



# UNEMPLOYED SHARED SUPPORT GROUP MANUAL



**UNEMPLOYED  
SHARED  
SUPPORT GROUP**

**MANUAL  
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## Chapter 1

# Introduction



## Chapter 1

# Introduction

**“Finding a full time job is a full time job.”**

Welcome to our Unemployed Shared Support Group. You may think that you are alone in your quest to find a job. You're not. The number of unemployed in the United States is at an all time high. During 2009, one out of every five U. S. workers was out of work at some time. The average college graduate today will work for seven different companies in their lifetime. This could be perceived as a very discouraging outlook, since you will have to beat out all the others trying to get a job. In order to differentiate yourself from all those others that are out of work, there are some very positive things that you can do.

We will help you enhance your skills and your attitude so that your chances are better than most in landing the job you want. It's going to take a lot of work, full time work, as emphasizes in our motto “Finding a full time job is a full time job.”

Our Group can provide support. Everyone at our meetings is in your same situation. Look to them for support. Talk to them and ask how they are handling things with which you may be having trouble. Offer support to them. There is enormous strength in sharing.

The group also provides networking. Review the Member Lists to determine if there are others in your field. If so, plan to meet with them after the meeting. Share leads with each other. If there was a job that you interviewed for, that was not right for you, share the lead with others in the group. Include your assessment of the interview and other information you learned about the prospective company.

We hope to provide you with some practical ideas also. Over the next few weeks, we will discuss and work on improving your skills in:

Goal setting and identifying what you really want

Time Management

Resume Preparation

How to write effective cover letters

Your three-to-five minute verbal presentation

Telephone techniques

Successful interviewing

Networking

Technology

Most of the above skill enhancement topics will require that you follow certain process steps. It is important that you commit to the recommended process to improve your chances for getting the job you want.

The Group will maintain a Member List that will identify our active membership, telephone numbers and a brief description of occupation skills. This list is made available to prospective employers, and search or temporary agencies, with a recommendation to contact those meeting their requirements. Members of our Support Group can expect to receive calls from potential employers who have reviewed our Member List. You should question the prospective employer if called and submit your resume and cover letter if you are interested in the opportunity.

**Our objective is to get you out of our group.**

## Chapter 2

# Getting Started



## Chapter 2

# Getting Started

**“Ladies and gentlemen, start your engines”**

Everyone who has been terminated, goes through the same feelings. These have been described by the psychologists in varying ways but are generally identified as the emotional roller coaster.

SHOCK

ANGER

ACCEPTANCE

ADJUSTMENT

Although these feelings generally occur in the order listed, they may resurface over and over during the job-hunting period. Included in these are depression, panic, loss of self esteem, financial woes, denial, embarrassment, self pity, etc.

Anger can be particularly damaging if you allow it to affect your relationships at home or if it surfaces during an interview.

These feelings generate STRESS. Stress is external pressure that produces internal anxiety. It is generally unavoidable but not necessarily bad. It can be harmful if experienced at high levels for long periods of time.

You can deal with stress by recognizing and altering it by changing the situation. You can AVOID stress by removing yourself from stressful situations, or ACCEPT it with physical and mental preparation. Recognize that you're going to have it and work at handling it.

Stress can be reduced with the following techniques:

SPIRITUAL	Prayer, worship and commitment
MENTAL	Setting clear life goals, personal values and priorities
SOCIAL	Building and maintaining personal, professional and community relationships
PHYSICAL	Diet, exercise and relaxation

You need to take control of your current situation, realizing that it is only temporary. You have to let go of any of your old identity that is holding you back. Dream and envision your new identity. Focus on the future and set new realistic and positive goals.

You should assess your financial situation to determine how long you can continue a particular lifestyle. Take into account savings, severance pay, unemployment compensation (have you filed?) and other assets. Balance these against your obligations. Consider combining debt into reduced, spread-out payment plans. Don't be ashamed to ask debtors for extended or better payment terms. Determine which expenditures can be deferred. While it is advisable to exercise constraint, if possible, guard against altering your spending habits so severely that it affects your outlook or mental well-being. Remember, this situation is temporary.

We will be moving on to self-evaluation and personal goal setting in Chapter 3. But before we do, it is important to remember throughout this process (and all processes in this book), to ASK OTHERS FOR HELP. Your family and friends can provide clear insight into your own personality. They are the best to review and critique your efforts. Don't be embarrassed or upset with their suggestions. ASK, ACCEPT AND APPLY.

Another important aspect of job search activity is to LOOK FOR SUPPORT. The fact that you are attending these meetings indicates you recognize the importance of group support. There are also other Support Groups or Service Organizations that may provide additional specialized help during your transition. Find some.

