



WHEN JOB YOU ARE BEING COMPARED

By Nick Kossovian

Job hunting is a 'winner takes all' competition in which you're compared and judged against other applicants. Putting in an application for a job is no different from entering a baking or short story contest. However, there's one difference: there's no second place—silver medal—nor does "everyone wins for doing their best," hence why giving participation trophies does a disservice to children; it fails to prepare them for two universal life truths that they'll one day confront:

1. Everything in life is earned. (Yes, birthright exceptions exist. Choosing to squander your time and energy, resenting those who're an exception doesn't change this truism.), and
2. Sometimes, your best isn't good enough to beat those you're up against.

Job searching intensifies these truths.

Irrespective of your feelings about the "fairness" of having to do "what it takes," you don't rise through the ranks of whatever career path you've chosen by being meek. Be it corporate, artistic endeavours, athletics or military, without a competitive spirit, you won't have a career comparable to someone who does. Thus, generally (keyword) speaking, CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, higher-ranking military officers, celebrities and elite athletes tend to be hyper-competitive.

I keep the following phrase from American author Ashley Antoinette in my head: "You can't compete where you don't compare."

When entering any competition, for instance, job searching, it's crucial to understand the standards and benchmarks—your ego may insist you have the skills and qualifications, do you?—against which you'll be compared; therefore, consider the following:

· Awareness of standards

Knowing and accepting what employers in your profession and industry will most likely expect from you is critical.

If you're applying for any job requiring strong writing skills (e.g., grant writer, content creator, communications manager), it's a given that your writing skills need to be well above average. When applying for a sales position, your sales record and ability to sell yourself will be evaluated.

Along with industry and profession expectations, employers evaluate applicants based on the expectation of applying professionally.

I repeatedly see sloppy applications and an unprofessional appearance as the biggest hindrance to a successful job search. Even with all the online job search advice, typos, grammatical errors, incomplete LinkedIn profiles, and dressing inappropriately for interviews—dress for the position you're interviewing for—are common. In 2025, there's still a strong conservative element in the workplace, albeit not as strong as before.

· Self-Assessment

You can identify your strengths and weaknesses by honestly comparing yourself to those you're competing against. My advice: To be competitive and considered a contender, focus on your strengths (read: lead with) and be less concerned about your weaknesses.

My "go with your strengths" story:

Years ago, over a Thai lunch, I asked my then-boss how he managed to work so fluidly. He never seemed stressed; it was as if he floated through his workday, accomplishing high-level tasks. His answer: "I work with my strengths. As long as my weaknesses do not hinder me from doing my job, I don't spend time and energy trying to overcome them. I spend my time and energy improving my strengths." The food wasn't memorable, but my then-boss's words were. As a result of ignoring my non-detrimental weaknesses and focusing on my strengths, I've become a stronger competitor and have benefited from it.

· Strategic positioning

Knowing where you stand in relation to your competitors helps you improve your strategy.

The words uttered by another ex-boss during what I think was a friendly dust-up some 20 years ago, "There's always someone younger, more skilled, and hungrier than you," have stayed with me all these years. His words remind me that I must always be at least one step ahead of those nipping at my heels. I've seen many careers implode because the person rested on their laurels.

It's surprising how many people don't try to stay relevant by learning and becoming proficient in the technological advances affecting their profession and industry, AI being the latest.

Demonstrating continuous learning and adaptation is what employers like to see in candidates and their employees.

Always know where your skills and experience stand and what you can offer employers in terms of measurable value. Calling yourself "talent," as many nowadays do without quantifying how your "supposed talent" will make money for an employer, isn't a compelling argument for why an employer should hire you.

I hear from many job seekers experiencing the "Silver Medal Curse," where they land interviews and then hear, "We went with someone else."

Clearly, their resume and LinkedIn profile are competitive, which anyone can achieve with all the resume help available. However, one thing no one can do for you is your interviews, the meetings where the hiring manager assesses your suitability for the position and the company and compares you to the other candidates they're interviewing.

My tip to make your interviewer see you as a contender for the job is to prepare specific examples that showcase your skills and achievements, aligning them with the job requirements. The best strategy for beating your competition is to show employers that you are a winner who has produced measurable value (key) for your previous employers.

