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What It Takes To Land The Next Job

Excerpted from Burnison's latest book, *I Need a Job!: Be Noticed. Land the Interview. Get Hired.*

It was years ago, when I was in the hospital for an outpatient procedure—nothing major, but the kind of thing that requires anesthesia and a little recovery time afterward. As I lay there in my light blue hospital gown with an IV in my arm, an anesthesiologist came in to see me.

I was expecting more questions about how I felt and the last time I ate or drank anything. Instead, the anesthesiologist checked my chart and, of all things, asked me what I did for a living. When I told him, he said, “Oh, I could never do that—way too much pressure!”

The next thing I knew, the procedure was over, and I was being taken on a gurney to the recovery room. It registered that the anesthesiologist was wheeling me.

“Everything okay?” I murmured in my groggy state.

Seeing I was awake, the anesthesiologist gave me a big, reassuring smile. Then he reached into his white coat and pulled out a two-page document. He held it up in front of my face.

Blurry-eyed, I couldn't believe what I was seeing. Of all things and of all times—this was his résumé!

“When you mentioned Korn Ferry,” he said, “I figured it was my chance.”

Really? I may have been a captive audience, but I wasn't exactly in a frame of mind to network.

Think about it—here's a highly competent anesthesiologist in a profession that requires incredible awareness, focus, judgment, and decision-making. But when it came to looking for a new job, he was like so many professionals who just don't know the best way to go about it.

It's not enough to get a résumé into someone's hands—or, these days, simply upload it into a company's applicant tracking system (ATS).

No matter where you are in your career, getting a job today takes much more than just updating your résumé and sending it out everywhere. In fact, more often than not, you won't even need a résumé; instead, you'll be online assessing, video responding, and amplifying your visibility in the world of ATS.

Instead, it all comes down to your **A.C.T.**—an acronym that stands for being **authentic**, making a **connection**, and giving others a **taste** of who you are.

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The truth is landing your next job, and especially advancing your career, takes a lot of purposeful thought and action.

Timeless and true, your A.C.T. is what you need to navigate today's perpetual uncertainty and frenetic pace of change. The more the world changes—with AI, ATS, and all the rest—the more we return to the basics: who we are and how we can connect with others. Indeed, this is what got us here—and what will take us there.

OUR WAKE-UP CALL

It's brutal. I'm frustrated. Nobody is responding ...

These are the comments I hear in almost every conversation about the job market, as each opportunity and posting attracts hundreds, if not thousands of applicants. Not only that, but as many as 70 percent of positions are now being filled by internal candidates or someone who has been referred. That's why you must have a plan.

Ironically, when we were younger, we intuitively knew how things worked. I was reminded of this when I took my family to an ice cream shop many years ago. Sitting at a table in the corner was a kid filling out an application. Did that take me back to my high

school days!

Back then, you'd go to the place you wanted to work and ask if they were hiring. If the manager or owner wasn't busy, you'd get an interview on the spot. And if your buddies worked there, they'd put in a good word for you. In fact, you probably found out about the job from a friend, who provided a warm introduction to the manager for you.

But as time went on and our careers progressed, we got the idea that technology would do all the work for us. Today, we might even convince ourselves that all we need is an online presence and AI will somehow find us.

The truth is landing your next job, and especially advancing your career, takes a lot of purposeful thought and action. It starts with a shift in mindset—as well as evolving your skill set. That's how you'll not only rise to the challenge of the ever-evolving job market but adapt to whatever comes next. ■

I Need a Job! by Gary Burnison is available where books are sold.