



Reprinted from *Future of Work Agenda*
March 2009

Notes from the Field: Finding Your “Right Work”

By Jim Horan

If you have not lost your job, it's likely you are in fear that you will. If you have lost your job recently, I truly understand the pain you are feeling, I have been there.

April 1st nineteen years ago I was a CFO in a Fortune 500 company until 9:30am, when the phone rang and I was summoned to the executive suite to learn that my job had just been eliminated.

I was shocked and stunned; but it turned out to be the best possible thing that has happened to me in this life. It caused me, with a substantial amount of pain over several years, to discover who I really was, and then to go out and **find the right work for me.**

Today my national consulting firm, which I started in 2000, has 450+ consultants. Many of these consultants are recent refugees from corporate professional, managerial, and executive jobs. I also speak each year to hundreds of people in transition. Here is a short recap of the insights, reflections and aha's that I share with them on how they can go forward and find **their right work:**

- ◆ First, I suggest, you are not looking for a *job*; you are looking for a *way to work and live.*
- ◆ Share what you love to do, who you love to work with, how you help others achieve what they want – frequently.
- ◆ You might begin to believe it yourself.
- ◆ It might also change over time! In fact, bet on it. Keep notes; this history will be important.
- ◆ Pay attention to people's reactions. Listen carefully. Don't assume you understand their assumptions.
- ◆ Ask them, from where they sit, what opportunities they see for you.
- ◆ Ask people you know what *they* think you are good at. It might be different than what you think.
- ◆ When you hear something that intrigues you, go explore it.
- ◆ When people tell you to go do something, you should probably do it.

- ◆ I was told to go do public speaking on my one-page plan idea. I was terrified of public speaking. Turned out to be the smartest thing I did. It resulted in the creation of books, software, and a business with 450+ licensed consultants.
- ◆ In some ways, the nuggets of what I do today have been around for a long time. I just could not see them. I wonder what's right in front of you that you can't see. Start looking!
- ◆ Email can be your friend; it can also be your enemy. Have at least five breakfast, lunch, dinner, coffee dates a week. You need to be in front of real, live people.
- ◆ Building a business or career is one and the same. At this point, frankly, it does not matter whether you end up with a W-2 or a 1099 at the end of the year.
- ◆ Nobody builds a career or business by themselves. It takes a community! Be active in your communities. Be in service of others.
- ◆ Zig Ziglar says, ""The key to building a successful business is to help enough other people build their business; they will build yours." I say the same is true about finding your right work.
- ◆ Make networking a way of life, show up in logical places, meet everyone you can, ask what's happening in their industry, be a great source of referrals.
- ◆ There is power and magic in the written word. Capture your intellectual property in writing. You will look smarter in print! It will also lead to greater personal insights.
- ◆ Freely share what you know in public forums; speak and grow rich!
- ◆ Don't be a lone ranger or rangerette; the successful always know lots of other successful people, and they learn from each other.
- ◆ Ask lots of questions; assume you don't know the answers. The power is in asking questions, not knowing all the answers.
- ◆ I have been paid handsomely for all of my pro-bono work! Give freely; it will come back ten-fold.
- ◆ Everyone has a plan; the successful always have theirs in writing.
- ◆ I've learned I am not smart enough to know who I am supposed to meet.
- ◆ The community buys the products and services it wants and needs, always from the right sources. Be the right source.
- ◆ Celebrate the successes, big and small, frequently. The journey is long.

- ◆ You will know when you have found the right work. You will smile much more frequently.

Jim Horan is the president and founder of the [One Page Business Plan Company](#). He is also a frequent public speaker and the author of more than a dozen books about business planning. We referenced his work (which is brilliant, in our humble opinion) in January in our newsletter article “[Taking Charge of Tomorrow](#).” And our own feeble attempt at applying Jim’s one-page business plan methodology was on full display in “[Our 2009 Strategy](#),” in the February issue of this newsletter. You can reach Jim at: jhoran@onepagebusinessplan.com.

Please [send your comments directly to us](#). We look forward to learning from you, and we’ll be happy to share your thoughts with Jim Horan as well. This article is available online [here](#), or as a separate reprint (in pdf format) [here](#).

About the Work Design Collaborative and *Future of Work Agenda*

Future of Work is a global network of resources – practitioners, thought leaders, researchers, and senior consultants – who are committed to building and implementing physical, social, and technology-based work environments that are cost-effective, socially and environmentally responsible, and personally satisfying.

We are focused on defining the future of work and helping our members and clients achieve new levels of workforce and workplace productivity. *Future of Work* produces and distributes management tools, surveys, benchmark databases, white papers and technical reports, conferences and workshops, newsletters, books and articles, and public presentations on the changing nature of work. The Work Design Collaborative, LLC, provides leadership and infrastructure services for the *Future of Work* community.

Future of Work Agenda is a free monthly electronic newsletter produced by the *Work Design Collaborative*. To sign up for a subscription to *Future of Work Agenda*, please go to: http://www.thefutureofwork.net/news_newsletter_register.html.

Direct inquiries to either Charlie Grantham at charlie@thefutureofwork.net, or Jim Ware at jim@thefutureofwork.net.