

LESSONS LEARNED | BY GERSON ROSENBLIOM

# Back on the Market Tips

I thought I had a job for life. Owning a multi-generation, successful music store that was around for more than 50 years, the last thing that was on my mind was preparing for a day when I had to find a new job. I naively believed that I was a “lifer” in my position. And because of that, I put just about zero conscious effort into the “what if” of having to go out and shop myself.

Then 2008 happened. It was a sobering experience to have to seek employment after I closed my company at the end of the year. These are lessons I learned out of necessity when I found myself in the job market.



**When job hunting, your personal brand is your single greatest asset**

## WRITE WELL

The first thing I did was hire a professional resume writer. Don’t take a shortcut here: Long before you ever meet with anyone, this is your calling card. Pros know how to include the right words to help your resume get flagged by the software that companies use to weed through the hundreds of resumes they receive. On this last point, this screening software can be your nemesis. When applying to larger companies, you’re at the mercy of factors beyond your control and are often competing with a large candidate pool. Be sure to make applications focus less on you and more on the benefits your potential employer can derive by hiring you.

The best way to avoid becoming ensnared in the online application process is to try to utilize your network as your gateway to new opportunities. The adage, “it’s all who you know,” isn’t so far off! The problem is that many of us just leave our network to chance. As a matter of course, we meet whom we meet. But there’s a better way.

I was lucky. Although I never purposely designed it this way, my career path got me involved on some boards (including NAMM),

in some consulting positions, and made me reasonably connected in some corners. Initially, I did it by chance, but make growing your network a priority. Don’t hide away in your stores. Get out and be a contributing member of our industry and your local community. Answer the call to serve when you’re called. You never know when the connections you make will pay dividends.

## GET SOCIAL

Social media is another place to both grow and stay connected with your network. LinkedIn is an invaluable professional network. But don’t just put up a profile and make connections. You need to contribute to your network by posting valuable information and making yourself a known entity. Be real and be open. Your personal brand is your single greatest asset, so flaunt it. Then, when the time comes, you’ll be viewed as someone recognizable rather than just another person off the street.

## TAKE NOTES

When it’s time to look for a position, you can certainly start with the posted jobs, but be prepared to dig deeper. With a strong network in place, leverage your network to ask about positions that aren’t yet posted or searches taking place outside of the mainstream. That’s precisely how I landed my next gig after being out of the job search market for 40 years.

Lastly, become a student of the job search — even when you’re not actively in the job market. When my turn came, I had almost no knowledge of such matters under my belt. Don’t let that happen to you! Knowledge is power. Be prepared. **MI**

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