

## **Finding a Job of His Own Dreaming**

New York Times - July 12, 2009 - Last November, I was laid off from a database marketing company in Louisville, Colorado, a Denver suburb, for economic reasons.

Six months later, I found another position, at Kutenda, a provider of online marketing tools for small businesses, in Broomfield, Colorado, also near Denver.

Several things about my job hunt surprised me, including its length. I thought it would only take a couple of weeks to find a new job, or at most two months. I never expected to be out of work six months.

Other people would probably say that six months doesn't sound bad at all, but it was to me. Even though the news media played up the job losses and how bad the economy was, I wasn't worried. I had been a technical product manager, and I thought I had good qualifications.

My wife, Jill, was supportive of my job hunt. She's a stay-at-home mom and entrepreneur who gives seminars to new mothers on achieving balance in their lives. She kept reassuring me that something would come along and that I shouldn't feel overwhelmed as the main provider.

We have two boys under the age of 6, and I wasn't financially prepared for such a long layoff. We were going through our savings, and we started discussing whether Jill should go back to work full time, or perhaps find a part-time job with benefits.

We decided that she'd need a salary of at least \$50,000 if we were to put the boys in day care. She took a full-time job until I was hired and now works as a marketing consultant.

Now that I've settled into my new company, I'm of two minds about that period of unemployment.

- On one hand, I still think that my expectation wasn't unrealistic. I honestly felt that I stood a better chance than many other candidates. It's my competitive nature.
- On the other hand, I've talked to a number of executives in a business organization I belong to; vice presidents, chief information officers and chief financial officers, who were out of work much longer than I was.

I followed the standard advice, and I think I did everything a job coach would have told me to do:

- I tapped into a network of colleagues and friends and told everyone I was job hunting
- I got a few leads, but the job possibilities all fizzled

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- That motivated me to try to build a bigger network, but after a while I decided that this wasn't the best approach
- I was spending too much time having to explain what I did as a product manager in the software industry. The role can differ, depending on the company and the industry.

I scoured the job boards and set up a search agent, which automatically sent job openings to me via e-mail. But nothing came of that, either. I looked for job leads on Facebook too. Then I thought that Twitter might help. I tried following companies I had submitted a résumé to, and those I had heard were hiring. The volume of messages was overwhelming, however, and most of what I read had nothing to do with job leads.

Next, I set up a "Google Alert" for job titles to see which companies were hiring, and I applied to them. That didn't turn up any interviews, either. I decided instead to try to learn more about the companies that were posting the jobs.

Once, I ended up helping a company president define the position he wanted to fill. He kept mentioning the title of product manager, but I told him that the company needed someone who was concerned about future product strategy, too. I explained that in my experience, small technology companies often start with a good idea, assemble a development team, build the product and start marketing it. At the same time, they need to design a plan that considers their customers and addresses the future of the product.

That conversation made me do some soul-searching. I decided that I wanted to do more of what I had described to that executive. I wanted to be a product marketing manager, more customer and market focused than in my former product manager position, which was an operations role and more technical.

I visualized what I wanted this position to be like and wrote a list of bullet items about the job and my ideal company.

I wanted to lead a team in a technology company and be responsible for a product line, and I wanted the opportunity for advancement. I also wanted to be involved in online marketing, which I believe is the way of the future.

I learned about Kutenda when a contact in a business marketing association said her company had a marketing position available. The role was marketing coordinator, which was too junior for me. But I had read about the company and was interested in its technology. Kutenda manages Web sites, pay-per-click advertising campaigns and e-mail campaigns.

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I told the contact from the association that if the company needed help in determining future product features, I was good at that. She talked to the CEO and I interviewed with him.

When the two of us sat down together, I told him my ideas. He liked what I had to say and he hired me. I had never talked myself into a role in a company before.

I'm working on product strategy and market plans, and I'm developing ideas for new products. I feel that I'm perfectly suited for the job.

***(End)***