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Advice

January 6, 2014

The Ph.D.'s Guide to a Nonfaculty Job Search

You, too, can join the ranks of the gainfully employed outside of academe

By L. Maren Wood

For most Ph.D.'s, the nonacademic labor markets are shrouded in mystery: Where do I look for jobs? How do I meet people if I don't have contacts outside academe? Did I just waste the past eight years of my life on this doctorate when I should have been earning an M.B.A.?

Ill-equipped to manage a nonfaculty job search, many new Ph.D.'s struggle to find openings relevant to their interests and skills. As a Ph.D. who came up short myself on the tenure-track market and left academe to start my own consulting company, I designed a "Boot Camp for the Postacademic Job Seeker" to help graduate students interested in positions beyond the professoriate. In the boot camp, Ph.D.'s spend four weeks exploring career options, identifying their transferable interests and skills, writing résumés, and learning how to network beyond academe. Here are seven tips I've learned from teaching at the boot camp to help you begin your nonfaculty job search:

1. "It's the economy, stupid." Ph.D.'s are often surprised at how long it takes to land a full-time job outside of higher education. As the weeks turn into months, many begin to doubt themselves, their degrees, and their training.

The reality is, finding a job takes months for everyone, regardless of education and work history. According to the Bureau of Labor

Statistics, the average period of unemployment is nine months, with a median of 17 weeks. Those numbers are depressing, but they should remind Ph.D. job seekers that their experience is not unique. Do not let a difficult search or a slow economic recovery fill you with doubt. Your doctorate has value, as evidenced by the numerous blog posts written by Ph.D.'s who have successfully made the transition out of the professoriate.

That said, it will take work, creativity, and perseverance to land your first meaningful, full-time nonfaculty position. What the unemployment figures do suggest is that you may have to rely on temporary gigs while you search for it. You may have to intern, volunteer, or take low-paying jobs in the interim. For those in faculty positions (temporary or tenure-track) who are considering exiting the professoriate, the time to start your nonacademic search is now. Use the time left in your teaching contract to begin building a network of contacts and laying the groundwork for your search.

The good news, as shown in the recent placement study by the American Historical Association, is that most Ph.D.'s end up with good, middle-class jobs that use their skills and expertise. They become researchers, analysts, managers, administrators, and consultants. Many run their own businesses. You, too, can join the ranks of the gainfully employed outside of academe.

2. Employers care more about skills than credentials. In academe, credentials are key. So when Ph.D.'s read job ads for nonfaculty positions, they are easily discouraged when an ad requests a degree or credential that they don't have.

Most employers, however, do not care about your specific degrees. They care about your skill set, experience, and body of knowledge. That doesn't mean your Ph.D. was a waste of time. It means that organizations and companies hire people from a wide variety of educational backgrounds and work histories.

The problem for Ph.D.'s is not a lack of skills, but rather an inability to effectively convey the nature of those skills. Graduate programs don't teach students how to communicate what we do, and so we end up talking about what we know.

Articulating what you can do for a company or an organization is the most difficult part of the job search. To get started, think about a typical day or week in your life as an academic. Write down every task you did to prepare for teaching, conducting your research, or serving on a committee. No task is too small to list.

By reading blogs, websites, and industry publications, and by conducting informational interviews, you can learn the lingo of an industry or employment sector you're interested in pursuing. Then use that lingo to refashion your inventory of academic tasks into a list of skills that a nonacademic employer will recognize. Your experience leading class discussions becomes facilitating. Literature reviews become best-practice studies. Lectures become one-hour multimedia presentations. You will be surprised by how many of your academic activities can be translated into skills valued by the business world and described in its preferred jargon.

3. Your dissertation matters. In my consulting business, I work with professional organizations and university departments to track the career outcomes of their Ph.D.'s. What has become apparent to me as I've tracked placement data is that your dissertation topic matters in finding job opportunities. To people outside the ivory tower, a Ph.D. means you are an expert. In what subject are you an expert? That is what will set your application apart from others.

Sure, you have highly defined skills as a researcher, analytical thinker, and writer, but you also have a particular expertise that cannot be gained in six weeks of on-the-job training. If your dissertation focuses on gender, race, poverty, climate change, Latin America, emerging economies, immigration, or whatever,

then look for jobs at organizations that focus on those issues. They will find your skill set and expertise valuable.

4. Don't rely on job advertisements to find your new position.

Learning about academic jobs in your field is fairly straightforward. There are only a handful of faculty job boards. But where do you look for nonacademic jobs?

