Preparing college graduates for Work Success in a rapid changing modern-day business landscape.

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The goal of my thesis is to develop a hypothetical course curriculum that would serve as a capstone for students in business college.
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Executive Summary

The goal of this thesis is to provide a well-developed and hypothetical course curriculum overview that could serve as a course for students in business school.

The course itself will contain three core phases:

1. **Getting a job** – How to get a job, more specifically covering the complexity in navigating through the process of attaining a job after college. Some of the topics will be getting hired, the interview process, job hunting, wage negotiation and its importance, setting up goals, and selecting a career path. (Readings: *What Color is your Parachute*)

2. **Your Hired** – Once a graduate is hired, and successfully has attained a job, what are the next actions needed to help them thrive? Graduates now need the skills to put career plans into action, as well as the ability to understand and examine unhealthy and dysfunctional companies and systems. This will be the largest phase of the course. The ending goal of this phase is to help students prepare for the workplace and help them understand some of the complexities they will undoubtedly face. (Readings: *The Rules of Work*; *The Ten Commandments for Business Failure*; *Meltdown Why our Systems Fail and What We Can Do About It*)

3. **How to Quit (with forward progress in mind)** – recognizing when it is time to move on. How to quit or leave a job for another. This is something that everyone will have to do at one point or another in their career. The objective of this will be helping students understand the process of leaving one job for another. (Readings: *How to Quit Your Job The Right Way*)

This thesis provides a developed curriculum analysis on objectives and rationale for including them. This includes topics of content covered, reading material, overarching objectives, and propose elements for testing and assignments. This thesis is also paired with a presentation to demonstrate the start to finish detailing of the course and covers rationale for stating objectives and highlights the importance of studying and examining unhealthy dysfunctional companies and systems. This project also comes with leave behind material, which consists of book reviews on text to be used in the course.
Introduction

Every year, thousands of college business students take a brisk walk across a small stage to accept their hard-earned business degrees. They excitedly shake hands and retreat from the stage with their diplomas held tightly in their hands. With their hard-earned goal finally achieved, many of the new graduates clutch their diplomas with a quiet ferocity, as though at any moment it could be discovered that they are undeserving, and their prestigious accomplishment could be taken from them. This moment of anxiety quickly subsides as a new, more worrisome realization creeps in. Now what do they do? Even if the hardworking students are fortunate enough to have a job already lined up, a paralysis of insecurity and fear still presides as they recognize that the next chapter in their lives is about to begin. A large number of students graduating today are preparing themselves to enter the workforce. Their education has prepared them. Their years in college as business school students have acclimated them to the business landscape. They are armed with the skills and knowledge to work in a healthy, properly functioning, company – one void of instability, dysfunction, and entangled complexities.

Unfortunately, in today’s society, many companies at one point or another find themselves in exactly those conditions. College does a great job preparing students for what to do in healthy companies, but when it comes to recognizing and correcting dysfunctional systems and behaviors, many institutions fall short. More alarming yet, a staggering “43 percent of U.S. college and university graduates first jobs [out of college] did not require a bachelor’s degree.” Almost half of all graduates are finding themselves underemployed (Musto, 2018). This trend is alarming to both the recent graduates, and the institutions that have worked so hard to prepare them for the workforce.
This trend is leading to a large portion of recent graduates wondering if the accumulated debt and time spent is worth it.

This is why a course that explores the modern business landscape, with an emphasis on examining unhealthy, dysfunctional companies and systems would help prepare graduates to better recognize and understand the challenges of the road ahead. This understanding is essential. This in its own, however, is not enough. Students need to be better prepared to actively seek out and procure the jobs they want, one that allows them to utilize their newfound degree. Campuses across the nation are placing added effort in addressing this staggering level of underemployment among their recent graduates. This is why a course that focuses on the transition phase from business students to business leaders and workers is so crucial. Such a course would not simply teach them how to get a career, but how to excel within the given career. This will involve skills that will be implemented on a daily basis. Skills that could better prepare graduates to not only help promote changes in corporate culture, but also to implement policy changes that can correct internal derailments.

Business graduates who understand the consequences of inaction and dysfunction will be better equipped to understand and react to the actions and choices of the companies they encounter. With hours of praxis and hard work, graduates will be capable of not just assimilating into the business landscape, but also facilitating change. With the understanding of working in both healthy and unhealthy companies, college graduates will be better prepared for the many challenges that lie ahead in their professional careers. However, graduates still need to be better equipped with essential tools that have typically been left out of curriculums. One such skill that is vital to the success of future graduates and that is not taught to them, but should be, is how to quit a job. This seems
counter intuitive at first glance. Colleges are in the business of preparing students to gain employment, not leave it. This is true, but only superficially. College is a time for students to gain the fundamental base of understanding in their desired major to use in their career to come. The truth, however, is that new graduates will likely change jobs and even career paths a staggering amount of times (Doyle, 2018). So why are students not being trained how to strategically leave one job for the next? Quitting a job is as fundamental as being hired, and yet the stigmatism that is associated with quitting a job has made it unworthy of being taught. Most people intuitively know that there is a right way and a wrong way to quit, and yet this differentiation is left up to the individual to discover on their own and in due time.

Purpose:

*Business school students are in need of a course that teaches them in a direct and skillful way how to obtain a job worthy of their hard work and dedication, and that makes them aware of the risks that they subject themselves to by not understanding how to navigate the job searching and selection process. Business school students should recognize the process, the methods, and the approaches so as to not find themselves underemployed, undervalued, and underachieved.*

*These same students should also know how to work in the modern-day business landscape. They need more knowledge around day to day unspoken expectations that will lead them to success; they need more knowledge in how to operate in a job setting that has instability, dysfunction, and complexity; they need more knowledge in how to see eminent signs of failure, how to react to their own failures, and how to disentangle the complexities that lead to failure.*

*Finally, business school students need to know when and how to quit or move on. This skill on its own is an example of the need to better prepare college graduates for work*
success. Students that graduate with the fundamentals of their individual major, paired with the fundamentals of career skills will find themselves better equipped for work success. These graduates will be capable of not merely assimilating into the business landscape, but instead outfitted with the means to help reshape the business landscape.

