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# One way to showcase your skills in job search: write book

Working

How to write your ticket

By L.M. Sixel | April 2, 2009

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Photo By Al Behrman/AP

There are worse ways to spend time while unemployed than writing a book. And hey, it may pay off.

A résumé is essentially a list of where you worked, what you did and when you did it. But when you lose your job or you've been working at one place for a long time, it's easy for your one-page dossier to look old and dated.

And that's especially true if you haven't had any new entries for six months or so. So to avoid the impression you've been watching a lot of television or getting caught up on fix-it jobs around the house, it's time to show forward movement in your career trajectory.

Of course, you can do some consulting work. Or launch a blog. But if you really want to stand out, think about writing a book. Or if that sounds too daunting, consider penning some articles for magazines in your industry.

"If you are a consultant, coach, trainer or business owner, a book can be hugely valuable," said Donna Fisher, a speaker and author in Houston who specializes in networking.

It adds to your credibility and visibility, said Fisher, whose most recent book is *Professional Networking for Dummies*. It also doesn't hurt that she can sell copies of her books when she gives speeches or arrange for her clients to hand out copies to participants in a training exercise.

It's also easier today, Fisher said. Back in 1991 when she wrote her first book *Power Networking*, Fisher needed a publisher. But now you can self-publish, arrange to print copies on demand or write an e-book only available on-line.

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### Writing faster

Before you start to think "write a book?" and mentally calculate the time it will take, Fisher said it's not that bad. She's got five titles under her belt, and it typically takes between six months and one year, a process that's been speeded up by attending seminars that teach fast book writing.

**Dianna Booher**, chief executive of Booher Consultants, a communications training firm in Dallas, hosts a seminar once or twice a year for people who want to write a book quickly.

People used to distinguish themselves with academic credentials, she said. But as more folks collect advanced degrees, that's not enough any more. The bar keeps getting raised. Booher said it takes her two to three weeks to write a book once she's done the research. She just finished book number 44, *Booher's Rules of Business Grammar: 101 Fast and Easy Ways to Correct the Most Common Errors*.

But she argues it's important to find a publisher for third-party credibility.

"Anyone can publish a book," she said. "The key is to find a publisher who can validate it."

### Tips for free

Booher's three-day book writing seminar is expensive -- around \$3,500 -- so I asked for a couple of free tips.

"Write it in a marathon," she said. Lock yourself in a room for two weeks and put in 12- to 14-hour days. Most people stretch it out -- two hours here and two hours there -- and they just give up.

And don't talk about it.

"People who are always talking about the book they're going to write don't ever do it," she said. They spend all their creativity talking.

If a book sounds like too much effort, consider writing a journal article in your field, whether it's human resources, energy or the grocery business. Most every industry has at least one trade journal.

When it's time for your next bonus or promotion, you can list it as one of your accomplishments, she said.

### What you know

Another great way to show your expertise is by giving speeches. And don't forget to list them on your résumé.

It shows people seek you out, said **Lynda Doty**, senior accountant executive for the outplacement firm DBM in Houston.

Doty, who founded the **HR Roundtable**, which hosts monthly presentations for those looking for human resource positions, said some clients who are frequent public speakers write on their résumé that their list of speaking engagements is "available upon request."

The lists are often very impressive, she said, and illustrate they're a key player.

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