That depends on what you want to find: Industry jobs are listed on company websites; nonprofits post to *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* and Indeed; jobs in the federal government appear on its official jobs site, USAJobs; *The Chronicle of Higher Education's* Vitae lists academic and nonacademic jobs from various employers; while other organizations advertise only in local newspapers.

It can be overwhelming and confusing to figure out where to begin looking.

The truth is, you shouldn't be looking just at job boards anyway, unless your purpose is simply to learn about employers in a field or about potential career paths. Richard N. Bolles, author of the best seller *What Color Is Your Parachute?*, estimates that about 70 percent of jobs are never posted anywhere. Most people, he writes, find their jobs through a network of friends, families, co-workers, and associates.

In other words, if your job-hunting strategy is limited to reading position advertisements and submitting your résumé, that might explain the lack of responses, dearth of interviews, and continued unemployment. Your success in your post-academic ventures depends on your ability to connect with people and build relationships.

5. Networking. It's your ticket to a new career. You probably have more people in your network than you realize. In the boot camp I run, I ask participants to write a "broadcast email" about their job

quest and send it to every person they know. The email should include information about what you've been doing (completing your Ph.D., teaching as a contingent faculty member), and describe opportunities you hope to explore. It should be somewhat specific (you'd like to work for a nonprofit or an NGO with a focus on poverty), so that people can forward your message to anyone they know working in that field. Ideally you should include a résumé.

Alumni networks are also key to a successful search. Ask your department administrator or someone at the campus alumni office for a list of people who graduated from your institution in the past 10 years. Look up those people on LinkedIn. The best sources of advice for Ph.D.'s moving from academic to nonacademic work are people who have made the transition themselves. Alumni are easy contacts to make because you share something in common and they are sympathetic to your plight. They've been there.

Informational interviews are also important tools in finding openings and connecting to potential employers. You can arrange interviews with people you know or with total strangers. An informational interview is an opportunity for you, the job seeker, to learn about a new career path, about an organization or a company, and about potential employment opportunities. You may have to do 10 informational interviews, or 300, before you land your first real job interview, but in this economy, that is the way it works.

Everyone understands that networking is how people find jobs, and no one will be offended by your request for an informational interview, provided you [follow proper etiquette](#). You will be amazed at how often someone will recommend you for an opportunity or introduce you to new people.

6. Explore alternative career options. It's critical to explore career

paths beyond academe while you are still in graduate school. Doctoral students who don't do that are exposed to a narrow range of options. Applying for an internship at a nonprofit group or company can help you understand how to use your research and teaching skills in different ways. You may also find that you enjoy that work far more than teaching. Consider applying for a paid internship off campus instead of picking up an adjunct course. You need only so much teaching experience for your academic job applications, so one or two semesters working off campus won't harm your chances at a tenure-track job.

For those who can't work off campus for financial or legal reasons (graduate students in the sciences, international students), consider volunteering. Every organization needs volunteers. Match your volunteer interests with your academic areas of specialization: health care, ecology, environment, women's reproductive rights, etc. That will allow you to build networks outside of academe, add to your skill set, and gain relevant work experience.

7. Take the long view. Even if you were lucky enough to find a tenure-track job immediately after graduation, you would spend five to seven years before you earned tenure. Take a similar "long view" of your post-academic career track. You may have to start working at a small organization, in an entry-level position, with the goal of moving up. Creating a five- or seven-year plan can help take the anxiety out of landing your first position.

At this point, you just need to get started. Say yes to any opportunity that moves you in the right direction. Remember, you don't have to work in any particular field or for the same employer for life. It is not uncommon for people in the nonacademic world to change jobs every few years or to have more than one major career change. Don't worry about what you want to do with the rest of your life; just worry about what you're going to do *this* year, and consider it a steppingstone toward your ideal position.

L. Maren Wood earned a Ph.D. in history from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She is the founder and lead researcher of Lilli Research Group, a company that provides research-consulting services to organizations and career coaching to Ph.D. job seekers. She lives in Denver.

46 comments



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digiwork · 3 days ago

This is all good advice -- but about the dissertation topic, I would say that sometimes careers come at you completely sideways. Sometimes the dissertation topic doesn't really matter. You might start an organic hot dog company with a history degree, or a yoga studio after completing your computer science degree. I encourage all my own graduate students to be open to as many possibilities as might flit across the radar screen of their own interests.

