



You and Your Who

Executive recruiter and author Bob Beaudine says finding a job isn't about having friends in high places. But it is about whom you know. *By Jan Reid*

BOB BEAUDINE is a funny, fast-talking blond 54-year-old with a hot book in the stores and a messianic resolve to set the world of business right. "We've got problems," he declares on a recent morning in his Plano, Texas, office, the walls of which are crammed with sports memorabilia, muted TVs tuned to sports programs, and a mounted head of a moose — one that, he is quick to point out, he bought, not shot. "There's a Gallup Poll that says 69 percent of people in this country think a bad day at the beach is better than a good day at work. You're killing me! Another Gallup Poll finds that 87 percent of people employed by corporations believe they are not getting to use their number one talent in their jobs. And as of April, 13.7 million people in our country had no work. We've got to help these people."

Beaudine is trying to do just that. He is the CEO of an executive search firm that his father cofounded in Chicago in 1967 and then moved to the Dallas suburb of Plano in 1985. And he has contributed

to the family-grown business a thriving specialty: matching talent in sports and entertainment with organizations' needs. Beaudine has shown a particular gift for finding college coaches who are willing to leave enviable and competitive positions to risk taking on programs in trouble. *Sports Illustrated* has called him "the most influential man in sports you've never heard of."

But since the January release of his book, *The Power of Who! You Already Know Everyone You Need to Know* (cowritten with Tom Dooley), Beaudine has been on the *Today* show, *Fox & Friends*, and other shows, making a fevered pitch that he can teach *everyone* — not just athletic directors and coaches — how jobs are really won, how to overcome the psychological toll of losing a job, how to avoid spending "dog years" in jobs that are passionless and unrewarding, and how smart companies are managed and run.

Beaudine's first opportunity to carve out the profitable sports niche for his firm also gave him the footing for his new persona as a business coach for the masses. In 1992, a senior owner of the Atlanta Braves helped make him head of the search committee charged with finding a new Major League Baseball commissioner. George W. Bush, then a managing partner of the Texas Rangers and a political candidate running for the office of governor of Texas, had known Beaudine long enough, and was fond enough of him, to award him one of his famous nicknames: Bobby Boy. Beaudine writes in his book that Bush one day confided to him in a meeting, "Bobby Boy, you might as well get me the commissioner's job, because I don't think I can beat

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[incumbent governor] Ann Richards." Allan "Bud" Selig, a Milwaukee Brewers owner, ended up winning the top job in baseball, and Karl Rove, at the time a political consultant little-known outside Texas, steered a composed and disciplined Bush to an upset of the popular governor in 1994.

"Amazing, huh?" writes Beaudine. "The man who would become president of the United States for two terms almost made the wrong choice." He goes on with, "The point of this story is: If you're going to fulfill your destiny in life, you're going to need some wise friends and advisers to help you see a vision of your future that, perhaps, you can't see yourself."

One of the book's major thrusts is that the business world's sacred cow of networking, which assumes that relative or complete strangers will bond because of some perceived shared interest, is baloney. Beaudine says that theory holds up only if sinews of friendship are the ties that bind. In his paradigm, a person's "who world," as he calls it, is a series of overlapping spheres of influence: an inner circle of your 12 closest friends, a "40 list" of friends and peers who have special expertise and can help you reach your strategic objectives, roughly 100 "who friends" who may be separated by distance and years but will always want to help you, and rippling outward circles of allies, advocates, and fans. Working within your "Who World" to achieve your career objectives is what Beaudine calls the "100/40 strategy"; he boasts in the book's introduction, "This revolutionary concept will get you moving toward your dreams and goals in ways you never imagined possible."

During our meeting in Plano, he expounds on the dynamics of most job interviews, saying, "The interviewer's going to decide in the first minute and a half what he or she thinks of you: 'Do you understand my needs? You look like a nice person, but I don't know you. I can't necessarily say I trust you. I don't know your core values. Under duress and adversity, would you be a person of high integrity and character? Would you be loyal?' You'll have a much better shot if you've prepared, if you've asked your friends if they know anything about this person, this company. Do you have a friend who could put in an advance word for you? If you walk in knowing nothing, you'd better look around and see what commonality

of interests the two of you might have — if there's a golf club in the corner or a photo from a skiing vacation or an autographed picture of Bush or Obama on the wall. Or you can talk about how the company's stock has been moving. Everybody has stories from their careers they can draw on. That's the interesting aspect of this. It's called the 'I like you factor.' When that's in your favor,

29 years, I've never placed anyone from a résumé. Ever. Why is that? It starts with 'do I know you?'

But Beaudine offers hope for those who are willing to try his alternative brand of networking. Out of crisis comes opportunity, he insists — but only for those who are willing to utilize their "who." "In the worst economies, adversity can be a catalyst for

success," he says. "The greatest chances for success are right now. There are going to be a million new companies created this year, which is a spectacular opportunity for people. Who do you think they're going to hire? People they know or don't know?" **AW**

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"The interviewer's going to decide in the first minute and a half what he or she thinks of you."

the questions become much easier. You get lobbed softballs. If it's not in your favor, you'll get fastballs thrown at your cheek."

Beaudine's lessons become even more important in light of the economic woes Americans have been weathering in recent months. He is positively dumbfounded that the natural reaction of people who have lost their jobs is to turn away from those closest to them and try to go it alone. He cites this example to illustrate his point: "If you go get some minor surgery and you're discharged, who do you call to come get you — people you know or people you don't know? Of course, you call people you know," he says. But, he continues, if people get laid off, their instinct is to do the exact opposite. Out of shame or embarrassment, they don't call their friends. Rather, they turn "to faceless websites," he says. "They hand out business cards to strangers. They send out letters that start out 'Dear Recruiter.' 'Dear Recruiter' — that's an oxymoron, isn't it?" He lets loose a burst of wheezing laughter. "I get 52,000 résumés a year," he says. "In

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