

The Educator's Guide to Selecting a New Career

by R.J. Porter

What marketable assets do educators possess.... and what are they qualified for?

Today's world, where discipline and respect have been de-emphasized and budgetary restraints and shortfalls common, has had a far-reaching impact on individuals from all walks of life. Academia was not spared! We find more and more educators questioning whether their careers and long-term goals can ever be fulfilled within the academic arena. On another note, at the same time, many are seeking to find new challenges and supplement income in other part-time or full-time endeavors.

In this effort, there are two key problems educators often face. The first is that very few educators, not unlike the rest of the work-world, understand the new paradigm which controls the employment market, nor do they understand the necessity or how to market themselves in today's sophisticated, and very competitive, over-saturated job market. There are, however, avenues to which they can turn for assistance in solving this problem. The most fundamental concern which faces many educators, involves the direction they should take; basic questions as to the career positions for which they are best qualified, the types of industries most likely to be receptive to their approach, and finally, what financial gains might be awaiting them in the "for profit" sector.

The purpose of this guide is to introduce you to the thinking of professionals who are expert at marketing educators and others into new careers. They understand the marketable assets that individuals possess, many of which are discussed on the following pages.

Educators are excellent group communicators.

Educators are, first of all, people who have the confidence and fortitude to stand in front of a group and speak to them. Many people can't do that. They lack the ability and confidence to address even a receptive audience. More importantly, *educators are not merely narrators*; they know how to speak with authority, even in situations where their authority might be questioned. In many cases this makes them forceful communicators in-group situations.

Educators are sensitive listeners.

Listening is an extremely neglected skill, the most commonly overlooked by individuals from all walks of life. *But educators have been trained to be perceptive, to listen, to be sensitive* to the reactions of others. If the cliché is true that 90% of the problems of most businesses could be solved by the application of better communications, then the skills of educators should be in demand.

Educators are creative people.

Most professionals do not realize it but the attention of Decision-makers is swinging away from the "MBA" (who are in great supply) in favor of those with MFA's or a creative degree. Educators have learned to be creative. They must constantly find new ways to present material in order that it will be received as interesting and refreshing. They have to be quick at thinking on their feet.... because some audiences are always willing to trip them up if they spot inconsistencies. Creativity and quick thinking are assets most successful executives value.

Educators are sales people.

Selling is described by many different words... such as "convince," "Sales" and "Persistence" go hand in hand in our world of competitive commerce. Persistence is another quality that educators learn early in their profession. They recognize the importance of not giving up on people, of setting clear goals, and *convincing* the individual to utilize every ounce of their available energy in order to reach those goals. If all of the above sounds just like the criteria for a successful salesperson, that is only because this is another area where an educator's skills may help an organization.

Educators are trainers.

They have been taught to take a body of information, and design and implement procedures to make ensure that the individuals they instruct are able to absorb that information. In addition, they *train* people to think for themselves and to develop the skills necessary to set meaningful goals and to continue to grow and learn on their own.

Educators are motivators.

Many successful business leaders would have failed if left to learn and achieve on their own. How many times have we heard famous people give thanks to the Teachers who urged them on to success. *Here is where educators shine.* They instill a desire in their students to take an interest in a subject, and to work hard at mastering it.

When you consider that they don't always have willing audience.... and that the subject matter is not always of the greatest interest to the students.... their ability to motivate can be more fully appreciated.

Educators are administrators.

Have you ever known an educator who does not have *scheduling, planning and other* administrative skills? Just to be minimally effective requires careful planning of materials to be used, course content, pace of learning, the optimum mix of role play, testing, lectures, drill and many other factors. Sadly, like the vast majority of professional, educators do not "plan" their lives or careers.

Educators are good at time management.

Educators are people who have had to learn to control and use their own time wisely. The classroom may appear structured and easy for them, but everything they do in preparation, monitoring and creation of new approaches is performed in an unsupervised environment. They must establish the structure themselves and maintain the discipline required to keep at it.

Many educators function as project managers.

Some educators become good project managers. They are often assigned duties beyond the classroom, presiding over broad range of faculty and student activities. It is up to them to provide the organizational structure, the goals, the milestones for progress, and the final authority on matters which might be in dispute.