7 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›



fab4mattmarklukejohn → digiwork · 3 days ago

My dissertation director encouraged me to write about something I cared about, rather than something "marketable" so that I would actually finish the work! I finished it. Now in my present job search, that chosen topic is close to jobs I'm looking at, and the formerly marketable topics in Philosophy of Education, circa 1990, are mostly passe. And yes, of course, life comes at us sideways--absolutely true. The point, though, is that your expertise and your interests are both valuable to the employer, and the dissertation can support that part of the search.

5 ^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›



veritaspotens → digiwork · 2 hours ago

I disagree: I am a STEM senior faculty member currently pursuing non-academic employment. When asked "Why would we be interested in your [quite abstract] research?" My answer is "You wouldn't be, but you would be very interested in the techniques I use." The research topic can be irrelevant. This has garnered good responses, but, alas, no job yet.

^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›



ppe2012 · 3 days ago

This is good info, but it circles back that if you know you may not get a faculty position and plan to work outside of academe, you don't need a PhD. Unless you are in a serious research organization or research lab, you may not need a PhD to do what you want to do at all. I have a PhD and work outside academe, and can honestly say that my education has been a hindrance to my career rather than helping it - because many folks outside of academe feel threatened by someone with more education than they have (especially if they're the boss), even if you're the best team player and love the work and have no intent

2009, even if you're the best team player and love the work and have no intent of taking their job - you are a threat in their mind. Academe is so focused on pumping out the degrees and collecting tuition that the graduates are the ones that suffer. It goes back to the institutions themselves, they know the markets and demand and should guide students to what will benefit them when they graduate, not what will bring more money into the school.

20 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Bonapartist01 → ppe2012 · 2 days ago

I agree and would go even further. The article's emphasis on networking drives home the point about bypassing HR box-checkers and their pseudo-science that only is meant to subsume their own prejudices inside smoke and mirrors. Otherwise, however, the article seems to assume something like a level playing field of open minds, and as you suggest, this is not always the case. Try having degrees in a foreign language (not Spanish) and an advanced degree in a social science or the humanities on an "alt" path in a rock-ribbed red state and see the ensuing chimera, even with all the networking in the world. Try having been out of the work force while you were pursuing that higher degree you thought would be the ticket to unemployment nevermore. In other words, my question in essence is how the consultant/networking coach overcomes cultural biases, personal biases, caprice, and God only knows what else.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → Bonapartist01 · 2 days ago

Considered the Human Terrain System teams at Ft. Leavenworth? Need to be willing to deploy to Afghanistan for a year but it's exciting work if you know anything about social network analysis and can carry a 30 pound ruck, body armor and an M-9 Beretta.

Money is pretty good and it's experience you can't get just anywhere.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Last 2 months of a PhD → dochollywood_2 · 5 hours ago

Some of us are doing PhDs to end our deployments to Afganistan etc.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → ppe2012 · 2 days ago

I agree. When it comes down to it, your boss and coworkers don't want I have to call you Doctor even if you tell them they don't have to. And wait until you order business cards. Then your boss will really be uncomfortable.

It's ok for the CEO to have a PhD because it gives the firm credibility, but God forbid that during a meeting a consultant addresses you as "Dr. Smith"

Saw it happen at a meeting last week and the CEO about lost his cookies because he only has a masters degree, but then again who doesn't?

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



recovering_academic · 3 days ago

Really good advice except for the blanket assertion in #2 about transferable



Pretty good advice except for the blanket assertion in #2 about transferable skills. Unless you are talking about a specific research-related or teaching job, the skills one learns in grad school are not transferable. They can be more of a hindrance than anything in many cases.

1 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



amwhisnant · 3 days ago

I think this is all outstanding advice, but I will add just the probably obvious caveat that even the best efforts along these lines can founder if you don't have some directly relevant EXPERIENCE that the hiring entity can readily recognize, or the right degree program to check in an HR-box-checking box. With a history PhD and dissertation on the impact of the routing and construction of North Carolina/Virginia's Blue Ridge Parkway, I applied FOUR TIMES for a job as a community planner (job dealing with community impacts of highway projects) with the North Carolina Department of Transportation (the entity that had, in fact, handled lots of the work for the Blue Ridge Parkway). I repeatedly made the connection in my application materials between the historical study of highway impacts and current assessment of the community effects of likely highway routes. This was not a huge stretch. But the job listing in the state system you use to apply asked for a bachelor's degree (yep) in something like "anthropology, sociology, or related field." To me, "history" is definitely a "related field" to those disciplines. However, it turned out (I learned later) that the state of NC HR classification system had a very defined list of fields that would count as "related," and history was not among them. So three times my application was tossed out as "unqualified" on that technicality

[see more](#)

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



recovering_academic → amwhisnant · 3 days ago

Also, applicants can also be screened out for being "overqualified". It can happen when you have people with PhDs applying for entry-level jobs.

