factor that usually decides on the speed and efficiency of the job hunting process.

Q: What kind of clients do you have?

Sandra: A friend of mine said that our clients are “money rich and time poor” which is partly true. We serve two kinds of clients. On the one hand, busy executives that prefer to take a well-deserved two week holiday or simply continue focusing on their current job to sitting in front of their PC clicking and searching. On the other hand, less busy executives that come for a certain piece of knowledge: they want to participate in the Competence Center or use us as a sounding board to discuss their options or job offers with a neutral, objective party.

Q: What kind of feedback have you received so far from your clients?

Sandra: The other day one of our clients said, “Sandra, I really like working with you and your company. You are extremely professional and you do maintain a very high level of service. But what I like best is that you are all “normal”. You are not pretentious.” I think that sums it up pretty well. We are practical, direct, always straight forward. We have a cozy office in the Warsaw city center. It's not luxurious. When potential clients visit us, we want them to feel “at home”. They should be able to forget for a moment that they are sitting, again, in an office in a conference room. We need our clients to be honest and open with us to be able to help. One of the policies we have is to switch to a first name basis at the first

hand shake – which is very unusual in Poland. It helps get rid of the unnecessary, often very superficial barriers.

Q: Do you work with everybody?

Sandra: Our prospects have to fulfill two requirements:

1) They have to be willing to hit “pause” to answer those underlying questions about their motives, goals, desires, competences, skills and expectations.

2) They have to be open to feedback. I feel obliged to always telling the truth and giving honest feedback. To give you an example: the other day an experienced lawyer came to our office. She was going through an unlucky patch. Her words said, “I really want to find a job.” But her dyed raven-black hair and dark eye shadow screamed, “I'm depressed, don't hire me!” Her posture communicated, “I don't deserve getting hired. I don't believe in myself.” So, I told her, “Listen, even if I help you, nobody will hire you. Not with your current state of mind. Come back, when you feel better. If you need to speak to a psychologist, we are happy to recommend someone.” It turned out, that she was already seeing one, she thanked for our honest feedback. Two weeks later, she sent me a much better version of her CV & told me she had decided to give the job hunting another try. That little push helped her.

Here's another example of how much our feedback is appreciated: During one of the interview simulations our client, a Managing Director, suddenly says, “But be sincere with me. Tell me the truth. At work I am never sure whether my employees are being straight with me. I pay you to be honest with me.” It does happen that we turn down work e.g. if somebody overestimates their competences and is not willing to get objectively assessed. We don't want to venture into helping somebody find a job, that doesn't match their skills. Or e.g. if an executive brings their attitude into our office and starts by making demands. That doesn't work with us.

Q: Who are your competitors?

Sandra: I believe that we do not have competitors in our market segment. There are companies that offer CV-writing services. There are a lot of career coaches. There are recruitment companies that try to cross-sell to their candidates services from the career management area. To me, that's a conflict of interest as you cannot serve two masters at the same time. We've also seen the reactions from our clients who are not particularly thrilled about that strategy: why should I *pay* a headhunter to help me with my CV? It's not the role they see the recruiter in.

Q: Do you do career coaching?

Sandra: Partly yes. While a career coach needs 10 hours to ask you questions & complete exercises with you, we put our brains to work & do several things parallel. That makes us more efficient. During

the meetings with our clients, we obviously use coaching techniques where needed. But I would not call that career coaching. If a client requires coaching, we assign them one of our coaches that helps them work through whatever challenges they might have – but then we call it, specifically, coaching.

Q: What industries do you specialize in?

Sandra: Let's put it that way: we do not specialize. We are confident that we can help our clients in any industry. If the know-how is not with one of our Career Angels, we are able to reach into our network and obtain what we need from the market. Remember, that e.g. headhunters are not our competitors, but to some extent collaborators who are willing to share. Additionally, we keep very close relationships with our former clients who are the best sources of information and contacts.

Q: How do you attract clients?

Sandra: Only by word of mouth. I felt the need to thank our active promoters, so we introduced a symbolic recommendation system called "Virtual Angels": If thanks to your recommendation somebody you know becomes our client - irrespectively of the amount they've spent with us - you receive a Virtual Angel. At the end of every quarter you can exchange the Virtual Angels you've collected for e.g. a book, a photo session etc.

