

## The “White” Elephant in the Recruiting Process

The truth of the matter is discrimination still occurs with many employers during the recruiting and promotion process. And while it may not be the employers intent; hiring managers tend to hire like kind. If an executive hires a senior manager who doesn't value true skill sets and achievements over diversity, perceptions, or past experiences this allows their shallow-mindset to bleed into the recruiting/hiring process and as minorities are hired, there is a ceiling of opportunity where the growth is stunted. So it leads many minority candidates to ["whiten" their resume](#) (HBS Working Knowledge, 2017)". I'm not against the "whiten" resume process because it works. It is also true that not all employers have this issue; there are many employers who welcome diversity. As we dive in, here is how I coach my clients.

Here is where you rise! You rise when you pursue a career that you're passionate about. You rise when you know your worth. You rise when you understand your value system. You rise, when you know your why. You rise when you know your source. You rise when you know how you consistently impact your employers. And you rise when you remain teachable.

While you're seeking, researching and interviewing your employers, remember, you're hiring just as they are. If you see a vacancy, cross reference the company on Glassdoor, and you'll be surprised what you find. Create your opportunities! We give others too much control and power over what we possess.

I remember my first face-to-face with discrimination. I grew up in Florida, attended predominately white schools all my life and while color was present, it was never an issue. I have many different nationalities, colors and sexualities in my family and so different was my normal. I always saw people for what they offered and possessed. So if I noted a scumbag, it had absolutely nothing to do with color or religion or sexual orientation, but everything to do with their actions and intellect. I heard others discuss their experiences of discrimination, but I'd never experienced that – not even in the military. It wasn't until my first employer after the military that I was in that place. When offered the position, I counter-offered for comparable compensation and it was denied. Six months later I took a lateral position to advance my career in HR within the same company and during my HR training, I received the file for the person filling the position I'd just vacated. The male they hired for the role received \$20k more than I did who would perform the same role/responsibilities, same location, and same requirements in the job description. He did have 20 years of experience with no degree, and I had 8 years of experience with a degree and the position didn't require a degree. What troubled me most is I was only asking for \$5k additional, and I was three classes away from completing my MBA.

This was a defining moment for me. I had a choice, I could become a bottom feeder and harbor anger and bitterness, or I could choose to soar like the amazing, strong eagle. Everything within me said to “AIM HIGH!” Did it hurt? Heck to the ya!!! I even questioned the hiring manager and brought it to the attention of the HR manager, but I never heard about it again.

Here is where I started asking myself, "What is my worth? What is my value? What do I offer? and How do I make an impact?" At the time, I couldn't answer those questions. So, that experience ignited a fire within me to create my worth and understand my value system. Your value system can change over time as the family grows, and needs change. Because I changed my mind set, my career blossomed, and I've learned that the interviewing process is two-fold.

We give the "white" elephant too much of our energy and control. There are some things I don't want to deal with in the work place, and there are some cultures and mindsets that no longer serve me and my purpose. So I only pursue those employers that offer what I desire. It may take a while to find (so keep your current job until you find that right employer).

Whenever faced with an opportunity to make a great impact with an employer that doesn't offer autonomy, create it within your personal life. Remember you are the product in the workplace, outside of the workplace, you own your skill sets, your achievements and your solutions. Now listen, if your employer has a proprietary policy, adhere to that -- but know that you can re-create things outside of your job. A dear friend of mine, Pamela Green, authored a book "[Think Like a Brand](#)." She's a dynamic speaker, Conflicts/Resolution & Executive Coach, and she reminds me every time I look at her book to think like a brand. Don't stay confined within the scope of your employer and expect donations of opportunities and promotions. Create your value and your worth wherever you go!

Green, P. J. (2015). *Think like a brand: a 7-step strategic brand plan to increase your career satisfaction and success*. Washington, D.C.: Pamela J. Green Solutions.

Knowledge, H. W. (2017, May 18). Minorities Who 'Whiten' Resumes Get More Job Interviews. Retrieved May 25, 2017, from <https://www.forbes.com/sites/hbsworkingknowledge/2017/05/17/minorities-who-whiten-resumes-get-more-job-interviews/#496ff7627b74>