



Book Who Says There Are No Jobs Out There?

25 Irreverent Rules for Getting a Job

Bob Weinstein
McGraw-Hill, 1997

Recommendation

Bob Weinstein has built a career on advising you about yours. He is right on target in his latest book, a snappy, honest, conversational guide to job-hunting. Throw away all your old books on the subject. This one takes you right into the heart of today's marketplace, where the old employment-seeking rules (even from five or 10 years ago) no longer apply. Whether you're looking for a new job, or your next one, *BooksInShort* highly recommends this book to everyone from custodians to CEOs.

Take-Aways

- Jobs have changed, and so has job hunting.
- Companies are looking to hire durable human machines, not people.
- If you can sell yourself on your ability to meet a company's needs, you'll be hired.
- Look at all potential buyers for your skills.
- Apply jungle principles and jungle tactics to the job hunt.
- Customize the job hunt to suit yourself. There are no rules anymore. Don't do what everyone else is doing.
- Changing jobs frequently, and even changing careers, now is the norm.
- The best networkers get the best jobs.
- You may want to hire yourself and run your own business, freelance, or consult.
- Automatic retirement at age 65 is a thing of the past.

Summary

People Are The Product

Forget everything you've heard about jobs - The old rules simply don't apply anymore. What was a given in past decades has gone the way of the dinosaur: job security, company loyalty, pensions, you name it. How people work, where they work, and how long they work all have changed drastically in the last 10 years. Therefore, how you change jobs (and more often than ever, careers) has changed, too.

- Rule #1: Forget about a real job - Concentrate instead on work needing to be done. The so-called "real job" meant security, perhaps even lifetime employment, with the same company. "Real" meant conventional. Today, conventional barely exists. Organizations are becoming "de-jobbed." In other words, they're getting work done without hiring full-timers for conventional jobs. They do this by hiring temporary workers, contracting with project workers, and leasing employees. Now, workers just follow the work needing to be done, wherever that may be.
- Rule #2: Companies want products, not people - Employers no longer seek the perfect employee, the well-rounded, quintessentially swell person. They're looking for products, durable human machines who can work like cyborgs - and do perfect work to boot. If you think of yourself as product, and sell yourself on your ability to meet a company's needs, you'll land a job faster than anyone else will.
- Rule #3: Package yourself in today's style - Objectively survey all potential buyers for your talents or services. Don't rule out corporate cultures historically known for conservatism or stodginess. They're spinning on their heels and swerving into the fast lane these days, to adapt to the changing marketplace.
- Rule #4: Get yourself a flak jacket - Think of the job market as a battle zone in the midst of a heated jungle war. Since you're in the jungle you'll need jungle principles and jungle tactics to get what you want. These are custom-made, aggressive strategies that help you find the best jobs first. Take a free-spirited approach; don't do what everyone else is doing. Develop strategies that work only for you.

"Real jobs, the mythical goal in the 1940s, 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s, are gone forever."

What Do You Want to Do When You Grow Up?

- Rule #5: Find a career passion - All it takes is time, insight, and a sense of adventure. Some soul searching, list making (likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, dreams and nightmares), and risk taking will get you where you want to go.
- Rule #6: Take control of your life - Don't let anyone do it for you. And don't forget the three biggest employer lies: 1) You've got a future with us; 2) We're all one big happy family; and 3) We take good care of our people.
- Rule #7: Fine-tune your job-hunting machine - Organize yourself and your job-hunting efforts, and remember that job hunting is a full-time job in itself.
- Rule #8: Become computer-literate - All employers want someone with at least basic computer skills.
- Rule #9: Be fluent in conversational corporate-speak - Employers expect it. Buzzwords are the foundation of every industry's private language, and you've got to speak it.
- Rule #10: Olympic-class networkers get the best jobs - Don't just contact everyone in the known universe. That's not networking. Accomplished networkers have a sixth sense about people. They don't waste time randomly calling anyone who crosses their path. Only call people you've met, or people who've been recommended to you. The best time to call is after 5:00 p.m., when you can usually get someone's undivided attention.
- Rule #11: Don't believe all those pessimists - Jobs exist in virtually every area of the market. Be creative, do your research. You'll find plenty of hidden jewels.
- Rule #12: Keep your options open and pursue all leads - But don't put all your eggs in one basket. Don't rely only on human resource departments or employment agencies.
- Rule #13: Look beneath the surface for job-hunting leads - It's called the hidden market. It includes "virgin" markets (new businesses, new growth industries, and the like) and entrepreneurial businesses.
- Rule # 14: Job hoppers get the best jobs - You live in an era in which changing jobs frequently is the norm. Make strategic moves within the same industry. Don't burn your bridges. Be diplomatic when you leave. Give that two weeks' notice. The people you leave still are part of your network.
- Rule #15: Temping is a proven tactic for checking out the job landscape - Through a temporary agency, work for various companies in the industries that interest you. This way you can test the waters, and make some contacts along the way. You may even decide to make a career as a temp.
- Rule #16: Get rid of your resume - Instead, create a letter that is both resume and cover letter in an all-in-one targeted package. Customize this letter for each kind of position or industry you're interested in.

