

## **ASK THE CAREER ENGINEER!**

**Francina R. Harrison, MSW**

**Q:** I know I have great skills and I have never been terminated. I am not getting the offers that I want and have been unemployed for 10 months. The offers that I am getting are paying next to nothing and when I try for my field; I am beat out by other candidates. What are companies looking for? **Chris, Virginia**

**A:** Companies today are looking for that top 10 - 30% employee. Make sure you have what it takes to meet their needs. In talking with hiring managers and networking with the folks who decide, "who gets hired", it appears in today's market that employers are looking for "performers" and not just "presenters." They want employees and not just candidates. Hiring managers and recruiters are aware that some folks can "shine" in a one-hour interview. Nowadays, expect HR associates to "dig deeper" and ask questions regarding performance, achievements, initiative and leadership potential. You must make sure that your job search tools are sharing "what you can do with what you've got." Be prepared for interviews where you must showcase your accomplishments, how you achieved them, and your next steps. I can't say it enough; accomplishments are a must today. Be prepared to demonstrate your contributions, projects managed and how you "stepped out of the box" at various levels (individual, team and/or community). To have nothing... won't do.

Stability is very important today, if you have gaps, be prepared to explain. However, keep it business savvy and honest. Perhaps you volunteered during an employment gap, which could actually work in your favor. If you have been an active job seeker (unemployed) for quite some time; consider volunteering. I suggest you find an organization that supports your life philosophy and offer some method of active contribution. Volunteering can also assist in your social networking, skill development and at times "personal" sense of worth. One of the best benefits of volunteering is that it helps with "gap" information and keeps you active. Plus, employers are impressed with sincere volunteers as it demonstrates your civic awareness and responsibilities.

If you have a question for "The Career Engineer" send an email to [francina@thecareerengineers.com](mailto:francina@thecareerengineers.com) . Author of the book, *A Mind to Work: The Life and Career Planning Guide for People Who ~~Want~~-Need to Work!* For more information on Harrison & Associates, call 757-420-1109 or visit our website at [www.thecareerengineers.com](http://www.thecareerengineers.com).