

CareerSmart Advisor™

Strategies & Solutions for Your Career Success

A Note From Dave

If you haven't checked out the online archived discussions that take place in ExecuNet member executive Roundtables, please take a look. They're full of valuable insights from fellow ExecuNet members about business issues and challenges that we all face.



Most recently, I followed a discussion started in our General Management Roundtable by George Bradt, founder of Prime Genesis and author of *The New Leaders 100-Day Action Plan*, about transformational leadership. Bradt says that it's all about inspiring and enabling people to do their best and share a meaningful and rewarding purpose. He asked for input on how to turn a company's potential into something truly meaningful and rewarding.

Many of you responded in force, claiming it's not such a clear-cut task. Yet, I was most interested in comments by member Kerry Bensman, who pointed out that Bradt's ideas imply that an organization does have unrealized potential, as well as the ability, experience and expertise to embrace a goal and strive to reach it. That's not always the case, he says.

Bensman's point is that employees have the drive to succeed, but only if they are pointed in the right direction and set up to succeed. The real problem is that leadership sometimes doesn't know which road to take. You can't just say where you want to go. You need to have a plan that will actually take you there.

Top performers in your organization need to know you're serious and confident in guiding your company's objectives. Supply them with the direction and tools (not just the words) they need and you'll all find your way.

Sincerely,

Dave

Dave Opton
ExecuNet Founder & CEO
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The M&A Effect on Your Career

By Marji McClure

Microsoft's proposed merger of Yahoo! has captured headlines for quite a while, and several of the major U.S. airlines are currently exploring the merger route as well. So far, 2008 is looking to be the year of mergers and acquisitions. Whether you are currently an at-work executive or one in transition, this apparent trend toward increased M&A activity could have a serious affect on your career.

It's vital that you're prepared, either as a member of an acquiring company or the acquired entity, for the changes that occur as the result of M&As. Because this can mean new job opportunities or the need for a quick exit, executives need to know how to survive an M&A with their careers intact.

Maintaining Leadership Skills and Status Quo

Essentially, executives need to know how to maneuver their career direction through the processes mergers and acquisitions take, from the initial announcement of a deal through the integration and post-integration stages.

Whether your company is being acquired or doing the acquiring, your main role as an executive is to keep your organization moving forward as you guide yourself and your team through the entire transaction process.

"As a leader, it is imperative to keep your team focused on achieving its objectives," says ExecuNet member Ron Rose, who worked with an acquiring company on 11 acquisitions in three to four years and was also part of an acquired company twice. "Whether you are an acquiring company leading a strategy or an acquired company that is a strategic piece in the puzzle, operating results are critical. During acquisition 'frenzy,' the acquiring company's senior management can become consumed by activities relating to acquisitions; this is the time when they need their executive operating managers to remain focused and continue to deliver the results the CEO has promised Wall Street or company investors who are making the acquisitions possible."

Because M&As always mean changes, the best thing an executive can do immediately for himself and his team is to maintain the normalcy and productivity of his company's operations so that the organization's objectives will continue to be met. "The team leader has to ask, how does the

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Food for Thought

Growing Within Your Company: Achieve Success Where You Are

By Pam Lassiter

“**W**hat was I thinking?” Have you ever felt that way after straying away from something that you liked, whether it was a relationship, a city where you lived, or even your favorite ice cream, to discover that the alternative isn't so great after all? The grass is not so green? Reverting back to chocolate chocolate chip isn't so difficult. Reverting back to a job or company that you've left behind is tougher.

There may be some options for you to consider before you take any leaps that can set you up to achieve your goals closer to home. Aren't they worth exploring first? Your search for “The Ultimate” could be waiting for you right where you are.

The Inverse Security Monster

Remember the first day you came into your current company? You were probably about as hot as you can get. You knew about the competition, the trends in the marketplace, and how your competencies could add to the bottom line. Your company was proud to have snagged a competent technical professional woman and you were delighted to be out of the job market and to have found a company that had potential for your growth and its own. Time goes on.

After a while, you master your job and people trust you, so you keep doing what you've been doing. You seldom think, “Will I have this job next year?” or “How can I increase the success of the company?” because there's enough on your plate today to keep you busy and you're looking down rather than up and out. As you become more engrossed, your relationships outside of work may diminish. “I don't have

time to go to the professional association meeting/trade show/conference. I'm buried!” Sound familiar?