Q: Who can join your team and how?

Sandra: We are always looking for professionals with an absolute minimum of 7 years of experience in both recruitment and ideally, in-house. They must have worked directly with executives. Should have some coaching / advisory experience. Candidates must have an eye for detail and no tolerance for low-quality service. Whenever I interview somebody I ask myself, "Would my most demanding client, a seasoned CEO, feel that he speaks to a partner?" If the answer is yes, I know I'm on the right track. I look for market and business understanding. I want my Career Angels to be conversation partners and advisors to our clients. At the very beginning, I promised myself to never compromise on the quality of consultants. When it comes to applying... the obvious answer is: by sending us a perfect CV.

Q: How would you describe your company as a work place?

I am too involved to objectively answer that question. Therefore, I asked Anna Zadrożna to help me with the reply. This is what she told me,

"I will start by giving you some context: I have known Sandra since she arrived in Poland in 2005. I had already been working at Hudson then. Last year she asked me if I wanted to help her with a project as they had a lot of work. Curious and temporarily with some spare time, I agreed. I would come into the office a couple of hours per week. It coincided that at that moment I was considering new career opportunities and becoming a Career Angels, aside from not having actually thought about it, seemed

fun but rather unlikely. I was supposed to continue my career in a corporation. Sandra asked me if I wanted to get more involved until I found my dream job. Why not? Then clients I worked with started having their first successes. I saw how my headhunting background and my insights from being an HR Manager came in handy. Clients started recommending me.

I must admit that I found myself at a crossroads: on the one hand I was receiving job offers from international corporations, on the other hand, I *really* liked being a Career Angel. I could apply my coaching skills and they made a difference. I was learning about employee branding, something I would have never even heard about being on the other side. I felt like in a place where for the first time *all* my experience and skills were relevant. Though I also had doubts: Do I really want to work in such a small company? Boutique or not, the brand was still rather unknown. Would it damage my CV? Can I develop? Am I competent enough? Will I manage in a B2C environment? How comfortable will I feel putting myself “out there” not being able to hide behind a corporate brand? Et cetera, et cetera.

It soon will be half a year and I do not regret having joined – at all. The reasons?

- 1) I'm surprised that I enjoy researching for my clients. It means “back to the roots”, but with a much deeper understanding. When I now look at the names and positions, I go, “Yes, that used to be a candidate of mine. Yes, he's my friend. Yes, I've heard about their internal changes.” It's like a big puzzle coming together... and after having worked in a rather narrow market for such a long time, I welcome the diversification.
- 2) It was a once in a life time opportunity. How often can you co-create a brand, let alone a new profession? I told myself that I always could go back to being an HR Manager.
- 3) It might seem counterintuitive that I receive more support in a small firm with theoretically less resources than a corporation, but that's what's happening. Probably because we are a small team that was carefully put together, we have an on-going ex-change of know-how. We attend trainings and conferences. There is on-going feedback, admittedly sometimes even if you do not ask for it ☺. I work with people I like – both team members and clients... which leads me to the fourth point:
- 4) Working with mature, aware, experienced, motivated clients is pure joy!
- 5) Sandra is a very practical, straight forward entrepreneur. Anything that makes sense and is viable, is implemented on the go. That kind of thinking gets us to participate in projects like putting this book together, doing *pro bono*, or creating new tools. A corporation is too heavy to adapt so quickly.
- 6) Last, but not least, I myself keep telling my clients that they should do what they love. We spend most of our lives at work. So, why not choose a professional that you actually enjoy doing?

Now, who would do well here? Definitely those who like working project-based, who are quick on the

uptake, who loathe slow corporate structures and who like seeing rather quick results. It's for those who are versatile, meaning, that they don't mind advising a CEO one minute, and formatting their CV the next minute. They should not have the feeling that those kind of tasks are "beneath them". I sincerely believe that people who will do great here are those who honestly enjoy helping others. It's good to know that you are the co-author of somebody else's career success.

Q: What challenges do you face?

