

## Discussion Group Etiquette

My patience with the TENG Discussion Group has run out. Administration has been a nightmare due both to member complaints and departures and I am seriously considering shutting down the Discussion Group if member etiquette and behavior fail to improve immediately. I am annoyed that some of you ignored Emails I posted to the group asking you to stop two recent threads and that you also ignored an original requester's Email to end your voluminous replies to his inquiry. I erroneously assumed that TENG members, being senior executives, would automatically understand how to be polite and considerate of others when posting comments and also restrain themselves given the few rules, which I initially created for the Discussion Group. This has been an education for me. I along with many of our colleagues have been more than patient allowing a few of our fellow members to vent frustrations and share unwanted opinions at the expense of others. This is over.

I launched the Discussion Group for these reasons: First, to allow members to obtain contact information and introductions to companies where they had secured interviews or wished to establish connections. Second, it is to allow us to post useful career information, such as book titles, seminars, meetings and networking events. Third, it is for us to announce chapter activities, which would provide a cross-pollination of ideas for chapter meetings and permit members who are available to multiple chapters to plan their schedules. I do not intend for it be used as a chat room, an opinion forum or a marketing channel. Over the past few months, we have suffered the following abuses: gripes concerning recruiters, an attempt to launch a consulting business, a polemic on the value of Top Five consultants and most recently a session on the effectiveness of Haldane Associates. While not all messages in these dialogs were critical in nature, many contributors merely shared "me, too" and "hear, hear" comments with the entire group, when they should have sent them to the topic originator only, if at all. While many of you have time on your hands to spend in such dialog, most of us do not, nor do we wish to be forced to receive your opinions when we don't want them. Moreover, some parts of the discussion thread concerning Top Five consulting was especially insulting and offensive to our members, since many of them have experience in these firms. Venting anger and frustration is acceptable only when the intended recipient offers to listen. Forcing over six hundred fifty others to read your opinions and comments that offer no broad-based value or suffer your frustrations without their permission or solicitation is considered by some to be arrogant and impolite. At best, such behavior is unnecessary.

Effective immediately, the policies and rules of the TENG-Discussion Group are as follows:

1. This is for career-related (business and IT) discussion only. Chapter Chairs should post meeting announcements, highlighting speakers and topics. They may also post meeting follow-ups to this group if the meeting was especially successful. This will provide other Chapter Chairs with new meeting ideas. This is not a venue for business development, for posting personal items for sale, MLM or discussing other issues unrelated to TENG and career search.
2. Job leads are NOT to be posted to this list. Please forward them to Ed Pospesil <epospesil@brunerconsulting.com> for distribution. All leads must be pre-approved for appropriate fit for our members.

3. Members may post requests for information concerning company contacts, company information, career services, concepts, products and the like, but they must include their return Email address and/or phone number within their Email. Members who wish to respond WILL NOT use the "Reply All" button on their Email form. Instead they must reply directly to the sender only. The originator of such a topic may choose to prepare a summary, digest or scorecard of reader responses over a five to ten day period, which she or he may then distribute via one Email back to the entire Discussion Group. The originator's report must be carefully written to avoid unsubstantiated criticism and may not include negative comments unless they are of a very factual nature. Any further member comment to that single report will be directed back to the originator ONLY, but not shared with the entire group. The TENG-Discussion Group Owner must approve further distribution(s) on a given topic.
4. All members, their careers and ideas will be treated with equal dignity and respect. Usage of profanity is forbidden. Any opinionated criticism or bashing of people, industries and services (e.g. Top Five firms, search firms and employment services) is not tolerated or allowed. This also includes but is not limited to comments that deal negatively with topics such as race, gender, national origin, religion and ethnicity.
5. Attachments to Discussion Group postings are not permitted. This is to protect our members from computer viruses and to avoid clogging Email accounts with lengthy downloads that include unwanted information.
6. This Discussion Group is strictly for the use of TENG members. Sharing your user identification and password with non-TENG members is forbidden.
7. Violation of these rules will cause the offending member(s) to be banned from this Discussion Group.
8. The TENG-Discussion Group may be discontinued at any time if subjected to widespread abuse of its rules of operation.

Bear in mind that once you send an Email, you no longer have control of its content or additional recipients. Before you offer opinions and negative critical comments, consider whether you would be embarrassed if your Email was sent to unintended recipients. I have seen discussion threads that are several years old. At least "junk" in outer space burns up when re-entering the earth's atmosphere. Discussion threads appear to be more like radioactive waste, they don't go away for a long time.

As a member of this Discussion Group, you may elect receive individual Emails, each time a member posts or you may choose the Daily Digest option. With this latter feature, you will receive one daily Email, which contains the entire day's traffic and I recommend you elect it if you find the Emails excessive. You may also choose to not receive any Emails and log on to read the messages at your own convenience.

While it is impossible to achieve perfection and please everyone all the time, we must do our best to be considerate of our fellow members and pay careful attention to how others might receive our Emails.

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