This is the onset of the inverse security monster: the more you feel secure because you've been at the company a long time, the less secure you actually are. Skills can become obsolete, competencies dulled, and relationships withered when they're not nurtured; and those are your pathways to growth both inside and outside of your company.

As a professional in technology, continually reinventing your skills is critical. “You are so Web 1.0” is not where you want to be.

Taking Control

What does this mean for you? This means taking control of the wheel. If you have a vision of where you'd like to head with your work, what skills and competencies you need to get there, and are growing your career management skills at the same time, you're conquering the inverse security monster. Start thinking about the first part and where you'd like to head. You might be able to have your chocolate chocolate chip and eat it, too. ■

Pam Lassiter is the author of The New Job Security, a Wall Street Journal/ CareerJournal.com award-winning book, and principal of Lassiter Consulting, which provides senior-level outplacement and retention services to companies and executives internationally. Lassiter has made appearances on national television and radio programs. Her articles on career management appear in human resource and business publications, including Fast Company, Fortune, Financial Times, Bloomberg radio and CFO. Contact Lassiter at LassiterConsulting.com.

Insider Insight

Talking Your Way to the Top

By Karen Friedman

A recent survey of top executives who earned more than \$250,000 found that these executives believed their communication skills were the number one reason they made it to the top. They said their ability to communicate effectively meant articulating company goals, personifying company values and impressing senior management, which helped them take their careers to the next level.

“I work with a lot of terrific people who are exceptional at what they do. But in order for them to take their careers to the next level, senior management needs to see them as leaders who can command attention and respect.” That’s what a top pharmaceutical executive recently told me before I coached key members of his team. When delivering presentations, it’s essential for them to be able to “hit it out of the ballpark” if they hope to take their careers to the next level, he said. The executive says a person’s ability to present key information clearly and concisely is critical to her credibility, and the respect she earns both internally and externally.

Yet, even top tier managers will privately admit they are not sure how to deliver more effective data-packed presentations that contain fewer slides and more personality. They acknowledge that their PowerPoint-driven presentations are too long, lack organization, substance, style and sometimes fail to provide perspective, context or direction. Sheepishly and slightly embarrassed, they divulge that this is the way it’s always been done and they’re afraid to leave out important information or personalize their presentations for fear of not being taken seriously.

While most communication coaches, including this one, will teach you to craft strong opens and closes, organize material, develop powerful messages and improve delivery and body language, you will be hard pressed to connect with higher-ups if you do not learn how to impact them emotionally. Based on hundreds of coaching

sessions and conversations with scores of executives, we have compiled key tactics and presentation strategies in an effort to help you advance your career.

Get Out of Your Own Way

You know your business, which is why you are delivering information. So stop trying to jam 10 pounds of information into a two-pound bag just to prove that you know your stuff. Figure out how to appeal to their emotions. If you’re talking technology, how will the technology save them time and money? Step out of your shoes and into theirs to talk from their perspective and address their concerns.

Leave a Lasting Impression

People remember impressions, not facts. They remember how you made them feel. When we see stories about tsunamis, we don’t remember all of the facts. But, we’ll never forget the stories, the images and how we felt when we saw almost indescribable pictures of death and devastation. People will not warm to your words if you don’t appeal to their hearts. You must support facts and information with examples, anecdotes and visual images that leave a lasting impression.

Stump the Chump

It is almost inevitable that management will interrupt your presentation to ask a question. As distressing as this can be, they are not trying to stump you. Think of the question as an opportunity to address their concerns and use it as a stepping stone to reinforce key points or deliver additional information. It’s helpful to anticipate questions and prepare answers in advance.

Remember the Three Cs

Obtaining the financing you need to grow your business might require delivering a financial presentation to investors before you can ask them for money. Delivering information and presenting the numbers is not enough. You must

be Clear, Concise and Credible. You must quickly articulate what your business will provide, how the company will make money, what you are doing to address problems and anticipated hurdles, and how your product or service will benefit your customers.

No One Came to See a Slide Show

Today’s business presenters often equate preparation to preparing a slide presentation. Visuals should reinforce what you say, not serve as your script. The fewer slides you use, the more impact you’ll have, because you will be free to look at people and engage them. Audiences are looking to you to make sense of information. Prepare your presentation first. Then develop visuals that support your key messages. By the time you speak, you should be able to deliver your words without the slides.

