



“Through a Glass Darkly”: Increasing Transparency in Talent Acquisition

MICHAEL DEAS, ABC, SCMP

IABC NASHVILLE – PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT – 27 JANUARY 2021

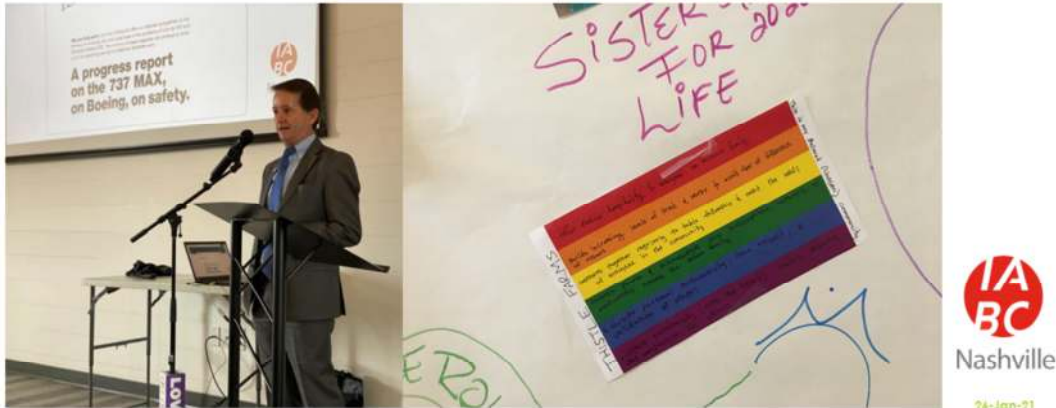


Thank you so much for having me!



SO HAPPY TO BE HERE! For me, it feels heavenly to be meeting with IABC Nashville again, even virtually. Because in my case, it's borderline miraculous!

A year ago at this time...



A year ago, we met at Thistle Farms for the first of only three PD sessions we would have in person.

The topic was on diversity and inclusion, and the setting could not have been more appropriate.

As you may know, TF is a program providing healing and hope for women who have been victims, becoming survivors, of trafficking.

I found this sticker on the wall outside our meeting room. The writer used the Pride banner not as a statement about sexuality but rather about inclusivity that is truly heartwarming.

Just a month later...



I took this photo on Leap Day last year, then blissfully unaware of the havoc that virus was going to have on the world, not just the stock market.

The hard facts

- ▶ U.S. unemployment spiked in March 2020 at nearly 15%
- ▶ In December, down to 6.7% due to seasonal hiring; expect a rising trend
- ▶ 900,000 new unemployment applications week during 10-16 Jan 21*
- ▶ To put it in perspective:
 - ▶ **Millions** of white-collar workers dumped into the job market since March
 - ▶ Hiring **slowed** due to budget constraints, COVID
 - ▶ More positions listed as "**remote**," so....
 - ▶ **Hundreds** of applicants for every job
 - ▶ HR / TA departments **overwhelmed**
 - ▶ Applicant tracking systems **inadequate**