This course is laid out in three core phases; each phase builds upon the next and is equally important for business school students. The culmination of these phases will serve to better prepare students to enter into the workforce. These graduates will be more able to seek out and gain employment at the job of their choosing, and this job will be more in line with their degree and career goals. In addition to securing employment, they will be better prepared to operate and function at a higher level than their coworkers and peers. Finally, they will be better equipped with the tools such as critical thinking, attention to detail, and ownership skills that give them control of their future.

Curriculum Overview

Course Definition

This course is designed specifically for college business school students but could be equally useful for other majors with slight alterations making the course more specific to the given majors. This course, however, will be most relatable to business school students that are entering into the process of job seeking. This course will be heavily based on readings that will take place both inside and outside of the classroom. There will be a substantial amount of reading material from five required texts, related business articles, and journals. This theoretical course is centered around reading. In today’s business landscape, it is well-known that industry leaders such as CEOs are weighty readers. The amount of readings will help students with time management skills and
increase their level of reading comprehension as it pertains to business. This skill and subsequent technique will better prepare them for the extensive reading that business leaders do throughout their careers.

If students take away just one think from this course, it will be the recognition that they as individuals have the power to make what they want out of life. They get to pick where they work upon graduation, they get to carve out their role within the company they work for, and they get to decide whether it is enough or if they want more. The ability to search out the tools and resources that will enable them to control their own life is what a college education is all about. College is a tool that prepares students for the workforce, but learning is the driver that takes them where they want to go.

Students that successfully take and pass this course will be better prepared than their peers because they will be able to recount what they have learned for years to come. At the conclusion of the course, business school students will remember and be able to seek out reference tools such as the reference book *What Color is Your Parachute?* They will use this tool to help them be proactive jobseekers and will remember for years to come the importance of recognizing elements that lead to failure. Students will also recognize the importance of failure, and how to own their failures and make the most of them by “failing forward.” Students who successfully pass this class will be able to make their own quit plan, a plan that strategically enables them to quit and leave a job for another opportunity. They will be able to quit with purposeful intent and leave in a way that deliberately avoids losing or missing out in future opportunities.
Course Content

Phase 1 – Getting a Job

Not long ago, the United States workforce resided predominantly as manufacturing laborers. The jobs were in producing goods, such as trains, planes, and automobiles. This manufacturing boom led to an abundance of jobs, many of which did not require a college degree. The economy was driven by these manufacturing jobs, and if job seekers had a high school diploma and were willing to move near a plant, they could easily secure a job. These jobs were good paying, and in order to reduce turnover, employers offered great incentives. They often offered pensions, health insurance, and most importantly, a chance to work their way into the middle class. This time was also characterized by employees that felt a high level of loyalty to the firms they worked for. During this time, whole towns sprouted up around the plants, and the owners often prided themselves in helping to create a community around their plants that they too often were a part of.

Flashforward to the present and the landscape has changed considerably. Many of the plants and factories have uprooted and abandoned the original communities in an attempt to either increase profitability, or in many cases to maintain any sort of profitability. Even the most loyal of companies have downsized their existing infrastructure, maintaining only a shadow of their former might, while choosing instead to build new plants and factories where labor is cheapest. This change has completely altered the way job seekers treat and feel about gaining employment. For the eldest generations, this has left a landscape that is unrecognizable, but for the young it has left a landscape that is all too familiar. These changes should come as no surprise, so it should be equally unsurprising that the way in which employment is secured is different as well. The idea that people
would have to interview only a few times to secure long lasting employment, and similarly only work in a few jobs until retirement is now very much a thing of the past.

Today it is estimated that the average American can expect to change jobs upward of a dozen times, with an average tenure of 4.2 years (Doyle, 2018). This constant pivoting being done by today’s workforce has made job hunting skills and interviewing abilities critical to long term success. Universities throughout the world have recognized this, and many have instituted career centers for students to take advantage of. These institutions are great, and jobseekers should take advantage of them. This class, however, is designed to bring techniques and skills that can be gained from them right into the classroom. The way it is set up now, students are expected to do much of this on their own. This course would integrate the actual practice of interviewing and preparing for an interview right into the course. Students would be expected to participate in mock interviews, or better yet, real interviews as part of the class requirements. They will have a professor there to help them prepare, help them learn, and in time help them master the techniques required to gain employment.

In phase one, students would be expected to read What color is your Parachute? This book would be divided into manageable sections for them to consume throughout the first part of the semester. It will be treated like a standard course text book, and have sections strategically assigned to them, that are paired with in class activities. These activities include students taking the time to complete the self-inventory which is covered in chapters 4 and 5. Students will be expected to complete the Flower Exercise in chapter 5 and complete the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator test (MBTI). This portion of the class will allow them to start to figure out and determine more precisely what their ideal job will be.
Next, students will update their resumes. All students will be required to create three resumes. The first one will be the hard copy resume, the second a Google resume, and the third will be a LinkedIn profile. If they already have created these three, they will then be required to update them, removing anything that may detract or “contradict the impression you [they] would like to make” (Bolles R. N., 2019). This process should take place at the same time students start to actively job search.

After students have taken the time to update their resumes and done a self-inventory, they will use their personal parameters to search for the job that they want. Students will start their job search. For this class to be most effective, they will be required to find real jobs that they can apply to work at. All students will be strongly encouraged to hunt for real employment opportunities at companies they genuinely would like to work at.