4 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



11161452 → recovering_academic · 3 days ago

As a former professor moving to alt-ac, I am reasonably sure I've been screened out by the HR person for this sin of overqualification. Is there anything you can say in your application that might at least keep you in the pool--short of actually leaving off degrees?

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



recovering_academic → 11161452 · 2 days ago

I'd suggest putting it further down the resume and don't include diss titles, awards etc. It's the resumes that read like CVs that seem to get quickly screened out.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



marenwood → recovering_academic · 2 days ago

Amwhisnant's story illustrates an important point about the power of networking. It can be difficult working directly with HR. Try to network with people in the organization or institution who can direct HR to bring you in for an interview. And I second Recovering_academic's suggestions. Unless the degrees are directly relevant to the job, your education should appear on the bottom of a

2 page combination resume (not chronological, not functional). Don't leave degrees off your resume, since the omission could be viewed as dishonest from the perspective of HR/employer.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → marenwood · 2 days ago

And will be viewed as being dishonest just like including a degree or certification you don't really have.

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davidbinder → dochollywood_2 · 4 hours ago

Actually, no. A resume needs to be tailored for the position sought, emphasizing those things relevant to the position and de-emphasizing or omitting those things that are not. Leaving something out simply means it will not be considered but if it is not relevant it is not missed. The resume/cover letter combination is a sales pitch ... the "product" is the applicant. It is about "features and benefits" to show how hiring one will add value to the organization. The resume can be thought of loosely as a "spec brochure" that describes the person; the cover letter is the sales pitch (BTW ... a "sale" in this context is to be asked to interview; the interview is a second sales pitch). One mistake made by many persons, both those in academia and others, is to try to use the same resume for all positions; that rarely works. The other common mistake is to make the cover letter about "me" rather than about the company's needs and how hiring "me" will help attain them.

[see more](#)

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11161452 → marenwood · 2 days ago

Re: networking, the current dept. chair in an area where I'd like to work is actually a former professor of mine from a long time ago, but I'm wondering what the right approach would be--just flat-out say I'm applying for a certain job and I'm concerned that HR will auto-screen me out?

Also, could you elaborate on what you consider a "combination resume"? I am now working with essentially a skills-based resume with work experience and degrees listed at the end.

By the way, I don't think I could bring myself to leave the degrees off anyway...the matter would arise eventually during interviews, plus, I worked too hard for those degrees to dismiss them.

Thank you for the article.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



marenwood → 11161452 · a day ago

Email the former professor and tell her/him that you are

interested in moving into said new field. You've noticed a job opening, and you'd like to talk to her/him about working at that organization and any tips they might have for your application. Ask to meet w/ them or speak on the phone for 30 minutes. (Specify the time length and then stick to it). They will most likely say yes. At the end of the conversation, you can ask them if they would be willing to speak with HR about your application. That's an easier thing to drop in conversation once you've re-established your relationship than to put in an email.

A combination resume is a bit complicated to explain in the comment section. It's a chronological resume that includes transferable skills and key skills. It's both skill based and chronological. Most HR people and employers loath functional/skill resumes and prefer combination resumes for people in career transition. I'm running a webinar on resumes/cover letters in a few weeks. And/or you can also check out the book *The Career Change Resume* by Kim Isaacs and Karen Hofferber. It has a great introduction walking you through the different sections of a combination resume and provide good templates and examples.

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11161452 → marenwood · 15 hours ago

Good ideas. Regarding the resume, my situation is complicated by the fact that I have a very large job gap, so chronology is not my friend--hence, the skills resume with the work experience at the bottom.

I'll ask one more question...why do the HR people so dislike functional resumes?

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



marenwood → 11161452 · an hour ago

It doesn't tell them what you've *done.* You could, feasibly, use one position to pad your functional resume. It doesn't show them the depth of your experience. I'd suggest reading (if you haven't) *What Color is Your Parachute*. For someone with work gaps on their resume, applying to large companies that use HR to screen applicants will not be your best strategy. Focus on small companies and set up face-to-face (informational) interviews. If you're interested in fed gov't jobs, still meet with people who can help get your resume out of the pile. You can explain in person why there is a gap. A resume is like a business card, you shouldn't lead with it, you should leave it behind. Good luck!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → 11161452 · 2 days ago

Don't list date ranges, just years of experience. Also consider a plan B that lists other qualifications.

