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Blind-Sided

Roger E. Hawkins
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In the current economy, books about life during unemployment are in great demand. Losing a job can feel like the end of the world, but writers like Roger E. Hawkins, Ph.D., help smooth the way back to confidence, courage, and, hopefully, successful employment.

In *Blindsided: Surviving Career Meltdown*, Hawkins begins by asking readers to take a close look at their professional past, present, and future and to parse out the goals that matter the most. Unemployment, Hawkins believes, can be an opportunity to realize some of these goals. “Write down as many different answers as you can to the question: [u]Who am I?[/u]” he says. Taking stock of one’s self is a vital step on the road to fulfilling employment

Resume preparation, networking, interview techniques, and follow-up strategies are covered in subsequent sections. Hawkins, who has worked with major corporations on employment issues such as hiring and downsizing, offers sample resumes and cover letters and a list of nearly one hundred action words that will make applicants sound competent and professional. To prepare for interviews, readers would do well to follow the advice he offers, such as, “Ask questions. Convey the impression that you also have to be sold.”

The most useful part of this book is the wide array of forms Hawkins includes in each section, like the “Interview Planning Form,” and the “Job Prospect Form.” From the brainstorming stage to follow-up correspondence, he offers specialized worksheets that will keep even the most absent-minded job seeker organized.

While most of the book has a professional tone, occasionally it slips into the condescending. For example, Hawkins writes, “You must keep a separate binder for each job search you conduct in your lifetime. Give them special names, such as Finding Nemo, The Fish Called Lemon Drop, Tongue/Foot Disease, The Little Engine That Rolled Up Hill, etc. This will enable you to keep your sense of humor.” Humor is certainly important, but his choice of examples feels forced and may not promote the laughter he recommends.

The layout of the book can be confusing, as well. After Hawkins has led his readers all the way through salary negotiation, he offers an epilogue in which he introduces a section on cartoons then provides a written summary of the cartoons. The cartoons finally appear in section nine and depict characters who are just beginning their journey towards employment. These cartoons would have been more effective if they’d been inserted in the pertinent sections.

Overall, *Blindsided* is a useful volume that offers practical help and emotional support during what can be a very trying time. Hawkins’ admiration for those who are trying to end their unemployment is evident. “The blindsided who keep walking are the real heroes,” he writes.
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