

Work Daze: Romancing the job

by *Bob_Goldman*

Valentine's day 2008 is history. The red roses have wilted. The last heart-shaped nougat is now firmly affixed to my thighs. And here I am - just discovering a timely e-press release from those hopeless romantics at InterviewStream.com.

"Valentines Dating Tips Help You Land a Dream Job" is the subject line of this massive missive from Conshohocken, Penn., the bucolic hamlet where Shawn Graham, author of "Courting Your Career," and Randy Bitting, InterviewStream honcho, have put their heads - and hearts - together to bring us the "Top Ten Tips for Romancing Your Dream Job."

I assume winter in Conshohocken is a cold and dreary thing, because in the process of typing up their tips, the two dating experts have clearly overheated their hormones. "From the moment you walk in the door, what you say - verbally and non-verbally - will often determine whether you're going to 'score' with your dream company," suggests smooth-talking Shawn with a nudge nudge, wink wink. "One of the most important skills to possess as you head out on the job market or dating scene is the ability to sell yourself and then to seamlessly 'seal the deal,'" adds randy Randy.

I don't know what's going on in Conshohocken, but I think someone should call Dr. Phil, and fast. I mean, are we getting advice from seasoned business executives or overly hormonal frat boys?

Once Graham and Bitting can cool their jets, I can see the real value in their approach. This is not just another case of 'HR Girls Gone Wild,' but solid advice that serious job seekers can use if they want to, in the words of the press release, "get past first base with an employer."

For example, consider Tip No. 3 "Always ask their number." Requesting a business card is just like asking for a phone number, the romance gurus tell us, and thus, appropriate behavior when "you hit it off with someone you're networking with." Fair enough, but be prepared for the job-search version of the famous wrong-number brush off. If you've ever called a proffered number only to find yourself talking to a complete stranger who has no idea of the memorable evening you supposedly spent together, bonding in the VIP room of the Kit Kat Klub, you won't be surprised when the phone number on the business card for the CEO of Worldwide Integrated Breadsticks Inc. connects you directly with a 7-Eleven outlet in Mumbai.

Or take Tip No. 5 - "Break the ice." The pickup artists at InterviewStream suggest you prepare your opening remarks well before hitting the job market dance floor. But "avoid canned or overly rehearsed answers - the dating equivalent of lame pickup lines." I agree. Use original, irresistible lines, like "Hire here often?" or "What's a nice manager doing in a dumpy company like this?"

Tip No. 6 suggests that you "give the right signals to heat things up." We're talking body language here, and as you'd expect, "non-verbal communication is critical." That's why, when I go to an interview, I ignore the chair and lie on nearest couch. If there's no couch, I conduct the interview from a closet. I want my future employer to know that I'm not a threat; when I'm on the job, I'll either be sleeping, or hiding, or both.

Tip No. 8 instructs us not to "bash our ex." Absolutely! Why ruin a perfectly good interview with a lot of useless conversation about your former employers and the restraining orders they had to take out? If your new boss wants to find that out, he can simply read the court transcript.

The final tip, No. 10, cautions against being a "runaway bride or groom."

No question you will be one smooth operator when armed with these tips, and will easily be able to waltz away with the prettiest job offer on the recruitment club scene. But you don't want to settle for a one-night stand. According to Graham and Bitting, you need to be able to commit. "Word travels fast," they explain, and your reputation as a candidate who loves 'em and leaves 'em could cost you your dream job when it finally sashays your way.

On the other hand, if you do run from every long-term job relationship, and instead spend your time and energy trying to hook up with some rich guy or gal who will insist on supporting you and your slacker lifestyle, you'll never go to work again.

And wouldn't that just break your heart?

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