- Rule #17: Spend time preparing for an interview - If you prepare properly for your interview, your chances of winning a job offer will be better. Your interview is an audition. Don't go in cold. And have a positive attitude.

“Job security, guarantees, yearly raises and pensions are out the window. If you're going to make it, you'll do it with initiative, creativity, hard work, street smarts, resilience, and unshakable self-confidence. The only one who is going to take care of you is you.”

Once They Want You

- Rule #18: Don't be nervous about tactfully negotiating a great deal - Once your target employer offers you a job, remember this: Don't believe employers when they say the salary is 'firm' or 'the final offer.' If they want you, they'll negotiate. When negotiating your salary, know what you are worth, understand the company's vision and goals, focus on your accomplishments and argue logically.
- Rule #19: Put your employment agreement in writing - Your employment letter should include: 1) your responsibilities, 2) where you will be working (private office, cubicle), 3) with whom you will be working, 4) to whom you will report, 5) your hours, 6) your salary (and commission structure, incentive pay, and any other financial details, 7) estimate of travel required, 8) benefits (insurance, vacation), 9) perks (car, expense account), 10) promotion opportunities, and 11) dates of employment reviews. Although this kind of letter isn't a legal document, it does give you an opportunity to clear up any misunderstandings.
- Rule #20: Smart employees become skilled followers - This doesn't mean you disconnect your brain, become a yes man or blindly move like a lamb to the slaughter. It simply means that you create harmony in your new workplace by becoming indispensable, making your boss look good and being visible. These skills make you valuable to the organization and position you for further opportunities.
- Rule #21: Don't get too comfortable - Always have one foot out the door. Since job security no longer is a realistic expectation, your employer could replace you or lay you off in a reorganization or downsizing - often with little or no warning. So, keep track of your accomplishments, and keep building your network. Save your money, and keep your ears open for other opportunities - in case you need them or want them.
- Rule #22: Every six months, find out whether you still love your job - Don't stay at any job just because it's comfortable and there is a promise of security. Only stay for the right reasons: you love the work, the people and the money. You should feel motivated, challenged and content. Be very honest with yourself.

“In short, you're a human machine. If an employer can find a better, faster or cheaper model, you will be history.”

Work for a Boss You Really Like: Yourself

- Rule #23: Create your own job - Why wait for someone else to create a job opening? The current job market is elastic and creative in terms of opportunities. Because it's so fiercely competitive, employers are more likely to listen to a money-making proposition. If you show them how you can boost their bottom lines, they'll listen. Uncover a need, tell them how you can meet it, and you've just created your own job. Do your research, make contact with a proposal letter, and then pitch your idea in an interview. Even if you don't hook your interviewer and score, you've gained valuable selling and proposal experience. Try again with another company.
- Rule #24: Find out if you've got what it takes to run your own business - Your own business can be anything from freelancing and consulting, to a company in which you hire employees or outside contractors. Paul D. Reynolds, Coleman Foundation Professor of Entrepreneurial Studies at Marquette University in Milwaukee, reports that more people are starting companies each year than are getting married. A record one in every 25 adult Americans is trying to launch a business. He estimates that the number in the U.S. - approximately seven million - exceeds the entire population of Massachusetts or Missouri. The first two years are the make-or-break years, and in many instances call for 10- and 12-hour days, six days a week.

“The only way to reach the right people is by employing ingenuity and doing some detective work.”

Do you have what it takes? Ask yourself:

1. Do you have a high tolerance for risk? Are you persistent?
2. Can you handle rejection and criticism, uncertainty and stress?
3. Do you have organizational skills? Are you flexible, adaptable, and willing to change?

4. Can you live without supportive feedback that co-workers can give?

“A high-powered Chicago headhunter said the perfect job applicant is someone who is comfortable in his or her own skin. Heed that precious advice.”

Retirement, What Retirement?

- Rule #25: Forget about retirement - Retirement is a failed concept. You're better off working till you drop. Thanks to rampant downsizing, fewer Americans can afford to retire than in the past. Second, even if they could, most of them would soon be twiddling their thumbs out of sheer boredom. Since most people thrive on structure, challenge, and excitement, many are choosing not to retire. Instead, they simply change jobs (unless they love the work they're already doing).

“Don't beat yourself up because you've gone to creative ends to avoid job hunting. It's normal.”

Most Americans can't afford to retire at 65 and live off their savings, pensions and investment portfolios. Many simply don't want to retire, but would rather remain professionally active. While others enjoy retirement, many choose a middle ground and take part-time work. They become consultants, or change their careers to something that gives them less stress and more free time. Keep on working at something you enjoy. Stop only to reappraise your situation so you get maximum satisfaction.

About the Author

Bob Weinstein is the best-selling author of *Resumes Don't Get Jobs* and eight other books on careers, including, *So What If I'm 50*, *Jobs for the 21st Century*, and *How to Switch Careers*. A nationally known journalist and trend watcher, Weinstein has contributed to *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, *Reader's Digest*, *Newsday*, and *Entrepreneur*.
