



## **Bait & Switch...**

The Thirteenth in the series: ***An Executive Summary for Busy Managers.***

Lucky number thirteen... perfect timing with the recent passing of Halloween. Even better is that the topic of this review will scare the daylight out of you!

Buenos días! Did you know that on average, Starbucks opens three new stores each day around the world. They are breaking into Spain as an alternative to the loud and smokey cafes that currently exist. Locals question the tact, but foreigners love the alternative.

*Is the job market as good as the media makes it sound? What is scarier than the ghosts and goblins that bang on the door in search of candy, gum and the souls of stingy neighbors?*

In case you are a sound sleeper with nary a care in the world, I have got a deal for you. A New York Times bestselling author has written a book about going undercover to try to find a job in the ranks of white collar managers. Barbara Ehrenreich, author of bestselling Nickel and Dimed, has just completed Bait and Switch. Wow, that almost sounded like a line a professional reviewer would have typed... well I had never heard of her so I figure the added credibility is required to have you take notice of this teeth chattering, spooktacular tale.

The idea sounded interesting. A person fabricates a background (using her maiden name) and attempts to find a

“new” job in the management ranks. I fully expected the old adage of one month searching per \$10,000 in base salary. Ehrenreich set her requirement at a minimum of \$50,000 base salary and a position in public relations with a goal of spending less than \$6,000 on her job search activities. Her real-life background clearly had prepared her with the skill set required to perform that type of job. Her resume was a little sketchy, but certainly nothing for the circular file.

***So, she set reasonable expectations for her undercover operation.***

Her initial focus for the book was to be able to get inside of a corporation and report first-hand on the “downward mobility” of white collar workers. Little did she know that just getting “inside” was going to prove to be worthy of an entire book. Well, maybe not “worthy”. Had she gotten a job on the inside, maybe she would not have been forced to devote an entire book to a job search.

Ehrenreich started her job search by speaking with a career counselor. As a matter of fact, she worked with three career counselors and a host of image specialists. She improved her resume, her wardrobe and even her make-up. All of this was done in the name of finding a job (I bet she enjoyed a pretty good tax deduction also). In addition to a complete makeover, she did not limit herself geographically. She flew to Atlanta and the mid-west to pursue job searching activities. In short, she did not put too many limitations on her job search. *Theoretically, she had done everything right!!!*



This is where the book becomes very scary. Not only does she not find a job, but she only gets a handful of interviews. Perhaps she is not the most experienced corporate job-seeker, but her hired guns should have been able to help her overcome some of those shortfalls.

The extremely disturbing part of the story is the lack of hiring sense that was exhibited by Corporate America. Here is a lady that in her real-life writes best selling books. In her fabricated life she was searching for a job where she would essentially write press releases. This is a task that she could probably have done with her eyes closed (hopefully your eyes haven't closed while reading this).

The nightmare continues as she describes the lack of interviews she obtains after attending job fairs with companies that have a published requirement. [What exactly happens to all of those resumes that the job fair staff collects?](#) An even bigger question I had to ask myself is what would happen if companies did not attend the job fairs? How much money would be saved by corporations that they could plow back into wages if they just stopped attending? Would the goodwill earned by the number of jobs created outweigh the goodwill that is obtained through hosting a job fair booth? After all, Ehrenreich's book seems to lead us down a path that the companies only attend so they can check a box that they have performed their social responsibility. Job fairs are not the only activity she "exposes". Job boards such as Monster.com are also pretty useless in generating leads. All of this brings us

to the question, how do you get a job in Corporate America? Ehrenreich does not know the answer. Her **hypothesis** is "Networking". She postulates that perhaps if she used her real name and talked to her close friends she would have been more successful.

Bait & Switch is a very interesting and eye opening book. It would probably not be the best idea in the world to encourage your employees to read the book as they might get the wrong idea. However, I think that anyone who is currently employed that reads this book will certainly benefit from a new found appreciation of their current employment situation.

**It certainly would be a good idea to encourage friends or family to take a look at this book. At least it will allow them to put their current situation into perspective and educate them on how hard it is to make a change.**

The book in a nutshell:

- Finding a good job is getting more difficult by the day

*Employers looking to staff up should read this book in order to understand what the labor market is currently facing. And maybe even to pickup on a few of the "common" deceptive resume techniques.*

Just my opinion and we all know what "they" say about opinions...

Thanks

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