Students will then apply to any and all jobs that they would like to. Undoubtedly, some students may resist this opportunity or have other reasons for not wanting to participate in applying to actual jobs. In some cases, students’ unwillingness to participate may be founded on genuine and real worries. One example may be students already have a job that they are working and would like to turn into their career. For these students, they should think of the application process as practice, and be reminded that even if a company shows interest in them, they still get to make the final call on accepting any job offers. If they still do not wish to apply to real jobs, then the professor will act as the company hiring manager for a firm they would like to apply. Students that take this route will still have to research companies and will be required to do all the same steps, only they will not actually apply to any jobs. They will still need to learn how to be effective at job hunting, interviewing, and negotiating.
The next part of the class will be dedicated to interviewing. This will involve educating students on the different interviewing techniques, questions types, and settings. Students will need to be prepped on proper interviewing etiquette, and structural processes and approaches. Some examples include multi-phase interviewing, face to face interviewing, teleconference interviewing, and committee interviewing. Students will also need to study and know the varying approaches of questioning such as the behavioral approach, situational approach, and group approach. After studying and preparing, all students should participate in mock interviews. All students will be required to be interviewed. Students should participate in at least one mock phone interview. The professor can schedule call times with students during office hours, or during a scheduled time. The professor can host the interview, or an external company can be utilized, or even potentially use HR students to host supervised phone interviews. Next, the professor should utilize a career center to help put together a real interviewing committee. If at all possible, this committee should consist of real hiring managers from real firms. This will involve reaching out to companies to see if they would like to host real interviews with students. A great place to start would be the career fairs. Great companies are always in need of great employees, and companies may decide to send someone to participate so they can offer to hire students, or more likely invite them to do an interview with their company. It should be the goal of the instructor to have committee members that are genuinely interested in hiring students. This course should offer students the ability to be interviewed by different committees on at least two occasions. This will allow them to show improvement. The professor should expect to assign a grade for each of the interviews.

The last segment of phase one is preparing students for negotiating. More specifically, negotiating starting salaries and raises throughout their career. The numbers are quite alarming when
it comes to wage negotiating. A staggering 68% of women and 52% of men do not negotiate their initial pay offering (Sankar, 2017). The costs of failing to negotiate starting wages often means forgoing more than expected. For example, a study done by George Mason University discovered that an employee who failed to negotiate just a $5,000 bump in starting salary moving from $50,000 to $55,000 actually gives up $634,198 in forgone wages with a yearly pay raise of 5% factored in over a 40-year career span (Marks & Harold, 2011). There are many reasons that have been speculated for why so many leave this large sum off the table. One is the lack in understanding of the true cost to the prospective jobseeker. Another proposed reason is that jobseekers do not want to jeopardize the chances of being hired. The fear of losing the opportunity to gain employment outweighs that of the pay bump (Marks & Harold, 2011).

There are many other consequences now being attributed to the failure to negotiate. The pay gap between genders cannot be completely explained by failure to negotiate, but it is a contributing factor nonetheless. Equally important, even if all women were to successfully negotiate initial offerings, this would not be enough to end pay discrimination, but it would narrow the gap significantly. Coaching future graduates to negotiate wages and raises will be a fundamental part of this course. The instructor will engage students in mock negotiations with the expectation that all students will engage in negotiating pay. The instructor can select to engage the students in negotiation or select to use an outside source. Students will be expected to engage in mock wage negotiations with the understanding they will receive a grade paired with feedback on their implementation of techniques learned in the classroom.

Ideally students will be working on gaining real employment throughout this course. For this reason, this class should be completed in their final year. Instructors will need to reinforce the
concept of this being an immersive learning opportunity, in which the instructor is coaching, and assisting students in real-time with job attainment. Instructors should be passionate about helping students address individual and unique situations as they occur during the semester. Individual students that gain employment throughout the semester that utilizes their degree should be recognized and celebrated as often as possible. These students should be encouraged to offer, and share gained insight on their experiences. The more this class is able to feel like a cohort vested in the same underlying mission of gaining the best employment opportunity the better. Students should be encouraged to help each other including celebrating their success. Phase one instruction should last the entire semester, with a plan to help support students that do not gain employment during the semester transition to a career center.

**At the completion of phase one, students will be able to identify and explain at least 3 different strategic steps to take for acquiring the job they want to have.**

*Phase 2 – Working in the Modern-Day Business Landscape*

The second phase of this course is focused on what to do after gaining employment. Students at this point know a substantial amount about their given major, but how much do they understand about the day to day aspects of what is to come. Although ever job is idiosyncratic, they all will likely share many underlying similarities. The goal of Phase 2 is to prepare students for the unknowns. Some of these unknowns they will inevitably have to confront are failure, the unspoken rules of work, and working with complexity. In this portion of the course students will read three books, along with articles, journals, and in class reading materials.
For addressing the subject of confronting failure, they will read *The Ten Commandments for Business Failure*. This book is authored by Donald R. Keough and is uniquely suited for helping students or any aspiring leader understand how to fail. This book is split up into ten chapters plus one, all addressing ways that leadership steers itself into failure. Keough the former president of the Coca-Cola Company is a well-respected industry leader who uses real examples from his personal experiences, as well as observations that he has made to help readers understand how companies succumb to failure. *The Ten Commandments for Business Failure* does a great job establishing a foundation of knowledge on the topic of failure. Students will become more attune to spotting indicators and leadership styles that can inhibit a company and make it susceptible to failure from a leadership standpoint.

