Apply the Scientific Method to Your Job Search

When was the last time you heard someone whine "I've sent out 200 resumes and I haven't gotten one call." Probably yesterday just before that person started sending out the next 200.

It's odd how people resist analyzing an unproductive job search with hard questions. If you are sending out resumes by the dozens and checking your phone to see if the battery has died, try applying a few questions. Science would be nowhere if scientists insisted on redoing the same experiment 200 times, wishing for a particular result. Ask yourself:

" Do I need to change the way I do things? What do I believe is wrong? What is working? What isn't?"

If hundreds of resumes are reaping no interest there's something wrong with the resume. Recruiters agree that a resume must be:

- virtually grammar and spelling perfect (an internet search of "funny resume errors" will have you laughing aloud, but a resume shouldn't be a comedy script);

- easy to read over and digest quickly (info neatly chunked, parallel sentence structures, strong verbs, conclusions drawn);

- focused on the requirements of the job (your stint in summer theatre 20 years ago won't help your bid for I.T. Manager);

- scaled down to the highlights (no boring list of position description statements);

- and it must show context that provides insight. In *telling* how you met challenges and solved problems, you *sell* your value by spelling out how you provided a return on your investment, i.e. how you earned your salary from the employer's perspective.

Along with meeting the criteria above your resume must also overcome perceived obstacles. Do you have a gap that you've not addressed? Bad idea: don't leave room for assumptions.

Have you listed 40 years of experience, back to when you were a switchboard operator? Resumes typically go back only 10-15 years these days; everything earlier is mostly irrelevant.

The trend today is to shorter communications, not longer. (Think tweets and e-mail acronyms.) BTW if your resume streams to six pages be brutal and cut out everything but the points most relevant to the job you are applying for. If this means that you need to create four different resumes to address the roles you are capable of filling, that's what you'll have to do.

If you feel that your resume meets these requirements (please be brutal; most resumes are truly lacking), then you have to ask more questions.

Is there a glut of I.T. systems analysts at the moment? If so, you must launch a job search campaign that requires more of you. Simply clicking attach and then send won't cut it in a tight market. You must get out and talk to people, aiming at getting your foot in that proverbial door before a job is posted.

Assuming there is a need in the marketplace for your position, is the problem outdated skills? Perhaps the I.T. environment changed and you need to update your skills with a new certification.

Rather than complaining that HR recruiters don't know a good thing when they see it, analyze why they aren't seeing you as a good thing.