

It's a buyer's market for those hiring superintendents. Employers have never had so many choices in their search for talent. But if you're looking at career cultivation, some reality checking is in order.

Who's getting the good jobs? The answer is both easy and complicated. Those who have demonstrated incredible confidence, competence and ability usually get the best jobs. They have successfully worked hard enough to gain a strong recommendation from a current employer and a reputation in the business. Who you know and what you have done always makes an impression.

How are they getting the good jobs? Again, the answer is easy and complicated. But those who don't miss an opportunity to impress, and to meet and to exceed expectations are at the forefront.

Environmental thinkers and doers are winning good jobs, as well. Smoke-and-mirrors environmentalism (where the actions don't fit the cooperative words) might be popular, but the truth is an excellent divining rod. I can assure you that walking the ecological stewardship walk will show much better than talking the talk.

I've noticed that the last dozen or so superintendent positions that have been filled were never advertised. If you are searching employment Web sites or sitting by the mailbox waiting for an association-forged job notice to arrive announcing your dream job, you had better think again. A great job never advertised is a truth in most of the business world. Growing grass is no exception.

Our local and national associations have been churning various cultivars of job listings for years. In a way, it's a natural — especially when superintendents are looking for essential staff positions. But the system of listings, both local and national, tends to fail at bringing together those who would be searching for a superintendent and good candidates.

How's that? It's easy and complicated.

First, a superintendent who is doing well in his or her current position may not be reading the listings or even subscribing to them. There are many who find contentment, challenge and success by not changing jobs every three years.

Second, it stands to reason that if the first is

The Art of Finding a Top-Level Job in a Buyer's Market

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true, then some of those actively reading the listings are either in trouble, unhappy or both. There exists a class of professional job changers, who may not be as desirable as they think, especially after move number five. It would be sticking your head in deep bunker sand to believe that those who are in positions to make hiring decisions are not starting to learn this.

Third, if you are management at a great club or course, do you really want a stack of resumes 300 deep on your desk? Think about it. The task of screening becomes overwhelming. Having had an opportunity to go through a stack of resumes garnered from a national job listing on several occasions, I can say it's nearly impossible to stand out of the crowd.

Several executive search firms are now specializing in placing superintendents in high-level positions. They are working to search for genius, screen candidates and conduct interviews with top people. What once was done on a fairly informal basis is now handled more along the lines of bigger business.

Superintendents competing for top-level jobs may even begin to use someone like an agent in order to make opportunities happen, express interest in a position and negotiate the terms of employment. Jerry McGuire come to mind?

Well-informed talent seekers want screen tests. They want recommendations from people they know and trust. They are not as interested in titles and certification as they are results. They want to meet the best of the best and compare. They want to know your ecological efforts.

That's what happens in a buyer's market.

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