Failure has become a dirty word, and many people will choose mediocrity before failure. Failure is not always bad. Skillful leaders and employees recognize failure for what it is, a chance to grow and learn. Sometimes failure is needed and even a welcome experience. A lecture period should be spent on discussing the positives benefits of failure, and strategic methods of turning failure into success. A great book that is not included but an option is *Failing Forward – Turning Mistakes into Stepping Stones* by John Maxwell. Excerpts from this book can be used to help students understand the relationship between success and failure, and how it is nearly impossible to recognize success, without first becoming intimately acquainted with failure. IBM Thomas Watson Sr. is quoted for saying, “The fastest way to succeed is to double your failure rate.” (Feller, 2016) Students should recognize the symbiotic relationship of failure and success.

Instruction for this portion of the class should be done with in class lecture with excerpts pulled from *Failing Forward* assigned to the students to read. Also having students write a short
paper on a time when they failed, or a time when failure was the cause of a discovery, innovation, or business breakthrough will help to ensure understanding. It is important to reshape the way students perceive failure, so that they are more able to identify, react, and redirect failure in the future.

Following the discussion of failure students will then start to consider the day to day roles and challenges of work. Class participants will start to consider the rules both spoken and unspoken of a particular business culture. The written rules will be easy to find and adhere to, but the unspoken rules of work may prove difficult for those that are unaware. For this reason, students will take the time to discuss unspoken rules for both society as a whole, and those found within the business landscape.

There are many unspoken rules for any given job, as a new employee it is generally left up to them to absorb and understand these rules. These rules can be things like not showing up to work within a given window so as not to be considered late. Understanding Hierarchical structures of the work place, or more importantly how to ascend the command structure. The Rules of Work does a good job breaking down 100 rules of work that every aspiring employee should keep in mind. This book is a very non-traditional book written by pen author Richard Templar. This book is one of many books by the same author that is designed as a quick reference guide, with rules being identified and explained within two pages. In total there are 100 rules that aspiring leaders should utilize to help themselves become a recognized and valuable part of a working community. Although some of the rules are written more in jest, there still are many real truths to what the author is trying to get across to the reader. These rules give a basic outline on what good employees are doing to set themselves apart from the rest.
The Rules Of Work should be read by the students and segments of it can be put into action and implemented throughout the semester. It is important to create an open dialogue with students and discuss these rules openly. Students should be able to question some of the rules for their continued validity, while understanding the genuine importance of other rules. All students should engage in regular conversations about the rules they feel are most important, as well as those that they may disagree with.

The final part of phase two is helping students understand strategic means to disentangling complexity. Future graduates need to be prepared and recognize that they will often find themselves confronted by complexity. A good leader, and successful business person should be prepared to deal with complex situations. The better they are able to address complexity, and navigate through to levels of understanding and familiarity, the more valuable they will be to the organization they are a part of. Critical thinking skills are essential trait of great leadership. Students should recognize that one of the most important attributes of a manager is their ability to identify problems quickly and effectively. Identifying the problem though is not enough. Leaders should also be prepared to solve the problem. In the business landscape inaction is expensive and damaging to a company. A great book that addresses modern-day complexity is Meltdown – Why Our Systems Fail and What We Can Do About It. This book is a fascinating read that uses real world examples and walks the reader through the process of recognizing underlying factors that lead to system failures.

Class time should be used to discuss the book. This book should be assigned in segments to help students ensure that they are reading and consuming the material at a sufficient pace. The instructor should use current events going on in real time to help students understand topics such as Perrow’s theory on tight coupling and complexity. This will allow students to see and understand
the nature of systems failures, and how to better understand the relationships between the two.

While this book could not possibly explain every exacting step that leads to a systems meltdown, it does do a phenomenal job tracing the pathway to the root cause of several modern-day catastrophes, and near catastrophes. To ensure students understanding, a current event paper should be submitted relating the reading to a real-world example that is taking place at the time they are taking the course. Students should find an example of tight coupling to an overly complex system and try to analyze the real-world example using Perrows theories and the book to better explain the situation. The goal of this assignment should be to help students become proactive in the awareness of potential systems failures. Students should discuss steps that could or should have been taken to avoid system failure.

The topic of complexity and systems failures is inherently difficult to teach. The depth of understanding and relatability to material will be difficult for the instructor to get across. Extra time and in class activities should be focused at helping students enter into a strategic process and rational for disentangling complex situations. It is important to stress to students that it is not uncommon for managers and business leaders to be confronted with material outside of their initial scope of understanding. What makes leaders invaluable is their ability to recognize this and use their resources to navigate the unknowns.

At the completion of phase two, students will be able to identify and define ways to navigate through challenges of a complex nature in both the firm they work, and the rapidly shifting business landscape.
Phase 3 – Knowing When and How to Quit or Move On

The ability to become a productive and vibrant part of a company is essential to new graduates. Their ability to integrate into the workforce is crucial to their long-term success. For some this may come easy, while others will likely struggle during this transition. The shift from an educational system that supports those, even when they make mistakes, to the workforce where mistakes are directly translated to dollars lost means that new hires are often subjected to high rates of turnover. This is often seen in the form of layoffs, firings, or underemployment. This may be one reason why focusing on training students how to exit a job has been left out of the curriculum.

Learning how to quit a job is being left up to the graduate to figure out on their own. In a 2018 study, Deloitte found that a staggering 43% of Millennials, and 61% of Gen Z surveyed planned on leaving their current job within two years (Deloitte, 2018). This study indicates that many recent graduates are unhappy with their current job and are already considering leaving. This alone seems be a strong indicator on the importance of educating students on how to leave a job. This however is not the only one. As stated earlier, the average tenure in the workforce has dropped down to just 4.2 years and graduates can expect to hold more than a dozen different jobs in their lifetime (Doyle, 2018). Knowing this, why then are universities and places of higher education not teaching students how to leave one job for the next?

