

Chapter Forty Four

CAREER CRISIS TIPS – Networking ideas and other stuff

The following Tips are compiled from a series of notes and e-mails I shared with my brother Rob. Rob is rock solid business leader and family man. He's my younger brother – but until this point in time I have had almost no opportunity to offer him any kind of advice. My relentless pursuit of a career in advertising and marketing gives me all the credentials I need to claim expertise in launching a campaign during a career transition. Rob doesn't really need my help – but I'm proud to be a cheerleader on the sidelines. He's the best!

SHORT AND SWEET

I am sorry my letter is so long: I didn't have time to write a short one.

- *Hawthorne*

Less is More.

- *Ludwig Mies van der Rohe*

Elevator Speech

We've got to have an elevator speech (something we can tell someone in 3 minutes about who we are and what we're looking for that can leave a lasting impression and maybe even spark action). It may feel awkward but you **NEED** to practice this speech. Stay on message.

Flyer/Leave Behind

Think of this as an elevator speech cheat sheet. If you got hit by a bus tomorrow – you'd be lucky to get two inches of 10 point type in the obituary column. What do you want people to know about you. What will it take to intrigue someone to contact you or refer you?

Dirty jobs vs. Clarity of Vision.

You have character. You are driven. Don't get too caught up in thinking certain tasks are a "waste of time" for a big shot like yourself. You are the same guy who unquestionably got down on hands and knees to clean a drain pipe for Al Sutton. (By the way – Dad – As I recall, liked to meet Al for lunch from time to time. His friendship involved listening to a variety of elephant jokes. Many of which Dad repeated at the breakfast table over Kellogg's Frosted Flakes in the morning. But that genuine friendship turned into summer employment for ROBO.)

LOOK FOR THE TRUTH

Examine highlights of your career and turn it into messages.

Example: Door is locked to late comers to Rob's sales training.

That locked door meeting to emphasize punctuality is a classic for me. The dilemma for me is a kind of painful reality. The people who come to my meetings, almost throughout my entire career, outrank me. So locking the conference room door could be a career ending ploy for me, instead of brilliant illustration.

Facebook

I said it and I meant it. It's posted on your Facebook wallpaper for all to see. You are a great man, Rob.

See and be seen.

Press the flesh. Make a note of how much easier this is to do when you are on Top. I believe this experience will humble you. (You are much more tolerable when you are humbled a bit.)

Get culture

Read a book. Visit a Museum. Smell the flowers. With any luck this will take some pressure off of elevator speeches, awkward networking and howdy calls. Read Kurt Vonnegutt *Slaughterhouse Five* and/or Joseph Heller *Catch 22*. Next time you talk to Megan bring it up in the conversation. Stand in front of a Van Gogh or a Matisse at the Dallas Museum of Fine Art. (Don't try to see everything. Just see something.)

Keep the Cards and Letters Coming

Write the perfect cover letter. Write a great letter of introduction (using some of that snappy elevator speech you are fine tuning). Explore the fine art of notes. Be a class act. Practice writing with a fountain pen on nice writing stock. If you prefer – develop a format for short letters that will serve you just as well. Maybe get an engraved stationary on Monarch size letterhead. (On this kind of letterhead you can do handwritten notes or run through a printer.)

Howdy Calls

Wes walks into HBE and earns a \$200 employee referral bonus for a guy he doesn't even know. Wes on Madison Avenue between real interviews actually gets a listen. Even in big bad NYC people have heart. Wes hires a swing band to meet about swing sets. Ya gotta know the territory. Site Visits. When he first started Morgan Studio, Dad used to make 16 calls a day. Running around town with nickels in his pocket so he could call in advance. Now you can call from the parking lot on your cell phone.

Small space ads

Buy space in an association newsletter or church bulletin. It only takes one person to see and/or remember such an ad to make a difference. Both will appreciate your token donation toward the continued publication of the newsletter/bulletin.

ANNUAL REPORTS –

face the music and turn it into business.

Do something outrageous or maybe even a little out of line. Dad's implied annual report work for Northern Telecom started a dialog that wouldn't have happened otherwise. (I'm not sure it was Northern Telecom – but it was a company with a nice annual report.)

Closure is the object of the game.

Don't worry or anticipate how the game ends. Right now it's about closure. Explore as many avenues as you can. You will wish you had done more when you are again buried in minutia

of some corporate responsibility.

Get Names.

Most people can't help you. At least they don't think they can. It saves face if they can offer up a name or two. Follow up. See where it leads. Then send a thank you note to the person who suggested you make the contact.

Mnemonic device

Find ways to be remembered. Make a speech at a dinner. Drop off some flowers at your gas station. Over tip your waiter. Pay the toll for the car behind you. Include a pair of shoelaces in a ice-breaker card with the note "I can help you run this business on a shoestring budget."