24-Jan-21

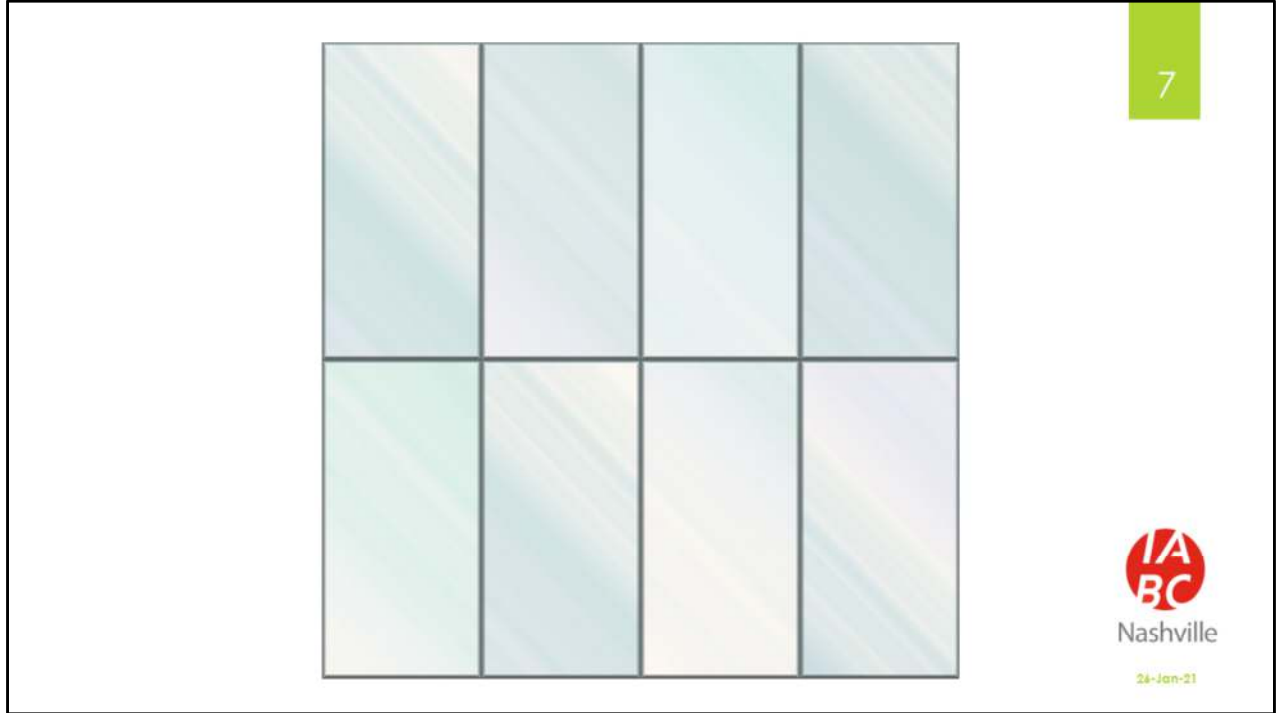
*Bureau of Labor Statistics, USDL21-0002

Speaking with John Donato, regional recruiter for Deloitte: the communications manager role I applied for in Nashville netted 630 applicants in its first week of posting.

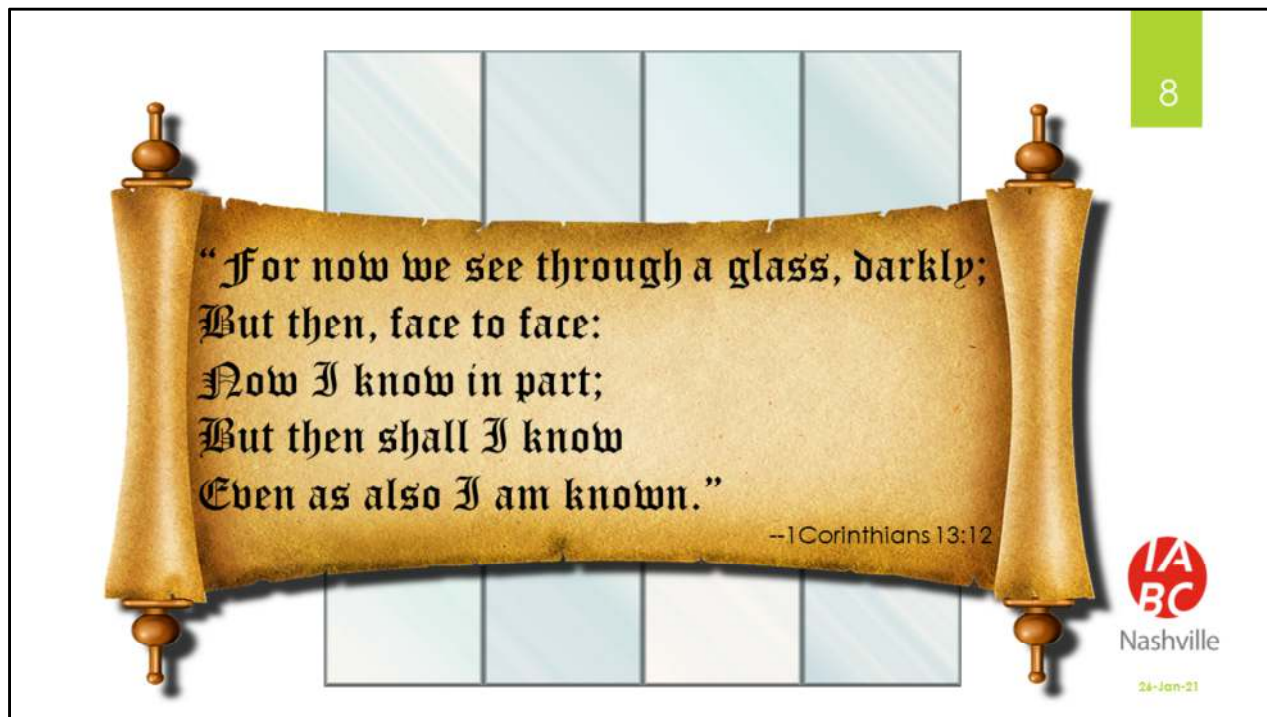
Why this presentation—why now?