Perhaps this skill is not being taught, because of the lack of foundational knowledge and research. Similar to failure, the words “I quit,” are so stigmatized that it is deemed unworthy of teaching. This could not be further from the truth, students need to be prepared to quit a job, and in a business landscape that is more connected than ever, the way in which a person quits a job can have disastrous results.
For this phase of the course students will read *How To Quit Your Job The Right Way – A 5 Step Plan to Ditching Your Day Job*. This book was selected because it lays out a strategic plan for how to actually leave one job for the next. Unfortunately, there are few books that help to layout a set of strategic steps, rather many of the books that cover how to quit a job take the shape of a self-help book. For this course it is important that students recognize the shortage of information. No book can cover every situation, but of the books available at this time, this book sets itself apart. Students will be expected to read this book while keeping in mind that this book is designed for consumption by an individual who is at a point in their life where they are considering leaving their current employer.

This book as paired with instruction will do a great job in rounding off the course. At this point students have learned how to gain meaningful employment at a company where they can utilize their degree; They have been armed with the critical thinking skills, and soft skills required to excel in the company of their choosing; They have learned about failure and complexity; and now they are learning how to remain in control of their career pathway by being shown a strategic way to quit. The steps in the book make sense, but they are in no way the only way to leave a job. It is important that the instructor does their best to fill the gaps. Instruction during this phase of the class should include how to write a letter of resignation, how to react to being fired or let go, and what to do if they are a part of a layoff. These situations are also likely ways in which students will leave a job, and students need to understand that the way they act during these situations is equally important.

The act of quitting a job in many ways is very similar to job seeking, both involve devising a plan for obtaining a new job, and both are centered around a great deal of hard work. The difficulty
of securing a new job while still employed however may compound the level of difficulty. In the book, *How To Quit Your Job The Right Way* a clear path is setup. This path includes another round of self-inventory. It is important for someone preparing to quit to have an understanding of the reasons for them wanting to leave. There can be a whole host of reasons all of which will be unique to the individual working their way through the process. Navigating through the rationale will be difficult to instruct, but some ideas are presented in the book. Students should be provided with real world examples and even offered the chance to share their own experiences. If the course follows the intended progression, there may even be students in the class that will need to quit their current job for one that they have interviewed for during the class. Instructors should be aware of this and serve these students as a coach there to help them navigate the process.

Leaving a job is difficult, but all students will likely end up leaving many jobs throughout their time in the labor force. Phase three is centered around giving them the tools and understanding of how to proactively go about deciding to quit. This phase will give students the ability to take charge of their careers. This will also help students familiarize themselves with methods of determining if they really should quit, or if there are better alternatives to quitting. Quitting a job requires a great deal of financial preparedness and the level of preparation done prior to leaving a job can help ensure students avoid significant financial losses. Phase 3 will help students analyze quitting a job while financial and career risks are low. A low risk environment is not typical of quitting a job, and students should take the chance to analyze and create a strategic plan, knowing that this hypothetical situation will be one that they will face throughout their time in the workforce.

*At the completion of phase three, students will be able to proactively quit or leave a job “on the up,” by implementing a deliberate quit plan that they design.*
Conclusion

Students who successfully pass this course will be better prepared to make the transition from college student to young business professionals. The first phase of this course allows students to become acclimated to the process of job acquisition. Starting from the self-inventory of what exactly they would like the beginning of their careers to look like. These students will be prepared to walk into an interview armed with the skills needed to get the job of their choosing. These same students will set themselves apart with their familiarity of the process. At this point they will be familiar with the line of questioning as well as proven interviewing techniques that allow them to be better prepared and more able to present themselves confidently as they articulate their individual abilities and skills obtained in college. Passing students will be able to obtain a job worthy of their hard work and dedication and most importantly a job that utilizes their hard-earned degree. Those students that utilize this class to help them apply and actively job-hunt will feel a sense of relief especially if they secure employment prior to graduation.

Once students are gainfully employed, they will possess the added skill of knowing not merely how to assimilate into the business culture, but instead how to lead. They will have experience analyzing and utilizing critical thinking skills that set them apart from their peers. Students who pass this course will be able to lead and operate in a job that exists outside of a vacuum. These graduates can hold jobs that will present them with instability, dysfunction, and complexity. The knowledge gained from this course will prepare them to recognize signs of failure and how to react. Successful completion of this class will mean that students understand failure differently and have a more resilient view of what it means to fail. These students will not freeze with
the paralysis of inaction, but rather proactively disentangle the complexities that uniquely bind to failures.

Passing students will also recognize that they are equipped with the tools and abilities not often taught to young aspiring professionals. These tools will put them more in control of their own career pathway. Students will have the ability to quit or move on from one opportunity to the next. They will know how to leave a job by their own choosing, or even how to react to a sudden job loss. Unlike many other graduates, they will own the skills needed to help them come out ahead as they remain confident in their ability to control their fate and put their capabilities to work by seeking out and securing jobs of their choosing.

It is clear that universities need to do more to help the startling 43 percent of recent US college graduates whose first job out of college did not require them to have a degree (Musto, 2018). This number reflects the strong need for universities to focus on helping students during their transition. Students that are not able to utilize their degrees, and as a result make less than their peers are subjected to significant amount of wage loss over the span of their careers. This issue is compounded further for the 70 percent of college graduates who now graduate with significant debt (Hess, 2018). The recent Class of 2017 graduates have on average a student loan debt of $39,400 (Kantrowitz, 2018). Students that attend a four-year university with the hope of reaching the financial status of the middle class, are quickly discovering the edge that college use to provide is disappearing. Nearly a third of the population who achieve a four-year degree are quickly seeing the economic advantages dissolve as today’s bachelor’s degree is carrying less economic advantage than that of a high school diploma for previous generations (Vedder & Strehle, 2017).
Universities that are paying close attention are now focusing on helping students with job placement. The ability for a university to help students transition into the workforce will likely carry significant economic impact on the institutions as well. Not just on admission levels, but on the ability of future graduates to give back to their alma mater as well. Universities that are willing to integrate courses like this one into their curriculum will be helping their graduates protect their earning potential as well as better preparing their alumni to realize the economic value of their individual degrees. Equally as important, graduates will come from a university that recognizes the importance of better preparing students. The integration of the career finding skills, paired with the comprehension of navigating complexities of failure will mean that graduates will be better suited for work success in a rapid changing modern-day business landscape.