A colleague wasn't getting any traction with an MBA and PhD in organizational management and leadership, then

realized they could also work in the intelligence community since he served 6 years in the Army. He took some self study courses online in homeland security and terrorism from the DHS and the response rate dropped from 11 months to 2 months.

No job yet but things are heating up.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → recovering_academic · 2 days ago

A desperate colleague was turned down by Chili's since they "didn't think they could keep up in the fast paced environment".

He's 63 and highly educated.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → amwhisnant · 2 days ago

That counts as employment.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



barkertj05 · 3 days ago

Excellent, practical advice. Thanks!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Mary Rizzo · 3 days ago

Thanks for a great post with really practical, timely advice for alt-ac jobseekers. It does pay off, too--I'm proof positive--though there can be an emotional toll to "quitting" the academic world, which I've written about here: <http://66.147.244.130/~maryrizz/2013/09/19/the-emotional-cost-of-adjunctification-with-tips-on-how-to-survive/>.

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LMABRB18 · 3 days ago

I think every point here provides valuable advice (as do the comments). I would add that if you think you may be in the market post-PhD for a job outside academe, consider taking some business courses as you work on the dissertation. A PhD may seem like a threat, especially if applying for an internship or low level position, but having business knowledge can aid in applying to higher level jobs where people welcome "experts". Between my art history MA and my cultural studies PhD, I got a degree in arts administration; this, along with my professional experience, makes me a candidate for leadership positions in arts organizations, where the PhD credential is welcome. It is definitely a greater time and money investment, but provides for more choices in a career. Food for thought!

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → LMABRB18 · 2 days ago

It's mostly an ego thing where a potential boss will feel threatened if they or anyone inside or outside the organization calls you "doctor". And forget about hanging your degree(s) on your office wall, ordering business cards, have a voice mail that uses the same phrase, or accidentally introducing your self as "doctor....."

A friend with a PhD in management was told by the HR department at the hospital she worked at not to use the title "Dr." because the title was reserved only for medical professionals, you know "real doctors."

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

**LMABRB18** → dochollywood_2 · a day ago

I can absolutely see that, and have been in a position of having more education than a supervisor - not fun. And what a mess being a PhD in the medical sector, since I imagine there is always back and forth about who is the "real" doctor. I think my advice is most applicable to those interested in pursuing executive director positions in arts or education organizations. Boards members may feel threatened here and there (especially by those that, in addition to having the PhD, are young and female), but boards generally like an ED who is educated, as it makes the organization look stronger.

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**dochollywood_2** → LMABRB18 · 18 hours ago

A college is a trauma nurse and she went back for a PhD. She says that it really throws the young interns off when someone asks for a doctor and she responds "I'm a doctor..."

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

**brinkhus** · 2 days ago

I so needed this article this morning. I have been beside myself for the last few months looking for a position. "As the weeks turn into months, many begin to doubt themselves, their degrees, and their training." this has been my exact experience.

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

**marenwood** → brinkhus · 2 days ago

I am sorry it is taking so long. I know that the job search process is awful and soul-sucking, so I am glad my article has given you encouragement. Hang in there. Keep networking! It's the best way to find your next opportunity.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›

**brinkhus** → marenwood · 2 days ago

Thanks.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›

**gretawendelin** → brinkhus · 5 hours ago

Go to the library and dig out "What Color is your Parachute," "So what are you going to do with that: Finding careers outside academia," and "Escaping the Ivory Tower" (oldie but goodie). Work through the flower exercise in "Parachute." It's extremely helpful. The others will help you as an academic to do the job searching.

Also, speaking as someone who has recently been there/done that, the urge will be to "take whatever I can, I'm desperate." Yes, you are, but you owe it to yourself to be a little picky and work towards those places that are a better fit for your skills/strengths/needs. For example, one who is very disciplined and independent will find it chaffing to work in a place that micromanages your time and does not encourage self-determination or creativity, and suddenly that pay check doesn't look so hot. Know what you are good at and what you need in a work place. This will help to guide you in knowing what kind of people to talk to-- INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWING will save your hide.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



brinkhus · 2 days ago

I so needed this article. I have been and are astonished at how long it is taking to find a position.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → brinkhus · 2 days ago

Depending on the field of concentration, age and job market be prepared to wait 2-3 years, so consider adjunct work in the mean time since you won't be able to get a job at a call center or McDs....over qualified.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Norman S Stahl · 2 days ago

When I was a Career Counselor at UCLA, I remember a PhD Particle Physicist and a PhD Philosopher who each were hired by big name consulting agencies.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 → Norman S Stahl · 2 days ago

And your point?

