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Jinfo Newsletter

Every month, the Jinfo Newsletter presents a makeover of either a CV or a job vacancy advert, presenting a before version and an after version. All identifying characteristics are changed.

To submit your CV or job advert for possible inclusion, send it to <monique.cuvelier@freepint.com>.

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A 4-Month Plan: Organise and plan for personal and business development as a freelance information professional

Joanna Ptolomey is a qualified librarian and freelance information professional based in Glasgow, Scotland.

Joanna specialises in the health, social care and inequalities sector. Her projects include the production of a multilingual health information resources directory, a series of mental health inequalities 'knowledge portfolios', and the research and preparation of 'evidence notes' for models of health services delivery planning. She also develops and delivers bespoke training courses in qualitative and quantitative evidence-based searching techniques for health and information professionals. She has also worked with libraries to help facilitate change when introducing new services.

For more information about Joanna and projects she has worked on please contact her at [<joanna.ptolomey@ntlworld.com>](mailto:joanna.ptolomey@ntlworld.com).

I am a freelance information professional, and for the past five and a half years I have focused on getting regular paid work. However, a recent review of my client/revenue mix and workload led me to believe that it was now time for a more decisive strategic direction in my work.

The result was a four-month business and personal development plan I set myself over summer 2006, which you can reproduce to put your own career on track. You'll read the effects it had on me personally and professionally, and pick up some tips and ideas for yourself.

It's all in the planning

The first question I asked myself was: 'How can I raise my profile and increase my client base with no budget?' I knew I needed a plan. I used the following pointers to draught out a framework, so give them careful consideration.

- Think long and hard about where you want to go with the business and what the strengths and weaknesses are. Be truthful with yourself, but also be realistic in your goals.
- Develop a 'closed list' of key areas that will help drive and focus the business.
- Allocate a time frame. My mini-plan utilised my quieter months over the summer period.
- Prepare yourself to work extra hours and consider whether you can afford to reduce your paid workload in order to complete the tasks. Keep in mind that this is your chance to increase clients and revenue.

Pull your head out the sand

Many of my tasks were related to marketing and increasing my profile. One of the most important things I learnt early on was that freelancers could be quite invisible to fellow professionals and different client groups. I decided to use the GOYB (Get Off Your Backside) management technique.

My advice is to be open to anything that results from these opportunities.

- Network. I hate this idea as it sounds forced. The trick is to relax, don't do the hard sell, listen carefully and show interest. By mingling you learn a lot about different sectors and can develop ideas for future clients and see gaps in the market.
- Find mentors. Do you have a mentor or a friend who can make introductions on your behalf? A client of mine offered to make some introductions to senior people. Bingo! Finding a mentor is like winning the lottery, so make the most of it, and remember mentors are bound to mention other people you should contact.

A 4-Month Plan: Organise and plan for personal and business development as a freelance information professional

- Boost your personal network. I contacted people I knew already and asked to meet them to discover their services, discuss work I had done previously and bounce some ideas around. Keep this social and short; I generally supplied some cakes or biscuits. Again ask them to recommend other people of interest and ask for introductions. I found most people were flattered to be asked.
- Go to events. I identified some local events that had a cross section of information professionals and organisations present mainly through CILIP.
- Make a script. Be prepared to talk about yourself and have a short succinct statement about what you do. Some people find it hard to imagine what freelance information professionals do.
- Write for publication. I identified publications that would be useful to showcase my work and worked to have those articles published.

Behind the scenes

Where do you work? If you're like me and work at home at home, then think about your physical environment. This can actually have a powerful effect on your mindset. Clearing clutter, sorting through files and re-arranging furniture cost no money but have a surprising effect on mood and efficiency. (Unfortunately, the one downside is that my ironing board is now available to actually iron on.)

Review your own work

Consider these two main areas when reviewing the work you've done in the past:

- Existing client base. Does it have room for growth? Are you putting all your eggs in one basket? Are you happy doing a particular type of work?
- Service delivery. How do you deliver work, and are you happy with the quality and efficiency? Consider developing delivery protocols to stop re-inventing the wheel and look at ways in which you can add value to your products.

Your time is up!

Each week monitor the plan, marking off completed tasks. What valuable lessons have you learnt? Don't be afraid to hold up your hands when something goes wrong. After creating my plan, I feel more confident now in my abilities and where I think the business is heading.

Of course this is just the start of an on-going process and I believe that a 'yearly service' is the way to manage personal and business delivery. If you are serious about improving your situation than what are you waiting for ... GOYB!

Comment

"As a freelance researcher, I miss picking up intelligence about new sources etc. from colleagues in an office setting. FreePint provides me with a wonderful online community of peers all over the world, who share their collective wisdom."

Freelance Researcher, UK
September, 2006

Comment

"City Professionals has been recruiting in the library & information sector since 1994 and have advertised in many specialist publications over the past eleven years.