Pet Peeves

Senior executives are a bit like television reporters. They want you to get to the point...quickly. When they ask a question, they want the facts, not long-winded answers. If they interrupt you in the middle of a slide to ask a question, they want you to answer the question and then move on instead of answering the question and repeating all of the information on the slide. Often, presenters over-answer management questions to buy time, fill the silence, or because they think a brief response is too simplistic. Less is more still holds true. Long answers frequently dilute messages, lack examples, and open the door for unwanted questions.

Don’t Worry, Be Happy

It’s okay to be nervous. It’s not okay to scowl, shuffle your feet, talk to your slides, keep your eyes fixed on only one person, race through your presentation, or frequently look at the clock. If you are uncomfortable, you will make your audience uncomfortable, and they will be less

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The M&A Effect

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goal of the transaction relate to my activities and what will be expected from me?” suggests Dr. Christopher B. Kummer, president of the Institute of Mergers, Acquisitions and Alliances (MANDA) and adjunct professor at Webster University in Austria. “It is important to know that everyone is expecting changes to happen. No change is not an option.”

Addressing Team Concerns

Rose stresses that it’s the executive leader’s responsibility to effectively communicate those changes and their impact on the team. At the same time, a leader must demonstrate the team’s value to the new ownership.

“You must be personally visible to senior management and do everything possible to make sure the value of your team is understood,” says Rose, who has held positions in general management/leadership and senior sales within the service/distribution sector. “People are very concerned about one thing...how does this impact me? It is your job to help them by making sure they understand the best way to protect themselves and their families is performance.”

Executives must understand the fears and perceptions felt by employees and be able to address them as an M&A transaction progresses. “Executives need to understand how employees perceive their values will be threatened,” says Ted Santos, CEO of New York-based Turnaround Investment Partners Inc. “If employees believe the merger presents a threat to job security or something about their job, employees will take flight, fight it, or freeze and become unproductive.”

Santos suggests conducting a form of human due diligence before an M&A transaction closes to get a better sense of employees’ issues. “To mitigate the risks [of a failed merger], executives can hire outsiders with an objective view to administer an assessment to measure employee readiness for the merger and uncover authentic perceptions and the source of employees’ fear,” adds Santos.

If you’re part of the acquiring company, be as honest as possible with employees.

When Layoffs Loom — Making the Cuts

If you’re asked to reduce the headcount of those who report to you, your success with such a task could have long-reaching effects on your future with the new company. It’s clearly imperative that you do what you can to keep the most valuable members of your team.

“If you need to and can reduce your workforce, the first step is not to lose the wrong people by fluctuation,” says Dr. Christopher Kummer, president of the Institute of Mergers, Acquisitions and Alliances (MANDA) and adjunct professor at Webster University in Austria. “Identify the key performers, talk to them as soon as possible. Tell them that you value them and will not only try to keep them, but even offer them interesting job opportunities and adequate compensation.”

ExecuNet member Ron Rose says that both companies should already have lists of individuals classified into categories, such as corporate promotables; develop in place; need training; and underperforming. After cutting the underperformers, the next step is to ignore job titles, names and salaries, and instead prioritize the work by department and develop the organization around the work.

For instance, if a company’s goal is to develop sales in China, a sales rep with 10 years of experience selling in China is more valuable than the acquiring company’s VP of sales who has 15 years of experience, but hasn’t visited China. “If you do this process based on the work, skills and talents you need, and limit yourself based on a headcount/dollar value that makes sense from an operating expense standpoint, you can make some pretty rational decisions,” says Rose.

However, keep in mind that any layoffs that occur as a result of an M&A can be interpreted as discriminatory, and executives must do what they can to minimize any legal risks. “Discrimination law risk is minimized by maximizing the objectivity of the decision-making process and thoroughly documenting it,” says George L. Lenard, managing partner with Harris Dowell Fisher & Harris, L.C. and editor of *George’s Employment Blawg*. “How this can be best achieved will, naturally, vary a good deal with the circumstances.

