

FOREWORD

When I graduated college a decade ago, the main topic my friends and I talked about was where we were all headed. Cities, jobs, marriages—there was so much to choose from and so much to do. But a few years into that euphoria, reality set in. Is this what we really wanted? Were we satisfied, fulfilled, happy? You know, all that stuff that makes sitcoms so easy to relate to.

Stumbling through my twenties, everyone around me faced daily tests with family issues, relationship problems, and sometimes health crises. Everyone had a different challenge, a different story. What dominated lunch dates or happy hours was a common bond over workplace frustrations: an unfulfilling job, a psychotic boss, ignorant co-workers, a pitifully small paycheck. It wasn't that I didn't know anyone who was happy at work, because many of us were (even if marginally), but there was always a workplace problem that couldn't be solved or a career goal that was impossible to reach.

Although most of us made our choices by default, when I looked back I realized that some of what we did was much harder than it needed to be. Or, on the other hand, we were much more apathetic than we should have been. There wasn't really a trusted resource to go to for advice, so we simply complained to one another. When we tired of that, we turned to our families. We asked our parents for information and insight, but they just hadn't had the same career choices that we have. We refused to listen to our siblings, assuming that we'd figure it out on our own, or just suck it up. What other options were there?

It seemed that the only way to find the best-fit career was to rely on luck—to try one job or one field after another and hope that we'd finally strike gold. It seemed that the only way to solve a workplace problem was to poll as many people as possible and go with what our gut said was the right choice. Sure, intuition and luck play a role in successes of all kinds—there is no doubt about that. But to rely only on luck and your gut is a risky, exhausting way to build a career. I set out to change that, building a business and a career development model that is focused on making realistic and smart career decisions.

I know, the word model sounds academic and boring. But it's not. It's more like a plan, a series of steps that you can follow without feeling like you've just been to the shrink.

In the past few years, as a career coach I have listened to hundreds of career stories and frustrations, and in my role as a recruiter and business professional, interviewed hundreds of job candidates. While many people want to have a

fulfilling career, or are willing to work hard to make their on-the-job experience a good one, not everyone has the time or money, or is willing to embark on long journeys of self-reflection. A quick look in the mirror is all we have time for and all we can afford. We're slaves to the Internet and want a menu of options to solve our career problems. We don't need lectures from a mother or father figure whose job-searching techniques were perfected before Blackberrys or Instant Messaging. We often don't have the patience to complete hours of exercises or worry about what kind of economy we might face tomorrow or in ten years. That's where *The Right Job, Right Now* comes in: a straightforward, no-nonsense way to finally get options and answers regardless of whether you can commit to complete career reinvention, or just need quick help.

While a good deal of what is in this book comes from my extensive research and work experience in human resources and business—recruiting, career development, training, consulting—much also comes from a huge collection of stories, choices, and chances I've compiled from listening to successes, failures, and second and third takes.

Regardless of where you are in your career, you'll discover that everyone's got a different career opinion. The advice you get from one career counselor might be different from that which comes from your boss or your mom. But *The Right Job, Right Now* isn't about *one* right way. It's a collection of suggestions from which you can choose the best solution at whatever point you are in your career. There are some clear-cut rights and wrongs. *The Right Job, Right Now* won't sugarcoat them for you. And if anyone tells you there's one silver bullet for finding the perfect career, they're lying.

I wanted *The Right Job, Right Now* to be not just a book, but a tool. As a result you'll find that the book's structure is different from that of other books you may have read. While it can and should be read from cover to cover for the most effective career strategy guidance, it can also be thumbed through to find the topic you need to address right this minute: You're forced to work with a lazy co-worker or have a pending interview and need some quick troubleshooting or immediate advice. *The Right Job, Right Now* is both a guide to a complete career makeover and a reference tool—a book for those who have the time to sit back and think, and for those who barely have time to think about what's for dinner.