

**STYBEL
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SUCCESS IN A THREE-DIMENSIONAL WORLD:

LINEAR, NONLINEAR, AND RANDOM.

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Stybel Peabody Associates, Inc.

Hockey great Wayne Gretzky was once asked what differentiated him from other professional players.

"Others look at where the puck is. I look at where the puck is going."

Gretzky's perspective is worth remembering when looking at opportunities.

Let's examine one sphere of professional life: job search.

Responding to opportunities posted on the Internet is a very linear activity.

It also is like trying to play a hockey game by skating to where you see the puck on the ice:

Your competitors are looking at the same job at the same time. When you respond, you are one of hundreds of resumes on a recruiter's screen.

In hockey, a puck on the ice does not remain stationary for long.

Available jobs do not remain unfilled. An opportunity may appear "fresh" when looking at the date that it was posted on the Internet. But the opportunity may already be "stale." For example, at my firm we sometimes advertise on the web for candidates for jobs we are seeking to fill on a retained search basis.

With Stybel Peabody's retained search for example, when we advertise opportunities on the Internet it is only after we already have found our first-tier candidates through our own networks and referrals from our networks.

We are seeking our second-tier pool.

On your computer monitor, the job seems "fresh."

Job Searching in a Three-Dimensional World

Looking at ads is an example of "linear thinking."

Linear thinking is the type of thinking most often taught in school: take x courses with an average grade of y and you can be sure to receive a diploma/certificate on (name a date).

Many self-help books with titles like "Five Secrets of Highly Successful Investors" or "The Three Things to do for Career Success" are tapping into a linear logic that sounds so appealingly simply.

We work our clients to get away from notions that we live in a linear world.

We live in a three-dimensional world that is linear, nonlinear, and random at the same time.

It is an easy concept to articulate but hard to grasp.

What is a Nonlinear Event?

A non-linear event operates within fuzzy boundaries. For example, you attend professional association cocktail parties in the hopes of meeting someone who will steer you to a great job opportunity. Ten times you go to the event and come up empty-handed. And on the eleventh time you strike gold.

Conducting an aggressive direct mail campaign using snail mail is an exercise in nonlinear thinking; you send out letters to three hundred companies and hope that three companies ask you in for an interview. You have no clue which three companies will be positive.

Job search within the nonlinear dimension is skating away from where the puck is to where you suspect it might be.

Managing Randomness in Your Professional Life

Nonlinear logic has a fuzzy logic. But the random dimension has no logic at all. The idea that we live in a random world can be a disturbing idea for some people. But how many of us have had life changing events that took place by random?

It is a paradox, but you can manage random events to some degree.

For example, we recommend that job candidates randomly "spin dial" their electronic address books and call the person whose name appears. We call it "Spin the Dial for Dollars."

We tell our clients to say, "Just thinking about you and called to say, 'how are you?'"

We have been delighted with the number of responses that begin with, "It's amazing that you should call. How did you know we have a need for your services right now?"

In hockey, a random approach is skating around the rink and waiting to pounce for the right opening.

A Three-Dimensional Approach to Managing Your Job Search

Skating to where the puck is going requires giving up the illusion of living in a linear world.

Grasp the implications of structuring your professional life along a three-dimensional framework of linear, non-linear, and random.

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Stybel Peabody Associates, Inc. is retained by companies to help valued senior level employees achieve Leadership and Career Success.

Core services: Retained Search+, relationship management coaching, and Executive Outplacement.

For more information:

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www.boardoptions.com

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