“Although decisions based on quotas by race, age, sex, etc. are unlawful, even if intended to avoid the appearance of discrimination (even if preferring racial minorities, older employees, etc.), it may be wise to review the distribution of the layoffs with these factors in mind,” continues Lenard. “If you find, for example, that 90 percent of black employees are set to be laid off, but only 10 percent of white employees, you may want to revisit your criteria and decision-making process. If, in the end, you conclude that your decisions are fully justified by business considerations, you should thoroughly document the business considerations and stand by your decisions.”

Kummer notes, however, that not all M&A deals require layoffs. If layoffs are required, and an executive can’t justify the cuts, he has to communicate that effectively. “Show what the options are, but also clearly demonstrate the negative effects that go hand-in-hand with it or why a reduction does not make sense or is impossible,” says Kummer. “An executive should not demonstrate the inability to realize reductions, but demonstrate what the outcome will be.”

“Avoid what could be interpreted as double dealing/lying,” says Dr. Laurence J. Stybel, a partner with Stybel Peabody Lincolnshire, a Boston firm specializing in leadership change. “It’s best to under-promise and over-deliver. [For instance,] tell people that 75 percent of employees will probably lose their jobs and they will be relieved that only 50 percent lost their jobs. Tell people that only a few people will be impacted and they will think you are a liar when it turns out that 40 percent lost their jobs.”

A New Opportunity — Or Not

How you handle the transition — and move things forward — can have a strong impact on whether you will have a role in the new company in the long term. You have to consistently demonstrate how your skills add value to the new organization.

“If you are seen as an executive who will provide value compared to existing executives, you will be retained. If not, you won’t,” says Rose. He adds that if the new company operates in a related industry, your industry knowledge

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could serve as an asset.

“Understand the acquiring entity’s wants, needs, desires, strengths and weaknesses,” says Larry Mandelberg, a strategic management consultant with Calif.-based BullsEye Integration. “Position yourself to add value to the strengths and as one who can help turn the weaknesses into advantages.”

Focus on the future, not the past, and emphasize that you have the skills to help the new company achieve its goals. “Don’t get stuck in the ‘back when we were ABC company’ talk,” says Rose. “Talk in a forward-looking style about the go-forward strategy and how you see yourself contributing. More importantly, just begin working as if you are part of the future. Stick your chin out in front, be a leader, show the new owners why you were an integral part of the success of every company you have been associated with.”

Tim Baskerville, president of Media Service Group, suggests volunteering to solve some of the key problems caused by the reorganization. “There

will always be problems,” says Baskerville. “This will give you a showcase before the new management.”

However, Rose cautions that the new company may decide to retain you only until that knowledge is transferred. Baskerville concurs that such a temporary role is a distinct possibility. “You may be valued in a transition phase for unique knowledge, but discounted once things start to settle down,” says Baskerville.

Because of the changes that mergers and acquisitions yield within companies (from culture to strategy to process) and the obvious redundancies in job functions, there is a strong possibility that your position could be eliminated as the result of such transactions.

It’s important that you keep on the lookout for signs that you’re not in the acquiring company’s future plans. One sign is that you’re excluded from regular business activities. “If you are not involved in decisions and discussions where you should be involved and need to be involved, this is a classic sign of trouble ahead,” says Rose. “In this case, one can usually have a discussion with his superior

to determine what is taking place. Be careful because you don’t want to [appear] involved in petty concerns. But if the concern is legitimate, you deserve to know whether this is a change in process, policy or you have been demoted.”

Mandelberg says other signs include information that is delivered through non-traditional channels; information is discovered, not delivered; there are sudden changes in responsibilities of either the employee or superiors; unexplained and confusing alliances are formed; vendors are engaged; or internal activities are begun without clear or confident explanations. Additional warning signs, notes Rose, include changes in incentive compensation and other benefits typically awarded to individuals at your level. “These are sometimes used as soft warnings to ‘encourage’ you to move on,” says Rose.

Should You Stay or Go?

As the dust settles on an M&A, executives need to determine if they truly want to remain with the newly created company. Experts agree that executives should assess the situation for about six months to establish if the new company is the right employer for them. “For executives who are uncertain about staying, they need to get clear about what they want to accomplish in their career over the next one to five years,” advises Santos.

If an executive determines that the new company isn’t a good fit for her skill set or that it won’t help her achieve future career success, it’s natural and understandable to walk away. “She must be prepared to explain why she is not a good fit without sounding bitter, angry, judgmental or accusatory,” says Mandelberg. “These things are based on fact, not assumption, coupled with how you feel personally.

