



Robert Westfall
Job Seeker of the Month

Robert “Bob” L. Westfall Jr. worked in corporate relocation sales for most of his career. When the economy dipped, his industry was seriously impacted, leaving Bob without a job for the first time in almost 30 years. As a seasoned professional with three decades of experience, Bob was surprised to realize that finding a job proved to be a challenge.

“After actively searching for employment, it became quite clear to me that in today's competitive job market, it is increasingly difficult to differentiate one's self in the marketplace,” said Bob. “Having not been in a formal learning environment since completing my undergraduate studies in 1973, I decided I needed to return to school,” said Bob. “By pursuing additional education, I am re-engineering myself in order to increase my market appeal and to educate myself in a different career endeavor in the hopes of increasing my value to a company seeking someone with my talents, skills and education.”

Bob enrolled in a master's degree program in human resources. While attending, he learned of a Human Resource Management Specialist certification program offered at Gwinnett Technical College that could be completed through a 35-class hour program. Bob enrolled in the program which has reacquainted him with current HR practices and businesses strategies, as well as given him insight into younger students' outlooks and perspectives.

“Learning has been extremely stimulating and has helped with maintaining a positive self image during a challenging job search,” said Bob. “It gives you hope. In the workforce, you have a tendency to get a little stale – this helps you grow professionally and personally.”

While enrolled in classes at Gwinnett Technical College, a friend introduced Bob to Georgia Work Ready. Bob researched the initiative online and, impressed by what he read, made an appointment to take the assessment.

“I am very glad that I took the assessments. Work Ready proved to me that I am a qualified worker at a good level,” said Bob “It is also providing me with the opportunity to improve my scores by taking skills gap training in order to improve my certification level and become even more valuable in the marketplace.”

Bob encourages other job seekers to make the most of the tools available to them to increase their chances of success by taking the Work Ready assessment and the online skills gap training, enrolling in continuing education programs and working their networks.

“It's easy to get lazy when we are happily employed,” said Bob. “Networking is critical to professional success. Due to the complexity of the application and interview process, it is difficult process to break into with just sending resumes. If you are young or old, looking or not looking, get involved in networking – just put in a little effort.”

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Bob is in his last quarter and will graduate with his Human Resource Management Specialist certificate in August. He hopes to apply his new credentials with a company that sees human resource specialists as strategic business partners who can positively affect a company's bottom line by recruiting the right talent.

"I am securing credentials which will make me more desirable in the workplace and to a larger selection of companies once I have finished my additional education," said Bob. "I am excited about the resources that have been made available to me and others with the goal to secure employment and be a more qualified worker through Work Ready – even if I am currently unemployed, I am very excited about the future."