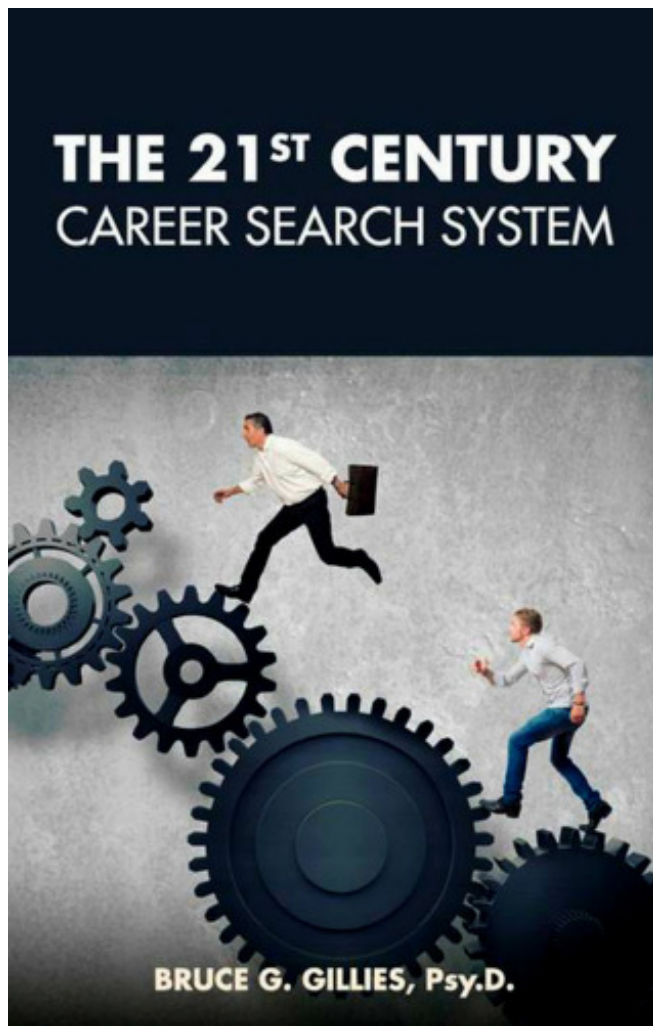


# ‘Career Search System’ a great tool

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*“The 21st Century Career Search System” by Bruce G. Gillies. Clearwater, FL: Prominent Books, 2016, 240 pages, \$14.95.*



“Early in the 21st century, we can see that organizations are much different from the ones that closed out the 20th century,” Bruce G. Gillies explains near the beginning of “The 21st Century Career Search System,” his new primer on finding fulfilling employment in today’s turbulent and ever-evolving job market. “At the end of the last century, computers, although prolific, were not as crucial to business as they are today. The workforce of today has also changed from what we saw in the latter part of the 20th century.”

“The employment landscape today has changed even from five years ago,” he continues. “Organizations and individuals are both enjoying more of a ‘free agent’ atmosphere. That is to say job seekers and hiring managers view the fit between the individual and the organization as the focal area. While the two-way loyalty between employers and employees is still in existence and valued, it is not nearly as strong as it once was.”

“The 21st Century Career Search System” needs to be distributed free of charge to all high school students. As the relatively stable world of their parents and grandparents continues to disintegrate right before their eyes, it is

imperative that those about to enter the workforce have a clear sense of the challenges and opportunities that lie just ahead. In fact, anyone who plans to be gainfully employed during the next few decades could benefit immensely from this succinct yet immensely powerful guide to finding meaning and purpose in life – in addition to a way to pay the bills. It turns out the two goals are not mutually exclusive.

The book consists of thirteen relatively concise chapters written in a very user-friendly style. The volume is designed to be a step-by-step map for anyone looking to enter or change their status in the workforce. The narrative is filled with real-life case studies involving workers at all levels of the employment spectrum who are looking for satisfying careers in a wide variety of fields. A couple of features I found appealing about “The 21st Century Career Search System” is the inclusion of a “summary” and “action plan” section at the end of each chapter. In the “summary,” Gillies encapsulates the main points the reader is supposed to glean from the preceding chapter. More important is the “action plan,” in which he spells out in detail precisely what those searching for a

job should do based on the information just provided. For instance, note the following “action plan” at the conclusion of Chapter eight, “The Recruiter – Friend or Foe?”

“Find three to five recruiters in your area, and then Google them for reviews on their performance. Request a meeting with a recruiter to review your resume, and evaluate it compared with what they have seen. Contact someone who is currently working in your field or for a company related to your field, and ask them if they are aware of any industry specific recruiters that have an excellent reputation.”

A growing number of people want to secure work that will allow them not only to enhance the quality of life for themselves and their families, but allow them to make a real difference in the lives of others in their communities as well as society in general. Whereas simply having a job is obviously important, Gillies believes most people want to be more content with their occupational lives. Organizations that understand and acknowledge the need of potential employees to make a contribution that extends far beyond the bottom line will have a decided advantage in hiring the best candidates. The author is expressly interested in the interplay between career and organizational development.

Gillies is an assistant professor of business at California Lutheran University, where he is also director of the organizational leadership and the online MBA programs. After spending twenty-two years in the U.S. Navy, he earned a doctorate in industrial/organizational psychology from Alliant International University. He consults regularly with Fortune 500 companies on leadership development programs, organizational change initiatives, career development programs, organizational culture and downsizing. This is his first book.

The appendices at the conclusion of the main text are especially useful as they contain examples of cover letters, sample interview questions and suggested responses, and a template for following up with a prospective employer after an interview. As most of us who have been in the workforce for a while know, the interview is often the determining factor in whether a particular applicant is selected for a position. Toward this end, I found the author’s advice in chapter eleven to be pragmatic and insightful; indeed, anyone who has been selected for a job interview, either in person or virtually (through Skype, for example – which has been increasing in popularity for the last decade or so) should probably take to heart what Gillies has to say about making the right impression:

“The interview is your opportunity to show you have the will and skill that the company needs,” Gillies explains. “The key is to find out early exactly what the organization needs and then adjust your responses to show that you can fill that gap. All too often, individuals who would be great employees for an organization simply fail to show that they are the right person to fill in the gap the company has. It is not always the best person who gets the job; it is the person who has the right responses based on the needs of the organization.”

“Practice your interviewing techniques to maximize your ability to gain information about the needs of the organization,” he adds and then reiterates: “Remember, it’s not always the best qualified person who gets the job; it’s the one who fits the organization’s hiring needs the best.”

In sum, I really like this book and I think it could be invaluable to anyone looking for a job in today’s global economy. That is why I decided to use it in my graduate-level career development class this summer. Moreover, it would be a great gift for that recent graduate or for anyone struggling to find meaningful work. Pick up a copy today.

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