That is something no one can argue with.

“Be committed to your beliefs, know your strengths and weaknesses; prove it by your actions,” adds Mandelberg. “Don’t be embarrassed by your choice to leave; be proud of it. It makes a bold statement about who you are and how you work and conduct yourself. Honesty is almost always the best policy. Answers become complicated once the truth is blurred.”

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Laying the Foundation for a Successful Alliance

The main reason any company chooses to enter into a merger or acquisition is the potential promise of success of such a partnership. Yet, because there are so many components to such deals, from people to processes, success isn’t guaranteed. However, a solid start through a strong framework can certainly be an asset.

Dr. Laurence J. Stybel and Maryanne Peabody, partners of Stybel Peabody Lincolnshire, offer these suggestions for dealing with the initial state of consolidation related to M&As from both the management and employee perspective.

Management:

1. **Initiate employee climate/attitude surveys.** Results are likely to be “rock bottom,” thus giving a good baseline against which to measure later improvements or lack of improvements.
2. **Involve outside consultants in helping to evaluate employees.** Consultants can help convince employees that the company is going the extra mile to insure impartiality against its own favoritism or subordinate backbiting on the part of subordinate’s bosses. It also allows the consultants to function as a scapegoat to explain why promotions weren’t forthcoming.

Employees:

1. **Provide management at the acquiring firm with more information than they may actually be seeking.** This action positions you as having a reputation of being cooperative and a player on the “new team.”
2. **Make every effort you can to establish good, personal relations with the new power sources.**
3. **Be wary of your boss.** An M&A action can turn a mentor into an ex-mentor.

Your Career Advisor

Can Your Résumé Get You in the Door?

By Meg Guiseppi

Executive résumés are constantly evolving in response to the ever-changing needs of the hiring decision-makers who are reading them — HR professionals, recruiters and hiring managers.

Today's standard or traditional résumé that includes skill sets, professional experience and achievements, was a cutting-edge document just a few years ago and truly helped job seekers stand out from the crowd. But this kind of conventional document falls short today. It's just not enough anymore to position executives above competing candidates, incite interest in them, and help them gain more quality interviews.

Many job seekers have not yet embraced the latest cutting-edge trends in strategic résumé writing. Savvy executives who power their résumés with these new essentials are differentiating themselves from others vying for the same jobs.

Put Yourself in the Reader's Position

Hiring decision-makers may review hundreds of résumés for any given position. Their time is limited and many are reading résumés in transit on tiny-screened, wireless handheld devices. They want, and need, to immediately locate the goods that will tell them if that candidate is worth interviewing.

Include just enough value-driven information to entice them and make sure they can get to it easily. Keep the content crisp, to the point, and in small bites. Do this by providing concise statements evidencing your value proposition and ROI, surrounded by enough white space to make each one stand out.

Let these considerations for the reader drive the way you format and craft your entire résumé.

Limit Your Résumé to Two Pages

Since the purpose of a résumé is to incite enough interest in you to gain interviews, provide just enough compelling informa-

tion to spur readers to want to interview you, and learn more about what you can do for their company. This can easily be accomplished in two pages, making the reader's job that much easier.

If you're having a hard time consolidating all you have to say into two pages, take a hard look and start paring away what isn't critical.

Remember, you don't need to tell the whole story here. Deeper slices of achievements and critical contributions can be provided verbally in the interview and in various companion documents, such as achievement summaries, career bios and leadership initiatives summaries.

Capture and Hold the Reader's Attention

The top of the first page of your résumé is obviously a prime location because it is the first part that is read. Don't waste it with a valueless "objective" statement. Your next employer is much more interested in what you will do for his company than what you want the company to do for you.

Instead, lead with a heading to immediately position yourself for a certain level and function. Follow that with a hard-hitting, value-driven statement of what you will deliver. Here is an example:

Quality Assurance and Production Manager — Global Manufacturing

Relentless fixer, turning around and revitalizing underproductive processes; benchmarking quality manufacturing practices; and driving triple-digit cost reductions leading multinational production teams.

This will set the tone for the entire résumé. Follow through with more evidence to support your promise of value.

