

Think Market!

By Cathy Goodwin

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Fast track to career freedom <http://www.movinglady.com>

Griselda spent hours polishing up her resume. No detail was too small: type face, layout and spacing. She weighed each word, counted each comma. She sent out 200 resumes and received no responses.

Reginald spent even more hours designing the most perfect website for his new business. Working with a highly recommended web designer, he chose colors, graphics, and layout. He agonized over products to offer his clients. After the site was launched, nobody came -- and visitors flew away, like bumblebees from a flower, taking free honey and moving on.

Griselda and Reginald are intelligent, motivated people. They turned their intelligence and motivation to designing a perfect product -- not conducting research on what the market wants.

Why? Testing the market is difficult -- sometimes impossible. Ideally, you will find at least six people who resemble those in your target market. I encourage clients to choose people who can offer you candid opinions. When you keep hearing, "This is wonderful," you haven't found the right resources.

Some newbie entrepreneurs hold focus groups or idea parties, complete with refreshments. That's a great idea if you can pull it off. Communication is contagious. When one person begins to be critical, the rest will follow.

Career-changers need to network (there's the n-word again!) to identify experienced managers who can help them evaluate their job campaign. You need to convey the message, "I'm one of you! I belong in your industry."

Here are some questions to get started:

- (1) Who are your ideal clients -- or employers, if you're changing jobs? Create a detailed profile.
- (2) How do they make decisions? Impulsively? Over time? After consultation with others?
- (3) What information will influence the buying decision?
- (4) Imagine that your ideal client (or employer) has just hired you and is absolutely delighted with your services. How will she or he describe you to a colleague?
- (5) What are the hot buttons to use -- and to avoid?

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