



Coach outlines job hunt how-to

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By STAASI HEROPOULOS

EAST LONGMEADOW - East Longmeadow native Dawn Quesnel is a career-life coach who knows the value of networking to eight years old when a friend helped her get a job picking beans for a farmer.

"I learned at an early age that networking is the best way to find a job," she says.

Quesnel has spent much of her career as an executive recruiter in the advertising industry, helping people prepare themselves and prospect for new jobs. She says the biggest mistake people make is being vague about what they want to do with their lives.

"It's one thing to say I want a project manager position, and it's another thing to say I want a project manager position working in a specific industry," she advises.

"Because people are so niche, because we're so information overloaded, the more you can be specific and help your network know exactly what you are looking for, the more likely you are to get results from it," she continues.

Quesnel says that while most of the focus today is on people who are unemployed, at any given time 50 percent of the existing workforce is looking for a new job or considering a career change. Those people, combined with out-of-work job seekers, are making for a very competitive market, she says.

"Finding a job in this type of market takes a more focused, directed approach - probably more so than at any other time in most lifetimes."

To help combat the increased competition, Quesnel has developed Bridge, a job-search strategy that features six major areas:

Become clear on the type of position you're looking for;

Research companies hiring for those positions;

Identify your target market;

Develop a contact list;

Write a game plan; and

Execute the plan.

Quesnel says a focused approach can help trim months off of a job search and prevent people from settling for a position that is not as desirable. "When people get frustrated because they've sent out "X" amount of resumes and they haven't received an interview

standards," she said.

When that happens, Quesnel says, people burn out and are back in the job market within a couple of years.

Quesnel says most companies don't advertise job openings; in fact she says 80 percent of positions are filled through networking and responding to ads - and that is where people make their biggest mistakes.

"Most of the people are spending a majority of their time responding to ads wondering why they're not getting a response," she