

Last fall term one of my students in Spc 2600, a very good student came quietly to me and presented me with that little yellow withdrawal slip. One had only to look at her to see she was upset and to some extent, distraught.

Vicky was in her late twenties or early thirties. She had been fulfilling her dream of finally finishing her degree, something she had not been able to do when she was 18 or 19.

But not now.

You have each heard the word. It's a euphemism. Her husband had been downsized. She would now have to extend her parttime hours into a fulltime job in order for her family to survive..

Steven, her husband had graduated from FCCJ when he was twenty, over a decade ago. He had graduated with a BS in Business Administration from UNF.

First he had gone to work for a small Mortgage company and then within a year moved on to the bank he was to stay with for over 10 years. He survived three bank mergers.

Remember Florida Nation Bank became First Union? No this wasn't his bank, in fact I don't remember his bank.

But I do remember Vicky, and I lost Vicky. Steven ultimately did find another position, but at half the salary he had been downsized from. Vicky might never make it back to FCCJ to fulfill that dream.

Companies are still downsizing.

More than 43 million jobs have been erased in the United States since 1979, according to a New York Times analysis of Labor Department numbers. (NYTimes, March 3, 1996)

Many of the losses come from the normal churning as stores fail and factories move. Does anyone remember when Gulf Life was downtown, or the Florida National Bank? May Cohens? Or Maison Blanche?

There is much good news. Far more jobs have been created than lost over that period.

The Avenues Mall, Office Depot, Home Depot, Lowes, Coach Leather, Parisian, etc.

State Farm Insurance Company has alerted its employees that it is moving to Winter Haven.

Some will be going with the company. Some will not.

Increasingly the jobs that are disappearing are those of higher-paid, white-collar workers, many at large corporations, women as well as men, many after they have just begun their careers, many at the peak of their careers.

Like a clicking odometer on a speeding car, the number twirls higher nearly each day.

That's the bad news.

But there is good news .

We are in an economic recovery. Yes the job market has changed. It is changing.

There are jobs out there for all of you. The jobs are different. More is required of each of you.

But we know what is required now. Each of you knows you must have the technical and professional skill.

Each of you knows without computer knowledge, no matter what your field, you will be among the "have nots".

And Communication Skills...

(The preceding is taken from the NYTimes, March 3, 1996)

Just a decade ago, top employees looked for workers with good technical skills and stressed the importance of being expert at number crunching.

Today, that's not enough. The plethora of information that must be communicated makes the old arts of writing, speaking and listening, work necessities and a part of man job descriptions.

These attributes are referred to be human resource managers as "good communication skills," and the phrase has become popular in employment circles.

Many call communication the watchword of today's job market, as necessary for engineers as for sales personnel as essential for support staff as for supervisor and managers.

Take a look at the classified ads in the Florida Times Union and you will see the change:

Employers want people with "good communication skills" in jobs that range from clerical workers to hospital administrators.

They want people who can read well, write clearly and speak effectively in person and on the phone.

I would like to quote Leon Farley, managing partner of a search firm in San Francisco,

"My thesis is, if you can't speak well, it means you can't think well.  
You need to have a clear image of what you want to say.  
Employers have come to realize that if you can articulate a problem,  
you have begun to solve it."

You have to practice both of these required skills because they don't come naturally.

For as Judy Lease, a professor of communications at the University of Utah's College of Business states:

"Acquiring the needed communications skills takes work, but it's worth it."

When employers say they want good communicators, they're not looking for people who know how to joke with colleagues at the water fountain, they are looking for people with the ability to get information from one mind to another with as little distortion as possible.

(the above was taken directly from the Sun Sentinel, September 30, 1990)

(Research shows that expecting to be evaluated or being uncertain about the proper way to behave increases anxiety.)

firstday