This is not a stock image: these are my own applications for employment. I lost my job as Director of Communications for a firm in Franklin, TN, in May 2020. I got my next job as a Marketing Manager for a firm in Franklin, TN, in December, 2020. Between those two bookends, I was unemployed for 34 workweeks... 246 days... or, as it felt to me, 5,904 hours. During that time, I applied to approximately 300 jobs, 10 every workweek....every one of them in my field of expertise, at my level of experience, from coast to coast. Approximately 220 of those applications resulted in rejections. 80 of those applications are still pending, i.e. the employer has never answered, or worse, interviewed me and still not informed me of my status. And my experience is not unusual! What's happening?



It became clear to me (pun intended) that job posters and job seekers had the same problem, but were seeing it from two different sides. What we weren't seeing was each other's process. There was very little visibility, transparency, in the entire acquisition effort. This window is a metaphor of the problem. And so I will use it as a symbol of what we are trying to solve.



This metaphor also reminded me of a verse of scripture.

Of course, the Apostle Paul is talking about the difference between earth and heaven, and we're talking about unemployed and employed... which feels analogous!

Because my experience on the jobless side in 2020 was far different from the last time I was jobless (2015-2016).

I learned a great deal about the disconnects between those seeking jobs and those seeking to fill them.

9

10 TIPS FOR INCREASING TRANSPARENCY

IA
BC
Nashville

24-Jan-21

So for the next few minutes, I'll share with you what I learned during the last 7 months of unemployment.

**Tips for
Talent
Acquisition**

**Tips for
Employment
Acquisition**



Nashville

24-Jan-21

Don't post the job. Seriously, don't.

- ▶ Ask yourself why
- ▶ Use referrals instead
 - ▶ Develop a handsome reward system
 - ▶ Plumb your reporting line, vendors, and network
- ▶ Employees have a far better idea of who you need than LinkedIn or Indeed ever will

O
N
E

Look for unposted jobs

- ▶ Don't depend on LinkedIn, Indeed, or any other job posting board
- ▶ Most firms do not manage career postings well
- ▶ Insiders can let you know what's coming
- ▶ They are incentivized to promote you



24-Jan-21

This is the most important tip I will give you today. If you take away nothing else, take this.



If you decide to “throw out that net” with your job posting and “test the waters”
Be assured, you will catch fish... more than you ever wanted!