We use the Jinfo website regularly because we are assured of a cost effective and accurate response to our advertisements and a swift and efficient service".

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CV Makeover: Emphasising Publishing and Education Experience in the US

CV Makeover

- See John Smith's 'Before' CV on page 3
- See John Smith's 'After' CV on page 5

John Smith is an information worker in the western US who has worked for the government, for the health industry and also for schools. Although his CV was already strong, he wanted to angle it more toward a job that combines database searching, writing and presenting instructional demonstrations. He also was unsure of how to tailor and effectively use the objective.

Jinfo turned to Sarah Johnson for help, founder of Library Job Postings on the Internet <<http://www.libraryjobpostings.org/>>. She launched the site more than a decade ago with the aim of helping library workers navigate online postings and gain access to opportunities that weren't broadly published. She's on a 'resume critique' team of the American Library Association. Johnson has helped new members craft resumes for seven years and gives in-person consultations at ALA conferences. She is also co-author of "The Information Professional's Guide to Career Development Online" with Rachel Singer Gordon.

'I thought John's content was good, and I changed very little of that', Johnson says. 'He used action verbs, was specific about the databases he used and described his job duties.'

The biggest changes for Smith's CV were formatting, removal of the objective and added instructional experience.

Clean and organise

'His resume's margins were weird', Johnson explains. The first version ran to four pages, but many pages were incomplete. 'I cleaned up the look and made it consistent'.

Johnson cleaned up the publications section in particular. She explained that the dates were mixed up, so she arranged it in reverse chronological order, listing a forthcoming article on the top to show Smith is actively writing. She also removed all the hyperlinks ('People can Google the articles; you don't need a URL').

Hidden objective

She also thought Smith's objective was too general and superfluous. It stated information that was repeated in the Summary of Qualifications section and didn't relate much to the job he wanted.

'I usually put that type of thing in a cover letter anyway', Johnson says.

Found experience

After a short phone conversation, Johnson learned that Smith actually had some teaching experience that he forgot to mention in his first CV. This would be vital to helping him land a job that used his training experience. She added a line about his orientations and demos in the summary of qualifications and added a few comments in the most recent position.

John Smith's 'Before' CV

JOHN SMITH
123 Anywhere St.
San Francisco, CA 12345
(800) 555-1212 - johns@email.com

OBJECTIVE

To use my exceptional skills in reference, database and Internet searching, writing, presentation, and customer service to fulfill the information needs of colleagues, clients, and/or the public.

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Expert researcher comfortable using a variety of commercial databases, Internet resources and applications to locate and deliver information in a timely manner
- Experienced information manager skilled at analyzing, organizing and categorizing data
- Detail-oriented, versatile team player and communicator

EXPERIENCE

Technical Information Specialist

2002-present

American Information Center, Government Office (current contractor BHC Company), San Francisco, CA

- Perform detailed reference interviews with Examiners in Business Methods and mechanical arts to ascertain search needs
- Search DIALOG and STN databases, Internet, and other electronic resources
- Maintain and enrich content of assigned intranet pages on Business Methods topics
- Assist in training new searchers, perform ready reference

Reference Librarian

1997-2002

American Information Center, Government Office (contractors: PRQ/Johnson, Wilson, BHC Company), San Francisco, CA

- Conducted non-patent literature reference for Patent Examiners, attorneys, private searchers, inventors, and the general public
- Performed sequence searching in in-house (HGR) and commercial gene databases on a UNIX platform
- Instructed patrons in the use of library systems, full-text databases, and the Internet
- Compiled and maintain reference collection of Internet bookmarks
- Created PowerPoint presentations, forms, signs, brochures, and software tip sheets, as needed
- Participated in collection development and recommend items for purchase or retention
- Led orientation tours for incoming Examiners and visitors
- Wrote articles for Inside Newsletter until its discontinuation

Librarian

1996-1997

InterTec Library (now InterGene), Oakland, CA

Temporary assignments to libraries including Oakland Children's Hospital, the County Medical Library, the California Hospital Center Library, and the XYZ Center for Education (XYZCE). Executed reference, collection development, and other duties in individual libraries

John Smith's 'Before' CV

JOHN SMITH
123 Anywhere St.
San Francisco, CA 12345
(800) 555-1212 - johns@email.com

EXPERIENCE - continued

Librarian

1990-1996

American Society of Public Health (formerly American Society of Health for Public Concern), Berkeley, CA

Responsible for public health research library

Librarian

1987-1990

Berkeley (CA) Public Schools

Responsible for two elementary school libraries

PUBLICATIONS

Articles:

"Using the Internet for your Job," FreePint no. 332 (April 9, 2000). <http://www.freepint.co.uk/> [Updated version reprinted by ABC Company (<http://www.abccompany.com>), issue 71, June 10, 2001; abridged version published in Library Newsletter, April 2001.]