## Chapter 3

# What Do I Really Want?



## Chapter 3

### What Do I Really Want?

**“If you don’t know where you are going, you’re liable to end up someplace else.”**

In this chapter we’ll be discussing you and what you have to realize and accept as part of the family of job seekers. We’ll look at where you are and where you should be going, after determining what are your true goals.

What kind of a job do you really want? It’s tempting to say, “Just a job, *any* job” - especially if you’ve been unemployed for a while.

But as long as you’re looking, why not look for the “right job” - one you’ll enjoy, and one that gives you what you need for yourself and your family? Consider:

The right job may not be much harder to find than the wrong job.

You’ll be a lot more motivated to look for it.

If it *is* the “right” job for you, someone might just recognize that - and hire you for it.

When you get it, you’ll work harder at it and do better. It will pay off in the long run.

We don’t want you back in the Group in six months because it didn’t work out.

Your first task is to evaluate yourself, and decide what type of job is right for you. This will be your PERSONAL OBJECTIVE. The next step is to decide whether you've got the qualifications to go after that job right away - or if you'll have to take some intermediate steps. The best way to ensure that you will be able to set some realistic goals for your job search is to follow the process. This means setting aside some quiet time, getting organized in your mind, using paper and pencil and being true to yourself.

## YOUR SELF EVALUATION

Most people who are out of work look for a job like the one they just had. If your last job suited you well, that's fine - as long as there is a realistic chance of finding that kind of work again and it has a future in tomorrow's markets.

In today's business environment, things are changing rapidly. Technology is a driving force. Service has overtaken manufacturing. You must communicate. Quality is king. Middle management is needed less. Are you prepared to work in today's environment (Outsourcing, international trade, productivity, bottom line, etc.)? You must be able to make an honest evaluation of yourself and determine what job you should be pursuing. Then you can pursue it with confidence, knowledge and enthusiasm.

Complete the first two checklists found at the end of this chapter:

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME IN A JOB?

WHAT AM I GOOD AT? WHAT DO I LIKE TO DO?

The completed checklists should start to give you an idea of what's important to you in a job, what you can do well, and what you like to do. Now you can start putting this information together to pick the type of work that would suit you.

The next step requires that you be “open-minded”. Using the PERSONAL OBJECTIVE STATEMENT at the end of this chapter, write down a reasonably specific statement of the kind of work you are looking for. Use the “what’s important to me” and “what I like to do” check lists. You might be suited for a job that, on the surface, looks quite different from the one you had last.

Have your Personal Objective reviewed by someone else - a spouse or a friend. People who work in the field that you’re interested in can also provide help. But you have to ASK. Be open to their suggestions and refine your Personal Objective.

As you narrow in on a Personal Objective, you have to decide whether you’re qualified to look for that job now - or whether you need to take an intermediate step. Find out the qualifications for the type of work you’re interested in, and compare them to your own. Here again it is important to ASK for help from those who know.

If you don’t have the qualifications you need, there are two options open to you: further training, or taking an intermediate “stepping stone” job.

## FURTHER TRAINING

You might want to consider a trade or professional school, college, or an apprenticeship program. Some factors to look at:

Can I train while I’m working at a job?

If not, can I afford to train full-time? (Look into scholarships, loans, veteran’s benefits. Talk to guidance counselors.)

