

Finding Jobs in Distant Locations

By Carl J. Wellenstein

Sharon was chief operating officer of a large and well-regarded hospital in Dallas. She called us one day to say that her family was putting pressure on her to return to Chicago, where she had strong family ties. Her father was in failing health, and her mother felt that over the next year she might not be able to care for him alone.

Sharon wanted to know how she could begin looking for a job in the Chicago area while still living in Dallas. She had spent most of her career working in non-profit hospitals and wanted to focus on a COO position in a Chicago-area non-profit hospital. But she didn't want her current employer to know of her intentions, because she felt they would probably start the process of finding her replacement before she was ready to leave.

We began by focusing on her achievements with her current employer. What had she achieved, what was her role in it, and how did it happen? Working together, we identified a few achievements that she thought another hospital would view as most significant.

Then we urged her to focus on increasing her visibility in the non-profit hospital industry. She mentioned that a community newspaper once featured a story about one of her achievements; the story reported on how her work had helped the hospital improve patient care while reducing operating costs. She contacted the newspaper and obtained permission to use the story in other publications. Then we had her send it to a periodical that senior-level employees in her industry read. Executive recruiters who specialize in her industry also subscribe to those publications and use them as a source for key people.

Next Sharon prepared a presentation that examined her newsworthy achievement at the hospital: how she identified the problem, developed a solution, assembled the resources, sold it to management, and achieved her desired result. She then found a presentation coach who worked with her as she practiced making presentations to large audiences.

When she felt confident that she could speak professionally to a large group, Sharon contacted associations who organized industry trade shows and offered to make a presentation on the subject. She made sure that all trade shows in the Chicago area were on her target list. Her employer relished this newfound exposure, as it helped encourage donors to contribute or increase their contributions to the hospital.

While Sharon was attending the trade shows, she met recruiters who specialized in her industry and were trolling the trade-show circuit trying to identify high-track executives who might be potential future candidates. Several executives from other hospitals heard her talk and asked for private conversations with her so they could learn more about the details of how she effected positive change.

During these conversations with executives of the Chicago area hospitals, Sharon was able to explore whether they already had the internal resources to do what she had done, or whether they were thinking of recruiting someone who could help them make the changes.

Sharon spent the next year concentrating on writing articles that shared techniques on how her employer enhanced patient service while operating more efficiently. As she increased her visibility, she began to receive calls from executive recruiters who had read her articles or had seen her speak at an industry trade show. They wanted to talk to her about potential opportunities. None of the opportunities were located in the Chicago area, so she declined the offers but always suggested another person the recruiter might consider calling or suggested other ways they might find what they wanted.

A little more than a year later – still within her targeted time to relocate – Sharon was offered the COO position at a slightly larger non-profit hospital in the Chicago area. Oh, and she also received a handsome salary increase commensurate with someone who had become very well-known in the industry. She left her Dallas employer with a very strong recommendation, as she had also taken time during the year interval to develop her replacement.

Had Sharon left abruptly to move to Chicago, she might have struggled to find a position without having an established network in that community, and she would have left her Dallas employer without the talent to continue what she had started.

Sharon learned a valuable lesson. By taking charge of her career and carefully planning her future career moves, she became a highly respected executive in her industry, one who others looked up to for inspiration.

Now go take charge of your career!

Carl Wellenstein is an employment and career strategist located in Southern California and is the author of [12 Steps to a New Career](#). He helps those in mid-career facilitate career advancement, expedite job changes, and pursue new career destinies. These articles reflect actual experiences, modified to protect the identities of individuals and employers. If you have a question you would like answered, write Carl at CWellenstein@ExecGlobalNet.com or visit his website at www.ExecGlobalNet.com.