At the same time, they have to understand group dynamics, and feedback, so that they get the most out of the raw enthusiasm and talent that their students will bring to any activity. When you think about it, the truly amazing thing is that time after time.... and year after year.... educators turn in outstanding performances in a variety of roles they are asked to fill.

Educators are public relations people.

Public relations and community affairs represent still another hat worn by educators during the course of a year. Group and individual sessions with parents are just one part of that.

Very often some aspect of the community will be touched by an educator's activities, and tactful, carefully thought-out communications are a must. This has become especially critical in recent years, as secondary schools and colleges have been asked to take over roles which were formerly filled by families.

Educators are counselors.

They are expected to provide the psychological and emotional support that many of their students require. They often find they must also counsel parents, as well others.

Again, the qualities of a good listener, a person who gets behind the symptoms to the causes, and the supportive person who is not afraid to express his feelings openly.... all these come to the fore in the educator who functions as counselor.

Some educators are small business managers.

Many educators have started and run small businesses during the summer or part time throughout the year. It makes little difference whether it is a concession stand at a resort, a landscaping and house painting company, part ownership in a local restaurant, operation of a summer camp or basketball clinic, running tours for students or building home additions. In these businesses, they learn what it means to meet a payroll; what receivables and payables are all about.

They experience and understand the pressures involved in making a profit, the importance of systems to control operations and quality, the importance of selling, the need to make adjustments when things aren't going as planned, and all of the other aspects of running a business.

For all of the educators who have run a business, there are tens of thousands of very logical potential employers. They include every small and medium-sized business in the United States.

Some educators are good general managers

Some educators have the same skills as good managers. They can plan for, and oversee, an operation to make sure the job is done right, supervising and managing sometimes-reluctant "workers." this experience may prepare them to help plan the direction of the company; serve as an articulate spokesperson with customers and the local community; train and organize as required, recruit and motivate; and in general do any of the things that a good general manager of a successful small business has to do.

The title isn't that important. The fact is that most companies can use a few good managers who are able to handle different functions and who can cope with wide variety of problems as they occur. Educators, by the very nature of what they have been doing, are well equipped to do just that. Those who have run a business are even more suited for this type of assignment.

Some educators have specialized knowledge to offer.

Those who are mathematicians might find their skills in demand by insurance company, a computer manufacturer or a software firm.

Those who teach biology or physics might find application for their skill in research laboratories. If their skills lie in graphics or written communications, they might find that publishing, advertising and public relations firms provide challenging environments for the use of those skills.

Someone who teaches woodworking or metalworking understands the design and production requirements for a variety of products and, indeed, these educators have often been in short supply in recent years because of the demand from industry.

Types of jobs for educators

Whether educators have specialized talents or not, there are many types of jobs for which they are well suited. The more obvious areas in which educators may achieve success include:

Public Relations/Advertising	Corporate Trainer
Counselor	Publisher
Editor	Consultant
Recreation/Leisure	Sales Promotion
Customer Service	Technical Writer
Sales.. Goods or Services	Salesperson for Services
Copywriter	Service Operations
Information Management	Business Broke
Office Supervision	Health Care
Assistant to a Senior Executive	Corporate
Communications	
Administrative Management	Internal Production Coordinator
Human Resources	Meetings & Conventions Planner
Non-Profit Organizations	Community Relations
Director of Marketing Services (brochures, promotional material)	

Certainly this is not an all-inclusive list. There are hundreds of other specific jobs which educators have taken.... and which have challenged their abilities as well as to meet their financial needs.

In summary

What is most important when an educator looks for a new, challenging and financially rewarding career? The primary concern is to ensure you have the opportunity to choose from among all of the challenging positions for which your experience, talents and personal characteristics qualify you.

And, this is precisely where we can be of help. In fact, as the Southwest's most experienced firm, FAIRCHILD, BARCLAY & ASSOCIATES is more capable of guiding the career decisions of educators than anyone else in our field. Our professionals adhere to very high standards of excellence. Most importantly, we are expert at helping individuals who are motivated to make a successful career move.... and who wish to take the essential professional approach to marketing themselves.

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