Graduates and future graduates deserve to be given the tools to help them achieve. Likewise, they deserve to have their investment in higher education protected. Universities need to continue focusing on helping students make the transition from successful college students to successful business leaders. College students that pass this course will be invaluable to the companies that they are a part of. Employers will feel confident that they are their because they want to be. These students will be able to help mold the future business landscape, as they become the face of companies wanting to succeed in a turbulent and everchanging world.
What Color is Your Parachute? 2019

What Color is Your Parachute is a designed manual or notification book that is intended to help those who are currently on the hunt for employment. This book is a how to guide book that helps jobhunters organize their process of gaining employment. First published in 1970 by author Richard Nelson Bolles this book has remained relevant, by undergoing annual updates and publications. Currently in its 48th year of publication, this book has undergone many revisions as the process and methodology of job seeking has changed dramatically.

Richard Nelson Bolles set out to help layout in a very detailed and concise way the step by step process of attaining a job. Bolles attended Massachusetts Institute of Technology studying to be an engineer before later transferring to Harvard University and graduating with a bachelor’s degree in Physics (Wikipedia Contributors, 2017). He became a well-known author when his book became a New York Times Best Seller in 1979 and would go onto sell more then 10 million copies and be a NYT Best Seller for more than a decade. Richard Nelson Bolles would later go on to become known as the Father of modern-day career counseling, and The Library of Congress named his book “one of the 25 books that have shaped readers lives.” (Bolles R. N., 2014)
This book was groundbreaking in its own right when it was first introduced. Since then it is become a key resource to all those that find themselves in need of employment. What Color Is Your Parachute undergoes constant updating and revisions as the employment landscape has changed over time. After Richards death in 2017, his son Mark has picked up where he left off, as well as many coauthors and contributors to date that submit regular revisions, corrections, additions, and suggestions (Wikipedia Contributors, 2017). For all of these reasons this how-to manual has remained relevant and a tool to be used by those who set out on their journey of job selection.

Richard Bolles first wrote in an earlier issue that “the whole process of the job hunt in this country is Neanderthal.” (Korkki, 2014) His goal was to layout a practical guide to help people navigate through this world of ambiguous reasoning. It helps the reader address the landscape. The latest edition is arranged as follows:

Chapter 1 – It’s a Whole New World for Job-Hunters
Chapter 2 – There Are Over Ten Million Vacancies Available Each Month
Chapter 3 – The Best and Worst Ways to Look for Jobs
Chapter 4 – Self-Inventory, Part 1
Chapter 5 – Self-Inventory, Part 2
Chapter 6 – You Get to Choose Where You Work
Chapter 7 – Google Is Your New Resume
Chapter 8 – Sixteen Tips About Interviewing for a Job
Chapter 9 – The Six Secrets of Salary Negotiation
Chapter 10 – How to Deal with Any Handicaps You Have
Chapter 11 – The Five Ways to Choose/Change Careers
Chapter 12 – How to Start Your Own Business
The Orange Pages – Resource pages

(Bolles R. N., 2019)

Each chapter is to the point, and very easy to read and take in. Perhaps the most impressive characteristic of this book are the pictures, diagrams, and tools that it incorporates in order to better help the reader understand just what they are looking for. The tools help the readers explore their
own unique desires, characteristics, and abilities. The authors viewpoint is very much centered around getting the reader to understand what they want to get out of a new job, and then helping to guide them through this arduous process.

This layout and design of the book shows that it is very much intended for those who are not only serious about finding a new job, but also committed to finding out more about themselves along the way. The insights gained from these relatively small exercises help job seekers understand themselves and their individuality as they explore the process of job attainment.

(Templar, 2003)

*The Rules Of Work*

Richard Templars book *The Rules Of Work* is a great book to use as a reference and is a quick read. The book attempts to put into terms the general unspoken rules of work. It tackles a wide array of topics and is very blunt and to the point. Ideally this would be a book that is read before entering the work place, and then kept at hand to reference. For this book, imagine a life coach, personal mentor, and business boxing ring side coach all rolled into one.

Richard Templar is the pen name of a British author who writes a wide collection of self-development books. Although the real author is unknown, it has not stopped the collection of books from gaining wide popularity especially among young business people.
The book does a great job covering a wide array of topics while being a fast and enjoyable read. Although some of the rules are not for everyone and they may seem a little outdated at points. Nonetheless the underlying messages are very useful. The messages center around making sure that employees do not grow stagnant at work, and instead are always progressing forward.

The viewpoint of the author is that people who want to be successful need to steer clear of some of these lifecycle traps that many people find themselves falling into at work. *The Rules Of Work*, and all of the Rules books authored by Richard Templar are broken up into bite size two-page explanations of a given rule. Every book is comprised of 100 rules. These rules aim to help guide the reader. In *The Rules Of Work* Templar uses 10 main Rules broken down as follows:

Rule 1: Walk your talk  
Rule 2: Know that you’re being judged at all times  
Rule 3: Have a plan  
Rule 4: If you can’t say anything nice – shut up  
Rule 5: Look after yourself  
Rule 6: Blend in  
Rule 7: Act one step ahead  
Rule 8: Cultivate diplomacy  
Rule 9: Know the system – and milk it  
Rule 10: Handle the opposition  

(Templar, 2003)

Each of these rules has 10 subsequent rules that serve to guide and explain the purpose of the rule. By breaking the book up in this fashion it makes for a fast read, and a quick reference guide that can be used in the future. Although some of the subset rules may seem to stand on shaky ground the overarching message of the main rule is never the less important to keep in mind.