Imprint Your Personal Brand and Leadership Talent

What are your unique attributes, strengths and qualities that set you apart

from others doing the same job? What is it about you that enables you to achieve such great success in your career? What are you passionate and enthusiastic about in your work? How do you compare to the best in the field?

Answering questions like these will help you identify your personal brand. Imprinting these sets of strengths throughout your résumé will reinforce your unique market value.

Replace Responsibilities with Powerful Examples

Unless your responsibilities were unusual for someone in your position, it is not necessary to reiterate the obvious and waste precious space doing so. Instead, offer compelling examples of contributions you made in those areas. If one of your pivotal strengths is new business development, craft a concise statement outlining a particular success in this area that the company wouldn't have benefitted from if you weren't leading the effort.

Provide Clear Evidence of Your Value Promise

Take a standard achievement statement a few steps further. Describe how you used your strengths to accomplish it and answer these questions, but keep it concise:

- What was a particular challenge or obstacle the company faced? Were the odds against turning things around?
- What actions did you take to deal with the situation and move things forward?
- How, specifically, did your actions impact the bottom line, team productivity/performance, market share, etc.? How quickly did the company see improvements?

The second statement below has much more impact than the first:

Before: Drove sales efforts to close \$3.5 billion in new assets.

After: Captured \$3.5 billion in new

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Learnings from Landings

Established Game Plans Provide Solid Beginnings to Job Search Efforts

Having a plan in place as well as the framework to make that plan work is crucial when it comes to job hunting. When ExecuNet member Dan Malone sensed that his job was in jeopardy, he didn't wait. He set the wheels in motion for a job search that ended successfully after only three months, mainly because he followed his own job seeking advice.

A 12-year veteran in the global supply chain/operations space, Malone knew that his job was in jeopardy when a company reorganization resulted in his responsibilities being reassigned to three departments. He learned of the changes one month earlier, which is when he began researching online job resources. "A quick review of job search engines showed me that ExecuNet and Dice would be my primary search tools, so I registered with them," says Malone, 56.

Then Malone formulated his plan and quickly got to work. "My game plan was simple and very close to what the search industry recommends; meaning I would do all the obvious job search activities, but remain very focused on what I was good at and where the few very complex jobs were," says Malone. The first thing Malone actually did was get in touch with his relevant contacts — he says there were 60 of them — to let them know he was looking for a new job opportunity. "This was presented as a two-way street, should they also be looking for 'options,'" says Malone. "Some people helped, but most had very little useful contacts due to my narrow search

Dan's Job Search Takeaways

1. There are a lot of available jobs, but just as much competition. "A lot of the Boomers are hanging in there until the bitter end," notes Malone.
2. If you meet all of the requirements of a job, you are overqualified.
3. Age (over 55) is definitely a factor, but not necessarily negative if a position requires a lot of judgment calls. "One has to spin it to one's advantage," advises Malone.
4. Set up very tight search parameters. Spamming the industry will not get you more interviews.
5. Never stop networking; preferably with people with jobs.
6. Don't spend countless hours on the computer searching randomly.
7. Be very well prepared for interviews. Know your operating ratios and have examples of difficult situations. "Sometimes the question I wanted asked would not come up, so I would sidetrack with other accomplishments to make sure the recruiter knew what I was talking about," says Malone. "That was difficult, because I wanted to keep discussions focused, yet get my key points across."
8. A bit of luck certainly helps. "Lady Luck had me at the right time with the right website with the right job," says Malone.
9. There will be bad days, but just keep looking ahead until opportunity knocks. "Remaining positive throughout the search will give you that upbeat impression recruiters look for," adds Malone.

in global supply chain management."

Next, Malone set up extremely tight parameters on ExecuNet and Dice to ensure that he wouldn't waste time applying for jobs that did not meet his requirements. "I narrowed the search down to only one or two positions per day at most," says Malone. "Then I spent hours drafting very specific cover letters providing insights or solutions relevant to that position along with a tweak of the résumé in the 'accomplishments' section." Malone says that he received a 20- to 25-percent response rate from companies and recruiters — and most of those responses led to phone interviews with the hiring companies.

Malone participated in about 11

phone interviews when the position he accepted — senior vice president of supply chain and inventory management for a retail company based in China — appeared in the ExecuNet job postings. After sending his résumé, Malone sat through several phone interviews — first with the recruiters, then with company officials. An in-person meeting in China followed, and Malone was offered the job.