Stress-test your ATS

- ▶ Applicant Tracking Systems are your first brand touchpoint
- ▶ If you've never tried to get a job at your own firm lately, try it!
- ▶ Weed out the spurious questions—ask yourself: do you know...
 - ▶ Exact date you started college?
 - ▶ Home addresses of your references?
 - ▶ Physical address of a previous employer who has been out of business for 10 years?
- ▶ Change dropdowns to free-forms for schools, certifications



Fake out the ATS

- ▶ Use Google Chrome to remember your answers for popular ATSes
- ▶ Use the same password for all profiles
 - ▶ 1 UC, 1 lc, 1 numeral, 1 special character
- ▶ Best to worst ATSes
 - ▶ **Workday** – most intuitive
 - ▶ **Taleo** – tracks progress
 - ▶ **ICIMS** – hangs up frequently
 - ▶ **SuccessFactors** – one long form
 - ▶ **BrassRing** – 90's horrorshow



24-Jan-21

You'd be surprised the things your company is asking applicants to fill out.

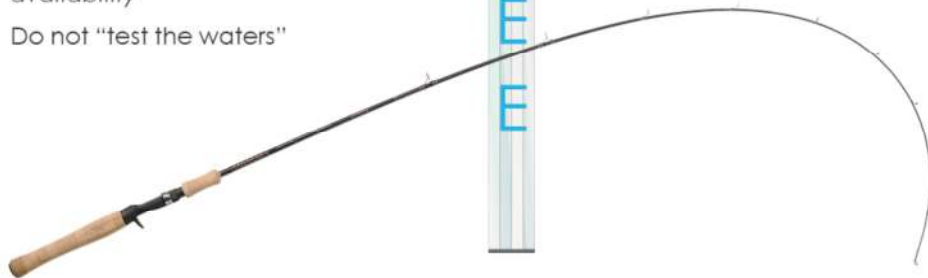
If only for legal requirement, say so

- ▶ If you plan to hire internally—that's great
- ▶ "This job posting is for the purpose of meeting EEOC requirements for external availability"
- ▶ Do not "test the waters"

Ask insiders about the intention

- ▶ Some job postings are never meant to be filled externally—that's OK
- ▶ Cheer on the internal candidate! You will make a friend

T
H
R
E
E



24-Jan-21

If you go fishing, you will catch!

This happened to me twice:

HDR – insider advocated for me but was eventually given the job

AkzoNobel – fellow IABCer was applying for the same job!

Make your job description airtight

- ▶ Don't list "preferred" qualifications as deselection criteria; those are must-haves
- ▶ Don't say "remote" for "work from home"; there's a difference
- ▶ Don't keep "no relo" a secret
- ▶ Don't require industry experience for transferable skills
- ▶ Don't ask for cover letters unless you commit to actually reading them

FOUR

Match the qualifications

- ▶ Don't fake it if you can't meet the requirements; move on
- ▶ Put all requirements in your resume and cover letter
 - ▶ Easy trick: cut and paste requirements *into* your cover letter
 - ▶ Finish your cover before you start your application!



24-Jan-21

If you say "Master's degree preferred, but then you cut all the candidates that don't have advanced degrees, you've made it a requirement. See how silly that is?"

"Remote" = you can do this job from anywhere with no requirement to show up ever; having this label will net you hundreds if not thousands more candidates.

"WFH" means you are remote but you are expected to live in the city where the office is and must show up sometime.

Post for 1 week MAX

- ▶ You will have a great selection within 24 hours
- ▶ More time ≠ perfect candidate
- ▶ They're ALL good eggs!



FIVE

Be wary of repostings

- ▶ Keep track of every app; note job IDs
- ▶ "Posted 1 day ago" may be a lie
- ▶ Do not trust aggregators; they harvest old data
- ▶ "Easy apply" is usually not a good deal



24-Jan-21

Follow the 6/3/1 rule

- ▶ Keep It simple
 - ▶ Round 1: 6 top candidates
 - ▶ Round 2: 3 top candidates
 - ▶ Round 3: 1 candidate
- ▶ Fiverounds is too much
 - ▶ Extends your process
 - ▶ Exhausts colleagues
 - ▶ Exasperates your candidates

Know your status

- ▶ Ask for your "place in line"
- ▶ Keep in touch with internal colleagues
- ▶ Let hesitators go—don't be desperate