The intended audience of the book is someone who is good at their work but knows that they can be better. This is a sarcastic funny book that helps to point leaders down a path to success. Like most books, there are areas where the rules may be somewhat outdated. Like most rules there
are often exceptions that can be found, but as the sum of its total this a great book for young workers to take in especially before they begin the first day in a new job.

(Keough, 2008)

_The Ten Commandments for Business Failure_

Donald R Keough was asked one day if he would consider giving a presentation to leaders of industry at a summit. He was asked specifically to explain to business executives how to be successful. He agreed, but quickly realized that he did not have the skills nor ability to tell anyone how to be successful. So rather than standup at the podium and attempt to tell all of these eager executives how to be successful he went about it in a different way. The speech he gave has become world famous and was titled the Ten Commandments of Business failure. Keough recognized that he was only truly capable of telling his audience how to fail. He believed that if they recognized and better understood the steps to failure, they could potentially avoid these mishaps that keep people from recognizing success.

Donald R Keough the former President and COO for Coca-Cola is widely credited for being one of the most powerful voices in the business landscape. Although he never became CEO, this fact did not keep him from being a powerful influencer. Donald Keogh was present at one of Coca-Colas biggest blunders, when the flagship soda company decided to change their coveted recipe and re-brand their new product “New Coke.” This blunder was noted by Warren Buffet as one of the worst
blunders in marketing history (Keough, 2008). The backlash from consumers and investors alike was so astounding that it very nearly ended Coca-Cola. Keough is credited with saving the company, by listening to the consumers. He very famously approached the CEO at the time and helped to convince him that they should abandoned New Coke and give the people what they wanted. The result was abandoning “New Coke,” and bringing back the old recipe known today as Coca-Cola Classic. This failure, and subsequent rebranding saved the company.

Keough uses his insights that he has gained over the years to masterfully craft a book which is centered around the speech he gave. It lays out what he believes are the quickest ways for a company to fail. He uses personal experiences, as well as observations that he has made to articulate how to go about failing. The overall book is split up into 11 commandment chapters as follows:

**Commandment One:** Quit Taking Risks  
**Commandment Two:** Be Inflexible  
**Commandment Three:** Isolate Yourself  
**Commandment Four:** Assume Infallibility  
**Commandment Five:** Play the Game Close to the Foul Line  
**Commandment Six:** Don’t Take Time to Think  
**Commandment Seven:** Put All Your Faith in Experts and Outside Consultants  
**Commandment Eight:** Love Your Bureaucracy  
**Commandment Nine:** Send Mixed Messages  
**Commandment Ten:** Be Afraid of the Future  
**Commandment Eleven:** Lose Your Passion for Work – for Life  

(Keough, 2008)

Every Chapter is skillfully crafted so as to better lend to the rationale for including it as a commandment. Keough uses personal stories as well as real world examples that show why following a commandment is almost certainly guaranteed to result in failure. This captivating method makes the reader want to keep reading and absorb all the insight that Keough has to offer. His ability to explain to his readers, coupled with his unique career experiences garners him a great amount of
respect as he skillfully lays out the importance of avoiding these dysfunctional behaviors. The proactive avoidance of his commandments is critical to the success of not just a company, but its employees as well. Failure to recognize and acknowledge his very direct and informative warnings will almost certainly result in catastrophe.

Keough’s layout is unique in that he was originally tasked with helping articulate how to be successful. The end result is a rather exceptional viewpoint from the author, as he tactfully guides his readers understanding, and shows them why these commandments are bad ideas. It is clear that his experiences have equipped him with the ability to give insight and share experiences that he has seen result in critical setbacks, and even collapse of once lucrative and established companies. This is why this book is for all those who want to know how to fail, so that they can learn from the mistakes of others, as they diligently pursue their own path to success.

(Clearfield & Tilcsiiik, 2018)

*MELTDOWN – Why Our Systems Fail and What We Can Do About It*

*Meltdown* is a book that takes a look at failure of modern-day systems. In a day and age where many systems have become layered with complexities until they eventually succumb to failure. They take a look at the degree of “coupling,” that our systems have inherited as new systems are constantly being expanded, and other seemingly unrelated systems are being linked and connected. The interconnectedness of these systems is leading to wide spread failure across many systems, and
the extreme entanglement that is making it difficult to preemptively spot the root cause before disaster strikes. *Meltdown* is a new book, published in 2018, and aims to help explain why this is happening. It is important that the reader understands “Failure is all around us.” In the book the authors explore modern day disasters and attempt to explain how it is possible to miss and ignore all of the warning signs. Chris and András do this by piecing together and tracing back the paths that failures take. Each and every one of these failures they explore is unique, and yet they all share astounding similarities, and a shared underlying trait – they all derive from systems that have built-up upon themselves layers and layers of complexity while also being “tightly coupled”.

This new book is authored by Chris Clearfield and András Tilcsik, both are graduates of Harvard University. Tilcsik received his AB, AM, and PhD from Harvard, and was internationally recognized with an award for being “one of thirty management thinkers most likely to shape the future of organizations.” (Rethink Risk, 2018) Chris Clearfield graduated with his AB from Harvard in the studies of Biology and Physics. He is credited along with two others for discovering a neutron star while he was still in high school using data from NASA (Rethink Risk, 2018). Using their book, Chris Clearfield and András Tilcsik help readers make sense of the intricate webs of complexities as they further illuminate the commonalities of these failures using the discoveries they have made while exploring “Meltdowns.”