2 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Norman S Stahl → dochollywood_2 · 2 days ago

I guess i have to be more direct for the linear thinkers: Many people would think folks with these degrees would not be a match for consulting firms, but by focusing on their skills and knowledge rather than their degree, they were able to land a job outside academe in a field not (directly) related to their skills.

6 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



dochollywood_2 · 2 days ago

Now let's talk about those who are 60 years and older with PhDs who have been trying for 3 years to final a job, any job inside or outside of academics. Like my colleague with a PhD in human resources from the University of Texas, a JD from UCLA and an MBA from Cornell.

Laid off 3 years ago after 15 years at an HBCU (no tenure program) and hasn't worked inside or outside if the classroom since.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Michelle Burnett → dochollywood_2 · 18 hours ago

1. Being over 60 and trying to get a job is extraordinarily difficult, whether you are a Ph.D., or you dig ditches. Despite the ADEA, age discrimination is common practice. It stinks, but it's reality.

2. As a hiring manager, I would look at the resume of a person with those degrees and think they were overqualified for just about any position, and probably very expensive. Irregularities on the resume beyond the recent gap would also have a lot of bearing. I think folks like your friend need a really excellent resume/job search consultant to help them figure out the best way to showcase their skills on resumes and applications, while downplaying the expensive education. Sorry for party rocking.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



davidbinder → Michelle Burnett · 4 hours ago



Good points ... given dochollywood_2's colleague's expertise, networking in SHRM chapters is a good way to make contacts. Even if folks are not hiring, companies often want to have some consulting done, something for which they likely would engage a 60-year old PhD in HR to do.

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Carlo Gallo · 2 days ago

PhDs in politics, international relations, political economy, policy analysis, etc. often have highly-specialist knowledge, research and language skills, and in-country contacts that are very relevant for political risk consulting to business. Those who want to apply to do freelance work in this area, possibly as an add-on to their think tank, academic or other research work, can apply to join our Enquirisk platform. They need to demonstrate in-depth knowledge of a country/region, or an industry, or a risk area (e.g. terrorism, international trade, transnational crime, etc.). If an applicant's expertise is defined primarily in terms of a country or region, he/she is ideally based in that country and is fluent in the local language.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Blue_Wave · a day ago

I am always wary about someone promoting strategies for finding employment is self-employed as a "consultant."

2 ^ | 1 v · Reply · Share ›



victormeyer01 · 20 hours ago

Try 10+ years! That's how long it's been for me after my PhD trying to land a decent job. Even teaching at a high school or college – in my 6th year of trying for permanent positions (part-time and fulltime). Have been doing all sorts of shitty jobs from call center to volunteering. Also tried joining the Army and Police Force – forget it!

^ | v · Reply · Share ›



gretawendelin · 6 hours ago

All PhDs can benefit from doing the work in books like "What Color is Your Parachute," or "Do What You Are" in addition to networking and informational interviews. Books like that can help to illuminate the skills that grads have from their doctoral work and help to finesse CVs into resumes, while informational interviewing gets PhDs connected to real people who can help them find their way quickly.

This is how the (smart) world job searches, rather than just throwing CVs/resumes to the wind, as is MO for academic job searches. It's worked well for me, both in getting decent work in higher ed administration, as well as starting a fulfilling career as a freelance writer. I graduated in 2012 with my PhD, and was unemployed for about 6 months. It probably would have been a lot less if I had been more proactive about networking and reaching out to others.

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share ›



Carla Taban · 5 hours ago

Please see <http://carlataban.wordpress.co...> especially "9. Failing" for a somewhat different point of view on the matter. It is indeed the "political economy stupid!" (thank you, Mr. Zizek) and "knowledge/cognitive capitalism" which 'produce' worldwide too many qualified and overqualified people,

inclusive but not exclusive of PhDs. The academic and non-academic job 'markets' are thus overflowed and unable to absorb all these people. It's like producing too many consumption goods that then have to be discarded or consumed/changed rapidly. The only problem is - from a human's point of view, THIS human's point of view - that we're talking about people here and not things. Systemic change is the only real solution.

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