## INTERMEDIATE JOBS

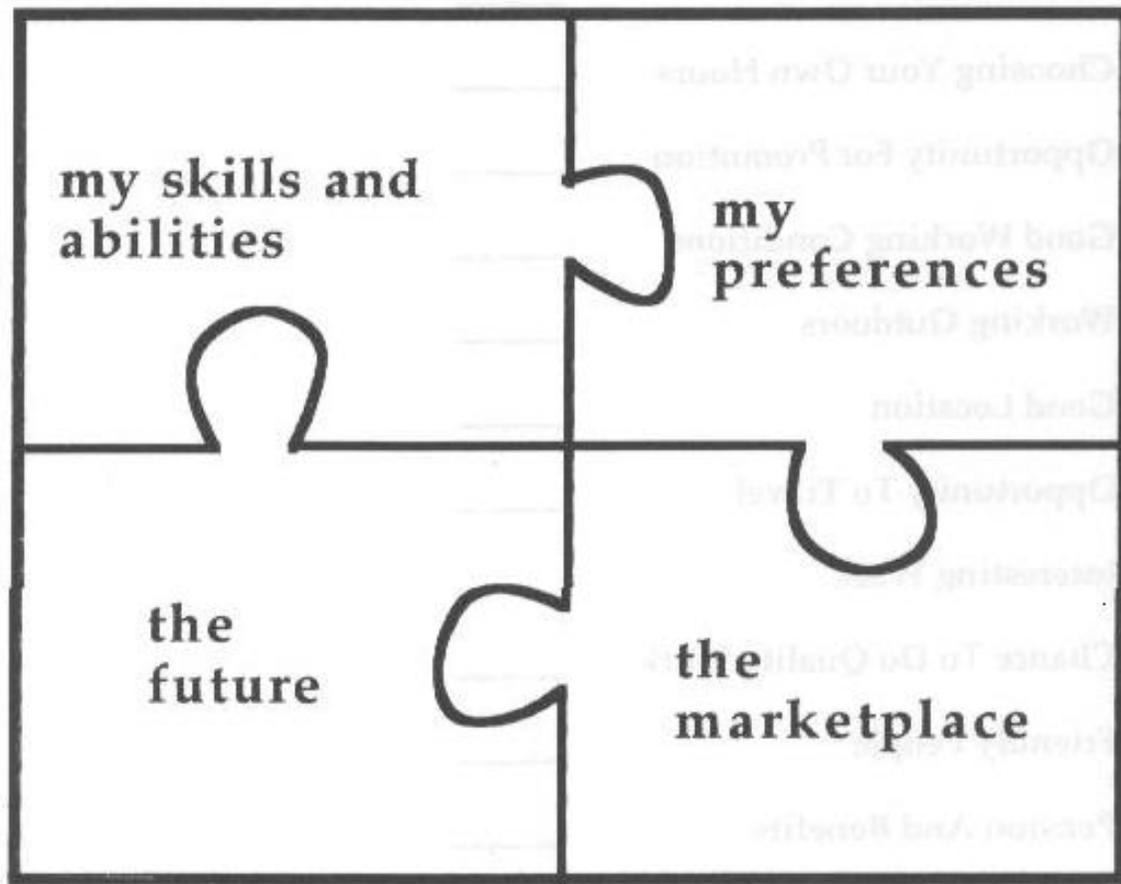
Perhaps you can get the training you need *on* the job - or perhaps there is a lower-level job from which you can advance into your target job. Ask yourself the following:

Can you imagine what job you'd like to have five years from now?

With that in mind, what are three intermediate-level jobs you could take that would lead there?

Most people taking this assessment of themselves will prepare a Personal Objective that says they should stay in the same field and pursue a job similar to their last job. Going through the Personal Objective exercise should help you identify what you truly want to do, and provide you with many of the reasons for your enthusiasm about it. It will also help you in preparing focused and consistent resumes and verbal presentations.

## The Ideal Job Puzzle!!!



All the pieces must fit together

## WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME IN A JOB?

What are (M)ost important or (L)east important to me?

- Steady Work \_\_\_\_\_
- Challenge \_\_\_\_\_
- Respect \_\_\_\_\_
- Prestige \_\_\_\_\_
- Good Pay \_\_\_\_\_
- Good Hours \_\_\_\_\_
- Choosing Your Own Hours \_\_\_\_\_
- Opportunity For Promotion \_\_\_\_\_
- Good Working Conditions \_\_\_\_\_
- Working Outdoors \_\_\_\_\_
- Good Location \_\_\_\_\_
- Opportunity To Travel \_\_\_\_\_
- Interesting Work \_\_\_\_\_
- Chance To Do Quality Work \_\_\_\_\_
- Friendly People \_\_\_\_\_
- Pension And Benefits \_\_\_\_\_
- Security \_\_\_\_\_
- Feeling Your Work \_\_\_\_\_
- Is important \_\_\_\_\_
- Opportunity For \_\_\_\_\_
- Improvement and \_\_\_\_\_
- Self-development \_\_\_\_\_
- Easy Work \_\_\_\_\_
- Educational Benefits \_\_\_\_\_
- On-the-job Freedom \_\_\_\_\_
- Knowing Exactly What \_\_\_\_\_
- You're Supposed To Do \_\_\_\_\_
- Getting Good \_\_\_\_\_
- Performance Ratings \_\_\_\_\_
- Satisfaction of \_\_\_\_\_
- Emotional Needs \_\_\_\_\_
- Approval of Family \_\_\_\_\_
- And Friends \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO ME IN A JOB? (continued)

What are (M)ost important or (L)east important to me?