Headhunters are carnivores

Feed the beasts. They don't want to help you. They want to help themselves. But if you help them they will not forget about you. A headhunter may be a good guy who can't help you directly. So be patient with the carnivores. Every once in a while they have a big fish on the hook that only a player like you can reel in for them. It's a win-win.

Dig your well before you're Thirsty

Harvey MacKay is right about this. (It's the title of one of many books he's written.) Networking is an art form. It is something you need in place whether or not you are in the midst of a career crisis.

Hit the library

Knowledge is power and, God Bless America. In the public library the information is FREE. Go get some. If you are like me, you can only hold so much in your brain at a time. Go get a nugget or two at a time and think about how you might leverage that new data.

Manage significant others' expectations

Maybe the most important bit of advice I have to offer. A lot of people have come to depend on old-reliable rock-solid

Rob. You still have a board of directors and you still need to be accountable. Besides, you don't want Joy mad at you now.

Do Lunch.

I know lunch is not your style. Me either. But check this out: Make a plan to eat lunch in a particular spot on a particular day. Invite someone to lunch as if you were headed there anyway. "If you can't make it, don't worry about it. I just like to go there once in a while. I'll be there around 11:45. If you can make it, great."

On line – Monster, Career Builders and others

The information dirt road is now a super highway. It's no secret you can spend hours setting up accounts and posting resumes. The truth is the world wide web is more likely to exclude you than it is to help someone select you. I'm not saying don't do it. I'm just saying don't sit and wait for it work.

References

The former CEO won't write a generic letter of reference. He likes to hold the cards huh? Yup. Move on. It doesn't make any sense to burn that bridge. But someday, somewhere, when you least expect it he'll be on the other side of the conference room table and you may have an opportunity...

Who do you know?

I have never been a fan of the idea that "It's not what you know, but who you know, that counts." The truth is that what you know is most important but sometimes you have to "shop it around" a bit.

Bob Greenberg is one in a million. It takes all kinds to make the world go around. He's a cynical and at times even silly. But he has a heart of gold. If he introduces you to the right person, at the right point in time, Bob's stock goes up by association. (And I believe Bob know a lot of the right persons.)

Pat Morin is an ad guys and has a law degree from Ohio State University. He is has been a senior champion in racquetball more than once. Pat has had to reinvent himself. But he's still

wheeling and dealing. Guys like Pat get around. They need new business to survive. You could learn a great deal from a guy like him. A good word at the right time from Pat could mean a meeting that could change your career.

Answering the question “So, what are you doing now?”

Projects. Advice. Charities. Association involvement. A lot of this will lead to bupkis.* But you need to find answers with which you can feel comfortable. (For the record – I still hate it when a stranger on a golf course in the middle of a relaxing round turns to me on the tee box and says “So what do you do for a living Wes?”)

* bupkis means nothing, nadda, zip, zilch...it’s a great Yiddish word.

Call for Phillip Morris*

This is a stunt. I saw it happen once and I was convinced (cynical guy that I am) that it was orchestrated. At a large gathering (I think it was a golf banquet after a tournament), the MC stopped to make an announcement. “Your attention please, I have an urgent call for Marc Wyse. Is Marc Wyse here?” I have no proof but I was certain at the time that the Cleveland Ad guy got his name mentioned in front of that group with the implied message that he was important enough to be paged in such a way. Guerilla marketing.

*Phillip Morris used to have an ad campaign with a hotel bell hop calling for Phillip Morris (old campaign...but the principle is the same...name recognition).

Right this way Mr. Morgan.

This is a trick Harvey Mackay talks about in one of his books. The idea is to invite an important person to lunch...with a little advance work...and maybe a tip...the restaurant seats you immediately. Taken a step further, You order and pay in advance so there is no interruption in your agenda for that meal. (The risk of course is that your guest doesn’t get a chance to consider different entresbut maybe you invite the person for a specific meal (i.e. Can you meet me for lunch at Café Bistro,

I'd really like you to try the Pork Tenderloin...Let me make arrangements.)

Thank You and Enjoy a movie on me.

Another inexpensive surprise thank you gift is a pair of movie passes. AMC and other big chains have 'em. A little extra in your Thank You note. Chances are your movie passes get used and the guy is talking to his spouse about Rob Morgan. "What a nice guy...met him recently in an interview situation....pretty thoughtful thank you note along with movie passes....hmmmm. This works especially well if part of the interview conversation was about "How do you spend your free time?" - a pretty typical interview question to which you respond "My wife and I enjoy the usual stuff...This past week we saw the Dark Knight...the New Batman Movie..."

