



## GREG SCHNEIDERS

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### In this economy, the ticket is to find a job you love and master it

**B**ecause this will be my last regular column in this space, I thought I'd use it to offer a little advice to young communications pros about to enter the toughest job market in recent memory.

■ **Do what you love.** If it's sports, music, cars, or cooking, look for a communications job in that field. If it takes you twice as long to find a job paying half as much, it's worth it to go to work every day to do something you truly enjoy. You will be better at it, your enthusiasm will be obvious, you will advance faster, and, oh yes, you will be happier. The corollary is to make sure it is obvious to those interviewing you that you love the field they are in and that is why you chose them.

■ **Become an expert.** Not just in communications, but also in what you are communicating about. The people you have to impress – to get that first job and to advance beyond it – will be substantive people (if they aren't, look elsewhere). They will respect you if you know your stuff in whatever field you've chosen – finance, technology, entertainment, etc. They are less likely to respect you if you present yourself as an expert in communications on *whatever*.

■ **Understand research.** Far too many communications pros do not understand or value research. They believe they can guess how audiences will react to a client's actions and messages. If they do commission research, it is often for frivolous purposes like getting a

quick, cheap headline. No political candidate runs for office without sound research. No company enters a market or launches a product without market research. When communications pros offer advice that is not based on research, they undercut their credibility in the eyes of sophisticated clients.

■ **Become an expert in new media.** As a young person coming into the field, this is one area where you can be smarter and more experienced than the people interviewing you for the job (be careful to show this, not say it). Every client today understands the need to master the blogosphere, social media, and whatever is coming next, but few have the time or background to do it. You grew up with this stuff and, while that is critical, it becomes a marketable asset when you add to it a sophisticated knowledge of all the tools and their uses.

You are about to enter one of the toughest job markets ever, but don't despair. Instead, commit yourself to finding a job – any job in a field you love – and spending the next few years becoming very good at what you do. Don't worry about the money, you're young and can live cheaply. Worry, instead, about getting the right job and the right experience. The economy will recover, and when it does, you will be ready. Good luck. ■

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