S
I
X



24-Jan-21

No more than 2 rounds of groupthink

- ▶ Outside perspective can help—to a point
- ▶ Make your questions pertinent to the job
 - ▶ BAD: "Tell us about a time you worked on a project"
 - ▶ BETTER: "What is your approach to project management?"
- ▶ Rely on your own team more than other departments

S
E
V
E
N

Get familiar with STAR and Spark Hire

- ▶ STAR storytelling (Amazon) is in vogue
 - ▶ Situation
 - ▶ Task
 - ▶ Action
 - ▶ Result
- ▶ Spark Hire (one-way video interviewing) takes prep!
 - ▶ Mobile app works best
 - ▶ Don't delete your responses!



24-Jan-21

“Multitude of counsellors” can backfire on you.
Your ops people don’t necessarily know how to interview someone.

If you take 'em in, staff 'em up

- ▶ EVERY entry deserves a response
- ▶ Your ATS cannot make judgment calls about people with potential
- ▶ Move quickly!

E
I
G
H
T

Network, network, network

- ▶ Don't rely on the system; most likely they are bogged down
- ▶ Ask your inside colleagues to promote you
- ▶ Stay "positively active" on social media (post to Twitter, LinkedIn, blogs)
- ▶ Create an aura of "noticeability"
 - ▶ Enter awards
 - ▶ Volunteer at anything



24-Jan-21

Remember, I warned you: if you didn't want to deal with this many applicants, you shouldn't have asked for them!

Keep only 1 backup

- ▶ Be merciful: cut also-rans loose as soon as you can
- ▶ A personal email to someone you have interviewed is requisite
- ▶ If your top candidate AND your backup candidate decline your offer, you should probably re-examine your offer



Be that squeaky wheel

- ▶ Keep your top employment potentials on a weekly pester list
- ▶ Find the vehicle that works and stick to it: LI messaging, email, text
- ▶ Always express continued interest in the job
- ▶ Write real, personal, paper thank-you notes after major interviews



Applicants = people,
≠ paperwork

It's not personal;
it's business

- ▶ Prioritize the "hunters" (unemployed) over the "hoppers" (employed)
 - ▶ Some are staking their financial future on you; feel the urgency
 - ▶ Nos are just as valuable as Yeses
- ▶ You will not hear anything back ever from 25%+ companies
 - ▶ You will likely not get feedback on a rejection; use a coach for that
 - ▶ You WILL get to Yes!

T
E
N



24-Jan-21

Additional Questions?



Nashville

24-Jan-21

The #grammarnazi strikes again!
Mike's Top 10 Gaffes in Print
2020 Edition

23



#10 – What's in a name?

“The novel coronavirus”
“The Corona”
“COVID-19”
“Covid”

24-Jan-21

The evolution of the term: agent (virus) becomes the effect (disease), a kind of metonymy. Constellation brands thought they would have trouble with their Corona beer brand; Online searchers for the Mexican beer surged on [Google](#) during the week of Jan. 29 with the phrase “corona beer virus” and “beer virus,” according to data from [Google Trends](#).

But they not only survived; they launched a hard seltzer product in the summer of 2020 into a crowded market dominated by White Claw and Truly and succeeded.

Another company wasn't so lucky: Video Cable company Co-Vid.

Norm Carson, CEO of [Covid](#), “Your connection company,” was at a trade show in Amsterdam when he discovered his firm now had a contagious cognomen. “It’s a little surreal,” [Carson told Slate](#).

But the company, which sells professional grade AV cables (think HDMI cables), has no plans to change its name. “It’s unfortunate. Today maybe some people will think we’re linked to this. But—I take that back. I don’t think anyone who knows Covid will associate us with this,” Carson said. But their search ranking was drowned out. (Modern Healthcare, 15 Feb 2020)

<https://www.modernhealthcare.com/clinical/covid-19-shares-name-arizona->

#9 – And your enemies closer...



This formidable door is actually in the building of my previous employer.

#8 – Overmessaging?