Chris and András do a great job explaining and simplifying “Why Our Systems Fail…” They use real examples as they walk the reader through events, mistakes, and flaws that lead to a crisis. These systems failures often result in loss of life, and were often identified ahead of time, but because they existed in a complex system the alarm bells were often ignored. These situations called upon
strong leaders to stand up and say, “wait something is wrong,” and not just sit down after that. This
is why the book is split into two parts with ten chapters as follows:

Part One: Failure All Around Us
   1. The Danger Zone
   2. Deep Waters, New Horizons
   3. Hacking, Fraud, and All the News That’s Unfit to Print
Part Two: Conquering Complexity
   4. Out of the Danger Zone
   5. Complex Systems, Simple Tools
   6. Reading the Writing on the Wall
   7. The Anatomy of Dissent
   8. The Speed Bump Effect
   9. Strangers in a Strange Land
  10. Surprise!

(Clearfield & Tilcsik, 2018)

The book is structured in a way that makes it hard to put down at times. Clearfield and
Tilcsik do a great job captivating the reader as they walk through the devolving steps of crisis. They
cut back the complicated strands of complexity and organize a captivating narrative that transplants
the reader into the occurrence. From there they rebuild the environment around the reader as they
add the layers back on. These layers are then examined using frameworks and theories such as those
by Charles Perrow.

This book is dedicated “To whistleblowers, strangers, and leaders who listen. We need more
of you.” (Clearfield & Tilcsik, 2018) This book is designed for readers that are intrigued by
complexity, horrified by avoidable crisis, and determined to help shape their organizations. Although
it is not possible to stop all meltdowns from occurring, readers may be able to better understand
when it is time to stand up and lead the organizations that they are a part of.
How To Quit Your Job – The Right Way – A 5-Step Plan To Ditching Your Day Job

*How To Quit Your Job* is a humorous self-help book designed to help those that are in need of figuring out an organized way of “Ditching their day job.” This book helps the reader tackle the challenge of forming a strategic plan on how to leave a job. There are very few books that tackle the strategic side of quitting a job. Many of the books that do exist fall short of either developing a realistic and strategic pathway to quitting or embellish the reality of financial benefits that can occur. This book is written like many others of this genera and is specifically designed for those who are ready to leave their current job. Despite this the logic of the strategy will still prove beneficial to all those that may one day find themselves quitting a job.

*How To Quit Your Job*, is authored by Danny Iny and Jim Hopkinson. These authors utilize their expertise to author this book keeping strategic guidance center to its intended purpose. Danny Iny has authored several best-selling books, but what he is perhaps best known for is his contribution to online education with his creation of Audience Business Masterclass and Course Builders Laboratory (Clark, 2018). He has helped to create online communities for professionals who are using the internet to create mini-classes and courses designed to help entrepreneurs, and business professionals across the globe. Jim Hopkinson is a digital media professional, author, consultant, blogger, and podcaster. He describes himself as a teacher with a passion for helping people tackle
challenges such as salary negotiation, entrepreneurship, and online education. He is well known for his podcast the Hopkinson Report. He has worked for ESPN as a marketing manager, an associate director of marketing for Wired Magazine, and a NYU adjunct instructor to name a few (Hopkinson, n.d.). These authors utilized their combined expertise to help readers understand the importance of creating a strategic quit plan.

This book does a good job covering how to deliberately process the act of leaving a job. This topic is one that is difficult to cover for many reasons. One example is that every person has their own individual motives for wanting to leave a job, another is the inherent uniqueness of a given job. There are many more, but despite all of challenges Iny and Hopkinson manage to help readers understand the importance of forming a quit plan. Their method is organized into 5 succinct steps to be taken. The book is structured as follows:

**Introduction**

**Step 1: Wake up Call**
Chapter 1: What’s On your Tombstone?
Chapter 2: I hate My Job Because

**Step 2: Craft your Exit Plan**
Chapter 3: The Importance of Planning
Chapter 4: Check Your Finances
Chapter 5: The Mind-Body Connection
Chapter 6: Choose your Quit Date

**Step 3: The (Fun) Research**
Chapter 7: Four types of jobs
Chapter 8: So what do you want to do?
Chapter 9: Should you follow your passion?
Chapter 10: Discovering your career
Chapter 11: Defining your craft
Chapter 12: The real research
Chapter 13: How much to research

**Step 4: Hustle and Flow**
Chapter 14: Finding the time
Chapter 15: Take a test drive
Chapter 16: The case of True Passion
Chapter 17: The portfolio career
Chapter 18: Get online
Chapter 19: Go with the Flow

**Step 5: Quitting Day**
Chapter 20: Making a graceful exit

**Case Studies – Ten Cases**

**Conclusion**

(Iny & Hopkinson, 2016)

Iny and Hopkinson approach is well defined. It aims to help the reader interpret the information in a logical and practical fashion. The authors articulate the importance of readers
figuring out first why they are feeling displeased with their current employment. This moment of self-inventory is designed to help the reader figure out if their dissatisfaction is truly with their current employment situation or are other externalities driving them. Is leaving their current revenue source really going to fix the problem or are there more beneficial options then quitting. After the authors provide the reader with time to reflect, they move into how to “Craft Your Exit Plan.” From their they walk the reader down the strategic frame work to “Quitting Day.”

This book is primarily designed to be read by those who are actively looking to quit their job. Despite it being written in this way, it can still offer a beneficial roadmap to those who one day may find themselves at a job they too would like to leave. Although forming a quit plan is not the only way to leave a job, it offers readers the chance to learn how to go about tackling this delicate process. *How To Quit Your Job – The Right Way – A 5-Step Plan To Ditching Your Day Job* is designed to be a tool offering beneficial insight that will help those quitting a job preserve their financial wellbeing, implement strategic process, and gain control of a difficult career situation that is typically taught through the chaotic hardships of experience.
References


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