

## They can switch

# Teachers don't need re-training, author says

By Suzie Rollins Singer  
staff writer

Displaced teachers see themselves as professionals who are terrified when the pink slips arrive.

"One of the biggest mistakes teachers make is believing they have to be retrained for another job," said Jacqueline Lichty, a former teacher and author of "The Educator's Job Change Manual."

"College never trained anyone to do anything. Most careers are learned on the job," she said.

Lichty, a Birmingham resident, likened herself with an English teaching job in 1973 at 33. Tired of being a full-time mother, she sought a career. After earning a teaching certificate at Oakland University, she plunged into a job at East Hills Junior High in Bloomfield Hills.

"I discovered I really enjoyed working. There was a myth that working was tough, but the toughest job in the whole world is staying home taking care of three preschoolers. Working is a piece of cake," she recalled.

THREE YEARS and a divorce later, Lichty quit teaching. "The incentive wasn't there. I wanted to create more options. I wanted a sales job," she said. Having no prior sales experience,

Lichty said she tapped every resource person she knew, telling them she was searching for a job. Ultimately, her neighbor referred her to his boss at 3M Co.

Asked about her previous sales experience, Lichty wrote, "As an eighth grade English teacher, I manufactured, packaged and sold a communications product to 180 resistant customers daily." Result: "I got the interview and the job."

As an education and governmental specialist, Lichty said she sells adhesive tape to the art and graphics industry. Her original territory was the entire state of Michigan, but has since been narrowed to the tri-county area.

"As a single parent, I loved traveling

a few days a week. It was like a mini-vacation. I've had tremendous success and won outstanding sales awards," she said.

WHILE CLIMBING the success ladder, her phone was "ringing off the wall" with teacher friends wanting to know how she "did it."

"A friend suggested I write a book but I was determined to make it a profitable venture," she said. (The book is available in stores or through her firm, Phoenix Services, Troy.)

Setting aside two hours a day, three days a week, plus Sundays, Lichty pounded her typewriter keys churning out copy, only to get discouraged after several months.

"So I put the book on the back burner

for a while and got a brochure together for seminars aimed at educators wanting a career change," she said.

Lichty talked to every school personnel director in Wayne and Oakland County and advertised the seminars at any place with a bulletin board.

The seminar idea took off, and Lichty was forced to pull her book together in 30 days.

"The Wayne County Intermediate School District offered to print it for nothing because I did a seminar for them," she said.

LAST SUMMER'S six seminars, at \$55 per person per day were successful. Most of her clients are school districts, including Oakland Intermediate School District, where she recently

completed a two-night seminar for 250 teachers.

Lichty seems self-assured and encouraged by her new-found success. She says she's in control of her life, enjoys her 3M job, including training young sales persons, and is having fun conducting seminars.

"My next step is to work on the national basis," she said.

Looking back at her career advancement, Lichty said, it wasn't easy making the career change and raising her children who are now 16, 17 and 20.

"But you have to know what you want and want it with a passion. When you're looking for a job, the narrower you are the more success you'll have," she said.



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