Malone says he is pleased with the compensation package as well as other benefits (such as a translator, a chauffeur and housing). He adds that the entire interview process took about six weeks, which Malone felt was average for someone seeking a senior-level position. ■

Your Career Advisor Continued from page 6

assets landing company's third largest client. This highly coveted first client influenced close of 16 other related firms within the year, representing \$12 billion in total new assets.

In today's highly competitive job market, it is critical to position yourself above the crowd. Be willing to embrace the latest résumé writing strategies available to you to help you land the job you deserve. ■

Meg Guiseppi has been writing executive career success stories for 20 years. She

specializes in crafting personally branded résumés and partners one-on-one with executives and top professionals to help them propel their career searches forward. Guiseppi has earned the career industry's top résumé writing credential, Master Résumé Writer, and contributes to numerous online and print career search publications. She can be reached at ExecutiveResumeBranding.com

The M&A Effect

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The same holds true when you begin reaching out to recruiters and other contacts to find new opportunities. This won't be the first time they've communicated with an executive displaced by an M&A.

"Positioning for recruiters shouldn't be too difficult as dislocations are commonplace," says Baskerville. "You can be frank about what happened once you're made redundant. When in the gray zone — you sense a problem, but haven't officially been told what is going to happen — you should accelerate your job hunt and cast a wide net with your contacts. Obviously, you have more leverage in negotiating if you're currently employed."

Caution Required During Job Search

M&As can even have an effect on your career if you are not yet a member of an affected organization. Most executive

Insider Insight

Continued from page 3

likely to listen to what you have to say. A smile really is worth a thousand words.

Voice Vision with Volume

When you speak, you're on! Even if it's a small meeting, you want to project so your voice is strong and authoritative. We've worked with many people who are soft spoken and others who start out strong, but trail off at the end of a sentence. We advise visualizing a person in the back of the room straining to hear

Expert Resources:

- Tim Baskerville, Media Service Group (TBaskerville@BaskervilleUSA.com)
- Dr. Christopher B. Kummer, Institute of Mergers, Acquisitions and Alliances (MANDA) (Manda-Institute.org)
- George L. Lenard, George's Employment Blawg (EmploymentBlawg.com)
- Larry Mandelberg, BullsEye Integration (BullsEyeIntegration.com)
- Ted Santos, Turnaround Investment Partners Inc. (TurnaroundIP.com)
- Dr. Laurence J. Stybel, Stybel Peabody Lincolnshire (StybelPeabody.com)

coaches stress the importance of research when creating a list of targeted companies to approach for your next career opportunity. In addition to learning as much as possible about a company's operations and executive leadership, it's vital to uncover if the organization is in M&A negotiations. Due diligence in this regard is a necessity.

"It's very dangerous to join a company where the guillotine is likely to fall," says Baskerville. "But this can be very hard to detect unless it is common industry knowledge. Check out any company you're considering joining with your network of contacts. Sometimes you can pick up worrisome vibrations."

you. Speak to that person in an effort to better project. Whenever possible, stand up to maximize the richness of your voice.

If you stop and think about it, you can probably recall a couple of memorable business presentations. What is it you remember? What did they have in common? Chances are these presenters were personable and energetic. They were able to quickly cut to the chase and clearly address audience concerns. And, while they likely rehearsed their well thought-out, organized, pre-planned and prepared remarks over and over again, they probably

This doesn't mean that you should eliminate such companies from contention, but exercise caution. "The only way I would join such a company is if I talked with people involved in the acquisition itself and understood the strategy and my role in the new company," says Rose. "If you get to the acquiring executives and there is a path forward for you in the new organization, this can be a positive time in your career. You must be a change agent, you must be someone who has been involved in integrations and you must be comfortable and able to assist in this process. If not, stay away." ■

made you feel as if they were simply speaking off-the-cuff for your benefit. ■

Karen Friedman is a leading communications coach whose techniques are successfully used by thousands of people across the globe. Frequently quoted by publications such as The Wall Street Journal and The New York Times, she recently released Speaking of Success which she co-authored with best-selling author Stephen R. Covey (Seven Habits of Highly Effective People). She can be reached at: 610-292-9780 or KarenFriedman.com

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