Sandra: One of the reasons I decided to write this book is to raise the awareness of HR professionals that what we could be a realistic alternative career path. We usually receive CVs from either very junior people or those who have finished a coaching course and want to only do coaching – and I definitely want to change that.

Q: What are the strangest or most unrealistic requests you have received from your clients?

Sandra: Sometimes we are asked to personally introduce our clients to headhunters by sending them their CV. We do not do that, because our recommendation will not change anything and the most important factor is the relationship our client manages to build with the headhunter directly. The Executive Search Consultant screens the CV against any current or potential processes. You might be lucky and hit an opportune moment. Our doing will not change the headhunter's client portfolio.

Q: What markets do you cover? What are your plans?

Sandra: We have been serving clients that are primarily in Poland or connected to Poland. Assuming that we continue the growth we currently have, we'll be going international by the end of 2012.

Q: What is your take on whether executives should test their market value and participate in recruitment processes although they are not interested?

Sandra: Both companies and headhunters sometimes post "fake" job ads to enrich their databases or to get a better understanding of the market. Why shouldn't candidates be allowed the same? Nonetheless, thinking long-term, I would strongly advise the executive to be very clear from the very beginning on their motivation, "I'm happy where I am. I suspect that you will not be able to offer me something that could be of interest. However, I am open to exploring, but please remember, I will probably not accept any offer." That way the headhunter knows from the start to look for more motivated candidates. On the other hand, the recruitment process might turn out interesting after all.

Recommended Reading Compiled by Agnieszka Piątkowska

“Monster Careers: How to Land the Job of your life”, Jeff Taylor, Doug Hardy

Monster founder Jeff Taylor, with former editor-in-chief Doug Hardy, has written an upbeat, inspirational, and indispensable guide to getting the job you want in the new world of work. Rich with real-world advice from recruiters, career counselors, human resource professionals, and successful Monster members who share their job-hunting expertise, *Monster Careers* provides a step-by-step plan for carrying out a super-charged job search—from exploring new career options to writing job-winning resumes and cover letters, to mastering the interview and negotiating a job offer. A practical and passionate guide for any stage of your career, whether you're a seasoned professional or a recent graduate, *Monster Careers* is poised to become the uncontested job search authority. (Source: Amazon.com)

Why should you read it? In my opinion, this book is the perfect manual for job hunters. You will find practical tips: basic rules of job hunting, a description of the preparation process, effective methods of the job search and also advice on the transition period which is the time between your notice period from the current position and the probation period at the new employer.

“Pocket Mentor: Shaping Your Career”, James Waldroop and Timothy Butler

Description: Your career is not a one-time decision made early in life. Rather, you refine or redefine it as you grow professionally. This volume helps you:

- Recognize when it's time for a change
- Articulate the business activities that interest you most deeply
- Assess your skills and values
- Update your skills to remain competitive in the workforce
- Spot and seize advantage of career-development opportunities (Source: Amazon.com)

Why should you read it? It is a short, to the point and interesting publication, which I recommend especially to busy people. It helps to understand why it is worth to take control over your career. You will find a set of interesting exercises and tools that can support you in determining your long-term career goals. I strongly recommend the chapter on career planning tools. This well structured book might inspire you to take systematic actions on shaping your career.

Harvard Business Review on Managing Yourself

Before they can effectively manage others, managers have to be adept at managing themselves. That requires truly understanding their own passions and motivations, strengths and weaknesses. This guide offers sage advice from business greats, including Peter F Drucker and John P Kotter, on how managers can improve personal performance and productivity and in the process, become better managers of those they lead. (Source: Amazon.com)

Why is it worth reading? I recommend this book to those who aspire general manager positions. I particularly recommend Dan Ciamp's article "Almost prepared", in which he describes the reasons why talented, hard working managers are not successful on GM positions, or why despite their superior skills, they are not promoted. Another article "History of your Career" also deserves your attention. It provides insight on how to describe your career in the most interesting way. It is impossible not to mention Peter Drucker's featured article "Managing yourself". The author encourages to ask yourself important questions like: what are my strengths? How do I work best? What are my values? Where do I belong? What shall my input be? On the one hand, he warns us against changing ourselves and on the other hand, he advises that we shall focus on mastering the skills we already possess. It is the only way to achieve the best results even for an "average" person.