Lobby Rat

A lot of people travel on business. A lot of people have semi private meetings in Hotels. Scope out a few places. You might be surprised how many people you can bump into in the lobby of a great hotel...meeting clients, customers etc. Airports too.

Conference Room - Meeting Venue

Go to an association board meeting. (Often non-board members are allowed to sit in on such a meeting If you have expressed an interest in membership.) If they do not have a regular monthly meeting spot...or a committee needs a place to meet. Offer your righteous conference room in your Grapevine corporate office. It's will be a unique change of venue and you'll be a bit of a hero.

Hang out your own shingle (or not)

You will, no doubt, run in to people who suggest you start your own business. You might even be entertaining this notion. This is a critical fork in the road. You are certainly capable of such a career move. BUT do it for the right reasons. If you choose this road you will still need: 1. an elevator speech 2. a brief description of what you intend to offer the marketplace

and 3. a boatload of support. I am so impressed with my father's ability to start up a business and keep it going for so many years. I think you will find, however, that many entrepreneurs - almost feel like there is no other choice. My father mentioned (more than once) that "no-one ever offered me a job." A college professor at the University of Miami MBA program said in class something that it also probably true: When you study to earn an MBA, you learn so much about business risk you might very well become to averse to it. Too risk averse to become an entrepreneur.

VIDEO introduction

Set yourself apart from the crowd. Develop a short video that acts as an introduction and quickly gives a bit of an insight. It may feel a little risky. (Like it's too desperate a thing to do - but it is not if the tone and content are right.) Videotape a short introduction and maybe a limited number of graphics and presto - you have an electronic version of your elevator speech

Intro Slide: Rob Morgan

"Hello, I'm Rob Morgan. My background includes X, X and X. Most recently I served as President atI'm currently in the market for my next challenge..."

I'm happy to provide a traditional (and more detailed) resume which outlines my experiences...

Graphic: Rob Morgan/phone/e-mail

Closing Graphic: References on Request

Maybe a humorous touch (Given it's an election year) "I'm Rob Morgan and I approved this message. This idea is even more impressive, if in fact you have a target audience of one (1) and you address the person by name. It's a closer's move."

You have work to do.

You need a plan of attack for Monday morning.

Something like:

A. Howdy Call on XYZ company (unannounced - but armed

with a letter of introduction and maybe a resume neatly placed in a manila envelope with Mr. Big's name handwritten on the outside of it). Ask to see Mr. Big but be fully prepared to simply leave the envelope for him.

B. Crash XYZ company's cafeteria. If they are open in the morning they won't have too much business. Have a cup of coffee and have a few manila envelopes prepared for chance encounter. Introduce yourself to people. "I just stopped by to drop something off for Mr. Big."

C. Clip an article or two from the morning paper and think of a pithy note you might send to people in your network, someone you would like in your network or someone at one of your prospective employers. Consider Saturday, Sunday and Monday papers for such articles. "I noticed you are expanding ... Congratulations on your appointment. I saw your picture in the business section and just wanted to....Enjoyed reading about your recent success. I'd welcome an opportunity to share some related experiences that might help you make a go of this new venture."

D. Make 10 phone calls at unlikely hours. (Before 7 am and after 6 pm) - before the "attack dawgs" come in and after they've gone home. If you catch Mr. Big in he'll be compelled to pick up his own phone (maybe) - If not you can be ready with the voice mail version of your "elevator speech."

E. Cold Calls - on the phone or live (or both). Talk to reception and win 'em over. Ask harmless questions like: "Who's the big cheese here in charge of ...Will he be in today?... Can I get the correct spelling of his name?" (Remarkable trick via cell phone - is if you ask a few questions on the phone from the parking lot and drop by right after you've talked briefly with reception with your manila envelope or hand written card...she'll be more receptive to you...because you have already assured her that you aren't trying to bust the line - just hoping to drop something off for Mr. Big...She feels like she knows you after all. (Receptionist doesn't really need to know the gory details of your mission - she's suspects you're trying to sell

something...and in a way you are...but you are a polite intruder on her day.)

New Year's Card

Go to Barnes & Noble, Borders or the Art Museum and buy a couple of boxes of generic art cards. Send a note to your database of advisors and leading prospects. Carefully address the envelopes. Take some time to hand write notes to these people. The message can be simple and timeless. (Maybe even a quote.) Don't ask for anything. Include your business card.

Example:

Mike -

I appreciate your assistance this past year in helping me negotiate my career transition. Your advice has been most useful and encouraging. I would like to also take this opportunity to wish you and your family a Happy New Year.

ROB

"Don't go around saying the world owes you a living. The world owes you nothing. It was here first."

- Mark Twain