Pulled up to this pizza place in Pontiac MI on 5 May 20.
Perhaps it is possible to communicate too much.
The “call” to action and phone number appear six times on 12 feet of storefront.

#7 – You're busted, buster

In New York City, organized groups allegedly cased businesses during the day before returning to ransack stores at night after peaceful protests

*By Dan Frosch,
Cameron McWhirter
and Ben Chapman*

the death of George Floyd, a black man in police custody, they have frequently been followed by looting. Criminals have **busted** into high-end clothing stores on New York's Fifth Avenue, mom-and-pop restaurants in Minneapolis, and an Amazon van in Santa Monica, California.



24-Jan-21

WSJ 3 Jun 20

When did this become a word for “break” in adult English?

#6 – Redundant redundancy



I mean, isn't this like sweetened sugar?

#5 – Raise Cain, your kids, and questions

BY JOHN J. MILLER

WHEN THE NARRATOR IN EDGAR
Allan Poe's short story "The Fall of the House of Usher" struggles to describe a style of painting, he resorts to a comparison and cites the "concrete reveries of Fuseli." This is a reference to Henry Fuseli (1741-1825), and it **begs** a question: How does anybody describe "The Nightmare," the artist's best-known work?



The proper idiom, "to beg THE question," means to ask what you have already answered.

#4 – Do J-schools not teach headline writing?

The Greenville News | WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2020 | 1B

METRO

When will I know time to get vaccine?



Ask LaFleur
Elizabeth Lafleur
Greenville News
USA TODAY NETWORK - S.C.

Question: How will I be notified to get a COVID-19 shot? I am in the I-b category (over 75 and have health issues).

Answer: For those wondering when they might be notified to get a COVID-19 vaccination, I'd first recommend being in contact with your own doctor, who can determine what fits your specific

situation. Additionally, I'd continue paying attention to news reports about which phase of vaccine distribution we're in.

Right now, we're seeing vaccines distributed to the folks in phase 1 (like health-care workers). As we move into phase 2, there will be a vaccine finder to help residents find clinics where they can receive the shot, per SCDHEC's COVID-19 vaccine plan.

That tool is not publicly available during phase 1, so keep an eye on <https://scdhec.gov/covid19/covid-19-vaccination> for updates as we move into

phase 2. ~~Phase~~ plan also explains its use of the CDC's Vaccine Administration Management System (VAMS) for data collection for the vaccine. VAMS is a secure online tool that helps health officials track the vaccine, from its arrival at a clinic to when it is administered to a patient.

The state also maintains a Statewide Immunization Online Network (SI-MON) where health-care providers submit information on administered immunizations, according to DHEC. Those programs will be utilized as we

move into phase 2 and beyond, so the state can keep track of how the vaccinations are being distributed.

As mentioned above, it's a good idea to keep in contact with your own doctor, as he or she will have access to the best information for your personal situation.

Elizabeth Lafleur loves running, gardening, spending time with her husband and daughter and answering your questions. If you're curious about something in the Upstate, chances are she is too. Reach out to Elizabeth via email at asklafleurgreenville@gmail.com.



24-Jan-21

From the Greenville News, 30 Dec 20
How would you write the headline?
And does that widow not bug anyone?

#3 – Helping make society more human



From WSMV 18 Jan 21 (I cheated)

I often wonder how these misspellings get made; does someone actually not know the correct word?

#2 – Oh, the difference a space makes



From the WSJ 18 Jan 21...

The idiom is “to turn oneself in”;

But CNN made the same mistake the same day!

I know only one fella who ever really turned himself INTO police....

#1 – By process of “elimination”...



Courtesy of our very own Tennessean, on 4 Apr 2020

You can't make this stuff up folks!

So with that, let's get out there and crank out some good communication!

Connect here,
succeed everywhere!



Michael G. Deas, ABC, SCMP

[linkedin.com/in/mgdeas](https://www.linkedin.com/in/mgdeas)

mgdeas@gmail.com

@mgdeas



Nashville

24-Jan-21

Thank you so much for your time!