Nick Kossovian, a well-seasoned veteran of the corporate landscape, offers advice on searching for a job. You can send him your questions at artoffindingwork@gmail.com



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Lisa Robinson

PICKERING CITY COUNCILLOR

Why Pickering Needs to Rethink Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Programs: A Call for Common Sense

By Lisa Robinson

At the May 6th, 2024 Executive Meeting, I stood alone in voting against forcing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) programs and policies on the City of Pickering. At the time, I cautioned my fellow council members and city staff that DEI was facing bans in some U.S. states due to its divisive nature and inefficiency. Now, just months later, my concerns have proven valid. DEI programs have spiraled into a bureaucratic nightmare—wasting taxpayer dollars, sowing division, and replacing practical governance with ideological agendas.

While I stood firm in opposing these policies, all three of my colleagues present at that meeting were actively pushing to accelerate the implementation of the DEI program. Meanwhile, some of the world's largest and most successful companies like McDonald's, Walmart, Boeing, Molson-Coors, Ford, Jack Daniel's, John Deere, Lowe's, Harley-Davidson, Meta, and Amazon, are abandoning DEI initiatives. Why? Because these programs don't work. They create division, invite lawsuits, alienate customers, and fuel tensions among employees. If industry giants with global operations recognize the harm caused by DEI, why is Pickering still embracing it?

The slogan "go woke, go broke" has become more than a catchy phrase—it's a reality. Time and again, businesses and organizations that prioritize ideological agendas over quality, fairness, and merit end up facing backlash from consumers and stakeholders. Just look at the numerous companies that have lost market share, tarnished their reputations, or faced significant public criticism for going too far with divisive DEI initiatives. DEI is not the cure-all it was once marketed as; instead, it is a framework that too often prioritizes optics over outcomes and division over unity.

In Pickering, we're already seeing the cracks. DEI policies don't just fail to address the root causes of inequality—they create new problems. By categorizing people based on their identity rather than their character or qualifications, these programs foster resentment and suspicion. No one should be hired based on the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, or their sexual preferences. When you board a plane or go into surgery, do you want to be wondering if the pilot or surgeon was hired because of DEI quotas, or because they were the best person for the job? Competence and merit should always come first.

These policies also breed inefficiency. The introduction of costly DEI officers, training sessions, and consultants eats away at our city budget, diverting funds that could be spent on tangible improvements for our residents. Do we want a city that prioritizes ideological box-checking over fixing our roads, supporting small businesses, and investing in public safety? Residents are already stretched thin by rising costs of living. They deserve to see their hard-earned tax dollars go toward initiatives that make Pickering a better, safer, and more prosperous place—not divisive policies that sow confusion and mistrust.

Let's be clear not to twist my words. I'm not advocating for the exclusion of anyone. What I'm saying is that we should be focusing on unity and inclusion through fairness and common sense—not through bureaucratic, expensive programs that polarize our community. A city should serve its residents by providing effective services and fostering real opportunities for everyone, not by lecturing and training them on identity politics.

Following our January 27th virtual council meeting, I will give notice of a notice of motion to halt DEI programs and policies in Pickering and block using your tax dollars to hire a nearly One Hundred Thousand Dollar a year DEI officer. It's time we prioritize fiscal responsibility and practical governance over ideological fads. The divisive nature of DEI is clear, and the evidence from the corporate world shows us that it doesn't lead to success—it leads to failure.

Time to focus on real issues like homelessness, rebuilding infrastructure, fostering economic growth, lowering property taxes, the reckless spending of your tax dollars, and ensuring the safety of our neighborhoods, to name a few. These are the issues that matter to Pickering residents, not divisive and expensive programs that pit people against one another.

Time to learn from the mistakes of others. The corporate world is moving away from DEI because it has proven to be a failure. It's time for Pickering to follow suit and focus on what truly matters. The people of Pickering. By redirecting our resources and efforts, we can build a city that works for everyone—not just those pushing ideological agendas.

I encourage you to review the May 6th meeting on Youtube yourself to see where I stood on this issue. The link is provided for full transparency.

I am Lisa Robinson, the People's Councillor, and I remain committed to advocating for policies and change that serve our city and its people—not empty agendas that divide and control us. Time to rebuild trust in our community.

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