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**My Fifteen Year Job Search**

**By Ieuan Dolby**

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The inscrutable Malaysian Immigrations Officer at Kuala Lumpur International Airport caused me a moment's consternation with his question until I realized that he was just making small talk whilst manically trying to stamp all the bits of paper that I had placed on his otherwise spotless Formica top. I had just finished six weeks work in Kuantan, Malaysia and was eager to get home; he was just starting his 8hr shift and was bored already.

He started off by asking me where in Malaysia I had been working and for how long. He then asked me if all of that time had been spent onboard one vessel! His next question heralded the real start of his small talk, "what sort of life is that" was his opening gambit. Initially thinking that he had suspicions over my activities for the last six weeks, my heart started to pack its bags for the rapid journey to my mouth. But then realizing that he was just asking a simple and friendly question I told my heart to stop hammering like an out of balance washing machine and to remain where it was.

It took me a while to register his question and by the time I had thought up a reply he was massaging his aching elbow and viewing up his next customer with weighted suspicion.

But I most certainly did not forget his untimely question. In fact his query prompted me to write this article. And to rethink my whole way of life and more than anything else it has made me reconsider my future career path.

I have in all truthfulness been looking for an alternative job for nearly fifteen years. Yep, none of these spur of the moment career searches that peter away to nothing when faced with an awesome pile of possibilities that would take an archivist a full year to locate the elusive 'needle in a haystack' job that might or might not be the one. I was not looking for a job via a casual glance through a Sunday newspaper whilst sitting out in the garden with a freshly brewed cup of coffee and mulling over mowing the lawn. My fifteen year search for employment has been ongoing, intricate and in-depth. My search for the ideal future job, the one that would take me away from the sea and onto land has been energetic and involved, persuasive and of course very demanding upon my soul and time.

## My Fifteen Year Job Search

For fifteen years I have been looking for a shore-based and long term career anywhere in the world. And for all of that time I have remained working at sea and onboard ships.

My Malaysian Immigration Officer through his well meaning and casually uttered question has made me realize that one of these fine days I will have to accept a job that has been offered to me. It sounds daft now that I write it down on paper, but in these endless years of bewailing the fact that I want to leave the sea but cannot because nobody will offer me a job, I have turned down many a wonderful offer.

Before I met this paper bashing, uniformed stamping machine at the departure terminal in the International Airport in Kuala Lumpur I believed that I couldn't get a job on land because nobody would employ me. But the real reason is that it has been a subconscious ploy to remain at sea, to earn a

more than sufficient tax free income, to visit strange and wonderful lands, to get absolutely drunk at seemingly frequent intervals and to be paid to see the world in style. And now why would anybody want to put a halt to that? And so during my heart rendering searches for a land based career that I have applied myself to with my usual vigor, enthusiasm and energy that I typically give to all projects in my life, some unmentionable companies have upset the applecart by offering me positions on land. Certainly looking back these serious offers of employment have placed a spanner in the works and have left me stumbling at the start line, unsure which way to run.

How dare they actually offer me a job when all I am doing is looking for one and then leaving me lurching in unknown territory trying to work out how to turn down the job without actually refusing the offer!

But my new found Malaysian Official has put into perspective all that has dictated my past existence for so long. I love the sea, I love earning loads of cash, I love adventure and exotic places and I love the fresh air of the sea and all that surrounds it (more sea). And in actual fact the last thing that I want to do is sit behind a desk, day in day out, staring at a screen and dreaming of what life used to be like on the high seas.

But that is what I have to do now. I have to find a steady career on land because if I leave it for much longer I will be too old to start a new life. I have to do it now because my first son is about to enter the world. And I have to leave the sea because my wife hates me being away. I have to leave the sea, I have to find a job on land and I have to do it now. Thanks Mr. Malaysian Immigration Officer at Kuala Lumpur International Airport departure terminal, you have made me realize that the next time somebody offers me a job on land I am going to have to accept it.

Well, see what happens in the next fifteen years anyway!

Ieuan Dolby is the Author and Webmaster of

. As a Chief Engineer in the Merchant Navy

he has sailed the world for fifteen years. Now living in Taiwan he writes about cultures across the globe

and life as he sees it.

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Yes, you can get free guidance from a job search book. My yearly favorite is: WHAT COLOR IS YOUR PARACHUTE? by Richard Bolles.

Others are: TRANSITIONS by Bill Bridges; THE RILEY GUIDE by Margaret Riley Dikel and THE COMPLETE JOB SEARCH HANDBOOK by Howard Figler.

There are often new titles for specific population groups. To find out more, use Google or Yahoo to search databases for your own needs.

All of this good, job search advice can get you, as a job seeker, to a good place to start your job search journey. You don't need to do EVERY EXERCISE that authors suggest.

Sketch out an exercise that appeals to you from reading the books I have mentioned. One technique may appeal to you more than another. Use those.

More importantly, is the use of the books as a guide to get you started on your search. But books, will never take place of action! Read and act!

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