"Ask the right questions, hire the best people", Ron Fry

This book is exactly what it says it is: A list of questions designed to make your interviews with prospective job candidates more effective in weeding out the pretenders and uncovering that dream hire. There's not a lot of strategic content here, but this book is rich in tactical detail. For example, most of author Ron Fry's theoretical advice amounts to two points: probe for specifics and keep the applicant talking. The repetition of this self-evident advice is the book's biggest flaw. But in the end, such shortcomings are irrelevant, because the book's real value is in its list of interview questions, with accompanying comments on what answers you should be looking for. It seems impossible that you could read this book and not stumble over one question that makes you smile and tuck it away to spring later on some unsuspecting interviewee. (Source: Amazon.com)

Why is it worth reading? I recommend this book to the ones who are actively looking for a job and who therefore participate in job interviews. This book gives a clear picture on how recruiters work and their methods. It is a book written by a headhunter for headhunters. It demonstrates how recruiters search for candidates, what they take into consideration when reading CVs, it describes various recruitment styles, types of interviews, examples of interview questions and interpretations of the answers provided by candidates. Why not get familiar with the recruiters' *motives* and behaviors?

"What color is your parachute?" Richard N. Bolles

Description: Still the best-selling job-hunting book in the world, WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE? is the most complete guide for first-time job seekers as well as second and encore careers changers. For more than three decades, it remains a mainstay on best-seller lists, from Amazon.com to Business Week to the New York Times, where it has spent more than six years, and it has been translated into 20 languages. The 2009 edition is an even more useful book, with its updated, inspiring, and detailed plan for changing readers' lives. With new examples, instructions, and cautionary advice, PARACHUTE is, to quote Fortune magazine, "the gold standard of career guides." (Source: Amazon.com)

Why is it worth reading? This book provides thorough and comprehensive advice that is both practical and relevant. It also appeals to almost any career level, from recent graduates to senior executives. The exercises will help you expand your thinking about what you want to do and where you want to go, and it will definitely be an asset during interviews and discussions. The hands-on advice can also remind you about the smaller details that are so critical but are easy to be forgotten. If you buy any book on the topic of job hunting or career change, this has to be it.

“Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters “, Jay Conrad Levinson, David E. Perry

Using a typically unconventional Guerrilla approach, authors Levinson and Perry cover all the basics of a winning campaign. This book covers:

- Using the Internet for everything from research and job searches to your own Web site, blogs, and podcasting
- Performing an extreme resume makeover and creating a higher-powered value-based resume
- Harnessing the full power of Google, LinkedIn, and ZoomInfo to uncover opportunities in the "hidden job market" ahead of your competition (or other job hunters)
- Branding yourself and selling your strengths in resumes, letters, e-mail, and interviews

Guerrilla Marketing for Job Hunters includes real-life war stories from successful job hunters and expert tips and tactics from over 100 prominent headhunters *(Source: Amazon.com)*

Why is it worth reading? The book acts like a personal mentor to you during the whole job hunting process. It gives you a tremendous confidence booster and opens up doors of opportunities for you to really get creative and result driven. Don't fool yourself by thinking that activity and accomplishment is the same thing. This book is all about accomplishments and results. I would highly recommend this book to anyone, whether you are a new grad or a veteran, this book will show you how to maximize your worth in the market today. A wrong job hunting approach can really be discouraging to your image (been there done that), so do it right the first time.

The Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC)

The Association of Executive Search Consultants (AESC) is the worldwide professional association for retained executive search firms (sometimes simplified as executive recruiters, or headhunters). The AESC promotes the highest professional standards in executive search through its industry-recognized Code of Ethics and Professional Practice Guidelines. The AESC also serves to broaden public understanding of the executive recruitment process and acts as an advocate for the interests of its member executive search firms.

The AESC also runs BlueSteps, a career management service for senior executives, and CorporateConnect, a service for HR professionals offering executive search industry information and

access to the AESC directory of its member executive recruiters. (Source: *aesc.org*)