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Raise Your Career Game During the COVID-19 Crisis

The COVID-19 crisis is challenging for all of us. But think of it as a growth opportunity – for your company and for you.

As you deal with the catastrophic consequences facing our health, economy, and livelihoods, it's hard to find time to focus on your career. But that doesn't make it less important.

The IRO occupies a precious role in the management ranks. If you demonstrate excellence and can pivot to new strategies needed to deal with this crisis, management will think twice about replacing you, even when companies may need to drastically downsize.

But the spotlight is bright. The technical competency to do investor relations is just table stakes. You need more. Top executives will ask, "Who do I want in the foxhole with me?" We are in a foxhole right now with mortar flying in every direction.

When the market starts to recover, smart management teams will also want the right executives in critical roles to leverage the pivot. They also look for who has the intellectual and intuitive ability to see around corners.

Sharp professionals who stand out will get their brand in shape and articulate the value they bring. Here are seven tips:

1. Align Your Profiles: I am amazed at how many senior-level executives who are very good at their jobs have resumes, LinkedIn profiles, Facebook pages, and company biographies that differ on key facts and information. Clean this up! This also includes your online NIRI member profile, which should also include the biographic information you can easily enter there.

2. Talk to the C-Suite: Use C-Suite language and positioning statements in your resume so executives understand your inherent value immediately. Include a one-line description of your company and industry (including market-cap size or pre-

IPO designation) that help readers identify with your career journey and see how you could add value to their organization.

3. Get a Soundbite: You must define your brand in a soundbite so you sound confident about what you offer. In today's market companies want to know that you can add C-suite value to solve challenges and pivot when the markets turn. Three key attributes and "game changing" experience is all you need.

4. Hone Your Writing Skills: Many top executives say, "Bring me an excellent writer!" Writing is thinking, so demonstrate your powerful thinking ability. Don't assume everyone knows what your company does – explain it succinctly. Many people don't proof their own writing, and careless mistakes can sink job opportunities. Don't be one of them.

5. Learn the Truth About Yourself: Seek input from five professionals who have known you for at least 10 years. They will provide valuable insights about you.

6. Manage Your Contacts: Create an Excel document that lists all your key contacts. We all have a lot, but are they the right contacts? Then use a surgical strike approach to determine how you want to message them in a thoughtful way about the path you are pursuing.

7. Know Your Strategy: Think critically about the next two chapters of where your career is headed and plan for it. "Just getting a job" might be fine to meet financial obligations, but you will find yourself lost and soon conduct another job search. Think clearly about where you are headed and your goals. This may also mean that you take a side-step from IR into something tangentially related.

Good luck and stay safe! 

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