"Directory of Self Publishing" in Smithson, Elisabeth (ed.), The Encyclopedia of Libraries, Lester Thomas, 2005.

Book reviews:

Smith, John. Finding Information the Internet. Free Pint no. 499 (June 30, 2000).

<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/ebooks.htm>

Review of Alpert, Francis, Searching Online. FreePint no. 608 (January 15, 2002).

<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/ebooks.htm>

Potter, James. Web 2.0 Searching. FreePint no. 717 (September 8, 2004)

<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/ebooks.htm>

Review of Franken, Stewart, and Johnson, eds, Information Techniques in Health Science (forthcoming).

Briggle, Antony, et al. How to Digitize. FreePint no. 601 (May 30, 2001).

<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/ebooks.htm>

Hawkin, Sam. Online Communities Guidebook. FreePint no. 500 (January 21, 2001).

<http://www.freepint.com/bookshelf/ebooks.htm>

Manuscript reviewer:

Davis, Channing S. Strategies for Success: From the A to Z, University Press, 2002.

EDUCATION

Master of Science in Library Science (MLS), Major University of America

Bachelor of Arts (History), Certificate in Women's Studies, Another University

John Smith's 'After' CV

JOHN SMITH
123 Anywhere St.
San Francisco, CA 12345
(800) 555-1212 - johns@email.com

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

- Expert researcher comfortable using a variety of commercial databases, Internet resources and applications to locate and deliver information in a timely manner
- Experienced teacher and presenter, in both one-on-one and group situations
- Information manager skilled at analyzing, organizing and categorizing data
- Detail-oriented, versatile team player and communicator

WORK EXPERIENCE

Technical Information Specialist

2002-present

American Information Center, Government Office (current contractor BHC Company), San Francisco, CA

- Perform detailed reference interviews with examiners in business methods and mechanical arts
- Teach short instruction sessions on database and Internet searching techniques
- Search DIALOG and STN databases, the Internet, and other electronic resources
- Lead orientation tours for incoming examiners and visitors
- Maintain and enrich content of assigned intranet pages on business methods topics
- Assist in training new searchers; perform ready reference

Reference Librarian

1997-2002

American Information Center, Government Office (contractors: PRQ/Johnson, Wilson, BHC Company), San Francisco, CA

- Answered general reference questions for examiners, attorneys, private searchers, clients, and the public
 - Performed sequence searching within in-house (HGR Division) and commercial gene databases
 - Instructed patrons in the use of library systems, full-text databases, and the Internet
 - Compiled and maintained reference collection of Internet bookmarks
 - Created PowerPoint presentations, forms, signs, brochures, and software tip sheets
 - Participated in collection development and recommended items for purchase or retention
 - Led orientation tours for incoming examiners and visitors
 - Wrote articles for *Inside Newsletter* until its discontinuation

Librarian

1996-1997

InterTec Library (now InterGene), Oakland, CA

- Temporary assignments to libraries including Oakland Children's Hospital, the County Medical Library, the California Hospital Center Library, and the XYZ Center for Education
- Executed reference, collection development, and other duties in individual libraries

John Smith's 'After' CV

JOHN SMITH

Page 2

Librarian **1990-1996**

American Society of Public Health (formerly American Society of Health for Public Concern), Berkeley, CA

- Oversaw all aspects of operation of public health research library

Librarian **1987-1990**

California Public Schools, Berkeley, CA

- Oversaw all aspects of operation of two elementary school libraries

TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

Familiarity with:

- DIALOG, STN, EBSCOhost, IEEE, ProQuest, and JSTOR databases; among others; XX and XX library systems
- UNIX, Windows XX, and XX operating systems

PUBLICATIONS

Review of Franken, Stewart, and Johnson, eds, *Information Techniques in Health Science*. *FreePint*, forthcoming.

Review of Potter, James, *Web 2.0 Searching*. *FreePint* no. 717 (September 8, 2004)

“Directory of Self Publishing” in Smithson, Elisabeth (ed.), *The Encyclopedia of Libraries*, Lester Thomas, 2005.

Review of Alpert, Francis, *Searching Online*. *FreePint* no. 608 (January 15, 2002).

Review of Briggie, Antony, et al., *How to Digitize*. *FreePint* no. 601 (May 30, 2001).

Review of Hawkin, Sam, *Online Communities Guidebook*. *FreePint* no. 500 (January 21, 2001).

Review of Smith, John, *Finding Information the Internet*. *FreePint* no. 499 (June 30, 2000).

“Using the Internet for your Job,” *FreePint* no. 332 (April 9, 2000).

EDUCATION

Master of Science in Library Science (MLS), Major University of America, 19xx.

Bachelor of Arts (History), Certificate in Women’s Studies, Another University, 19xx.