



WHY PEOPLE GET HIRED

Is the glass half empty or half full? We are looking at high unemployment in all technology sectors. Companies are cutting back and it is very hard to find a job anywhere.

So why is it that even in hard times some people are never laid off? Even more curious, why do some people get hired away from companies to other companies even when that other company is not hiring?

A Look From the Employer's Side

First, we have to look at the situation from the employer's side. If the employer puts an ad in the paper published in a large city on Sunday, it will likely draw sixty to a hundred responses through the mail slot by Monday morning. Clearly this creates a lot of work for the employer to read all of the responses, select the eligible resumes, arrange interviews, and then narrow the selection to a few highly qualified candidates. As a consequence, it is the least preferred approach.

Employers want the most highly qualified candidates available at the time they have an opening. If they do not have a candidate in mind (and quite often they do), they look for strategies to narrow the field rapidly and efficiently. One approach is to ask current staff if they know of any worthwhile candidates. A second approach is to apply special qualifications to the position to narrow the field of applicants.

For example, if an engineer is sought with a specialty in electromagnetic compatibility field-testing or electrostatic discharge control in packaging (narrow qualifications), a first area for harvesting candidates may well be the competition. Staff will always know who at the competition is both experienced and available. The question to the employer is whether the target is affordable.

Another approach is to seek out available or interested candidates from technical societies and professional associations. Most have a discrete listing of people looking for new challenges, either by directly listing their availability or listing "consultants" available. Both are fertile fields for mining new employees.

Those approaches are for culling the field for potential hires. The next step is to sort out who claims to have skills or talent most closely related to the desired position. The first yardstick is education. Having a degree is better than not having one. Having a degree in the specific field is better than a "related" degree.

The second yardstick is work experience. Does the prospective employee have work experience directly related to the job available? One unfortunate aspect of modern times is that job seekers are not inhibited when it comes to "stretching" their resume to embrace the job in question. With respect to the employer then, the situation is sort of "let the buyer beware," which puts the employer back into the mode of detective, to validate the prospect's claims.

The validation exercise must come from hard legwork to ask references and former employers just what kind of person the employee is. Former employers will probably not give much more information than the minimum facts: that they employed the person, the period of employment and the position held. Sometimes they will state if they would rehire the person but, because of liability issues, they likely will not.

In summary, the prospective employer is looking for a way to find good talent and to discard average or questionable offers.

The Value of FCC or Speciality Licenses

Degree-granting institutions do not require a comprehensive examination of student competence as a part of graduation. From the schools part, coordination of a comprehensive examination amongst individual instructors would be a monumental problem and there is no demand to justify the depth of understanding as part of course completion. Once the completion examination has been passed, the student will not hazard any other challenge to his or her understanding of the subject in an academic setting.

Employers do not want good examination takers. Employers want holistic practitioners with a comprehensive understanding of problems, issues and challenges relating to their line of business. From this, the employer can prescribe programs, design devices and manufacture products that resolve those issues at a profit.

Unlike academic training, specialty licenses are a holistic examination of subject matter competence. For example, there is a great concern in industry to obtain "work ready" technicians as they graduate from vocational electronics courses. Every course will claim that they instill the desired competence as a part of course training. However, gradu-

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Why People Get Hired (continued)

tion along with a General Radio Operator's License (GROL) awarded by the Federal Communications Commission, specifically demonstrates academic skill, coupled with a directly applicable license that has been issued by an objective third party.

Similarly, a ham radio operator's license is a demonstration of a particular level of subject matter competence. Years ago, employers sought candidates with ham experience because they knew that the active ham was also a tinkerer. Each employer expects to have to provide some training to every new hire. Tinkerers shorten the training period dramatically because they have current experience with components, circuits and equipment. They come to the workplace more than ready to overcome challenges.

The Role That NARTE Certification Plays

Specialty licenses demonstrate mastery of a subject matter. In the short term that is an excellent augmentation to academic credentials or work experience. It is an excellent approach to distinguishing a resume from the oth-

ers. For entry-level positions, a specialty license can be the discriminator amongst otherwise similarly qualified candidates. There is a drawback to specialty licenses in that anyone can sit for the examination at any time. Gaining the license does not necessarily say anything about one's ability to practice.


NARTE certification is a holistic examination of the applicant in terms of education, work experience, peer endorsement and competency. A certificate of competency is only awarded after stringent criteria have been met. A certification then, is a stronger credential in terms of standing out from other applicants. NARTE certification reflects technical competence, acceptance by peers, and a demonstrable record of responsibility.

The NARTE certification is held in high esteem because NARTE verifies the applicants claims, validates peer endorsements and carefully screens not only examination responses but also the understanding of technology by reviewing industry questions and solu-

tions provided by the applicant. This represents a holistic review more comprehensive than what most human relations staff give to an applicant. The NARTE certification dramatically reduces the employer's research burden and thus becomes a positive discriminator.

Why People Do Get Hired

The Czar hired Rasputin because the Czar thought he could do the job. History leaves it open to the individual to decide just how qualified Rasputin was. Unfortunately, not many of us have the charisma of Rasputin, to get picked up by the Czar on the strength of our personality. Why then do we get hired?

There is no magic dust you can sprinkle over your resume, but revisiting the recommendations above might help you understand how to make it to the next interview phase. The process is complex and requires diligence and tenacity. A helpful element is something that distinguishes you above your peers. For technical employment, that element can be an FCC license, NARTE certification or both. 



PROFILE: Handalall Sukhdeo, PhD/EHF, NCT; Inducted into the National Electronics Industry Hall of Fame in 2003

Dr. Sukhdeo, profiled and featured in this quarter's issue of *NARTE News*, has been a member of NARTE for over 6 years and is very proud of the organization and his NCT certification. Dr. Sukhdeo provided NARTE a list of the more notable achievements and qualifications he brings with him to the NARTE membership.

- Holds seven licenses, including four from the FCC:
 - 1) GROL
 - 2) Radar
 - 3) GMDSS-Operator
 - 4) GMDSS-Maintainer

- Holds certifications in 13 different specialties in electronics:

- 1) Audio
- 2) Video
- 3) Consumer
- 4) Radar
- 5) Industrial
- 6) Wireless Communications
- 7) Computers
- 8) Telecommunications
- 9) Biomedical
- 10) Avionics
- 11) Robotics
- 12) Fiber-Optics
- 13) Marine

- Holds Associate, Bachelors, Masters and Doctorate degrees in Electronics Engineering.

- Holds Master of Arts degree in Management, Information Systems.

- Certified by ISCET in six electronics options and recognized as the 1999

Technician of the Year, receiving the award in 1999 in Reno Nevada.

- Master certified by ETA and was presented with "The Master Certified Electronics Technician Award" in 1999.

- Employed at New York Transit Authority (NYCTA) in Electronics Division.

- Was inducted into the "National Electronics Industry Hall of Fame" for science, inventions and engineering, on 19 July 2003 at the National Professional Service Convention in Reno, NV. At age 34, Dr. Sukhdeo became the youngest person to ever receive this prestigious award.

NARTE welcomes Dr. Sukhdeo's participation as a NARTE member, and wishes him continued success in whatever future endeavor he pursues. WELL DONE!! 