Knowing What's Going On In The Organization	_____
Agreement With Firms Objectives	_____
Working Under Close Supervision	_____
Working Without Close Supervision	_____
Working For An Ethical Company	_____

(Feel Free To Add Your Own Entries To This List)

## WHAT AM I GOOD AT? WHAT DO I LIKE TO DO?

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>ENJOY USING SKILL</u>	<u>HAVE SKILL</u>	<u>DESCRIBE HOW YOU'VE USED THE SKILL</u>
Woodwork ( <i>example</i> )	<u>  X  </u>	<u>  X  </u>	<u>building cabinets</u>
Building	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Crafts	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Sports	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Working with:			
Machinery	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Electronics	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Chemicals	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Children	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Older people	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Animals	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Plants	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Food	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Finances	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Making things	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>
Taking care of things	<u>    </u>	<u>    </u>	<u>                    </u>

WHAT AM I GOOD AT? WHAT DO I LIKE TO DO? (continued)

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>ENJOY USING SKILL</u>	<u>HAVE SKILL</u>	<u>DESCRIBE HOW YOU'VE USED THE SKILL</u>
Problem-solving	_____	_____	_____
Planning	_____	_____	_____
Organizing	_____	_____	_____
Scheduling	_____	_____	_____
Budgeting	_____	_____	_____
Keeping Records	_____	_____	_____
Accounting	_____	_____	_____
Meeting People	_____	_____	_____
Selling	_____	_____	_____
Negotiating	_____	_____	_____
Talking to people	_____	_____	_____
Directing people	_____	_____	_____
Listening	_____	_____	_____
Counseling	_____	_____	_____
Caring for people	_____	_____	_____
Reading	_____	_____	_____

WHAT AM I GOOD AT? WHAT DO I LIKE TO DO? (continued)

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>ENJOY USING SKILL</u>	<u>HAVE SKILL</u>	<u>DESCRIBE HOW YOU'VE USED THE SKILL</u>
Writing	_____	_____	_____
Teaching	_____	_____	_____
Training	_____	_____	_____
Testing	_____	_____	_____
Interviewing	_____	_____	_____
Explaining things	_____	_____	_____
Diagnosing problems	_____	_____	_____
Being creative	_____	_____	_____
Drawing	_____	_____	_____

## PERSONAL OBJECTIVE

Because I feel that the important aspects of a job are \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and because I  
enjoy \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ and feel that I have certain skills in  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ the kind of job I should be pursuing is \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

### ***EXAMPLE;***

Because I feel that the important aspects of a job are challenge, good pay, interesting work, satisfaction of emotional needs and working without close supervision, and because I enjoy planning, meeting people, diagnosing problems and working with computers, and feel that I have certain skills in selling, negotiating, training, explaining things and working with finances, the kind of job I should be pursuing is probably in sales or marketing, maybe training, perhaps in the communications or electronics industries, with a small, rapidly growing company that needs a lot of help.

## Chapter 4

# Time Management



## Chapter 4

# Time Management

### **“But I just don’t have any time”**

As our motto states, “finding a full time job is a full time job”. You will make the job search process go a lot better if you organize and prioritize your daily and weekly job search work. When you were working, you had to organize your day and get certain tasks finished on time or you were in big trouble with the boss. It hasn’t changed, now you are your own boss.

Job search tasks (your full time job right now) can be generally described as:

Networking - making and expanding contacts

Research - Library, lobby visits, phone calls

Correspondence - Cover letter preparation

Mailings - stuffing and licking, Post Office visits

Enhancing Presentation - working on resume, 3-5 minute verbal presentation, interview techniques

References - more phone calls

Relaxation - thinking good thoughts, unwinding

One other task that should be included in every day's activities is exercise. Many of you complained when you worked, that you didn't have time to exercise to take those few pounds off or to feel better. You don't have that excuse now. Exercise also keeps you mentally alert. It can improve your appearance and attitude.

Good time management requires planning, organization and discipline.

## PLANNING

One hour of planning generally saves three to four hours in execution and gets better results. Take time to plan every day. Use an integrated system to develop plans, priorities, objectives and deadlines. Integrated means that all daily objectives, and the plans to achieve them, should work together and be targeted toward your primary objective of finding the job you want.

Impose deadlines. They should be realistic and you should work to meet them. Don't procrastinate. It's amazing how much can get done if things are done in small bites.

Planning should be done with pencil and pad in hand. Develop a daily work sheet that matches your daily routine. A sample of a daily work sheet is found at the end of this chapter. You may want to purchase one of the many kinds of day-planners available on the market. The important thing is to find a way to keep your plan for the day on paper, so you can review it often.

When planning your day allow for some flexibility. As they say, "The best laid plans....."

One of the most difficult tasks is to prioritize your action plan. What needs to be done first? What is most important? Prioritize any way you like(\*, \*\*, \*\*\*, 1, 2, 3, A, B, C) but identify the things in your plan that need to be done first. There may be a tendency to put off the tougher things till last. Don't!!! Do the worst things first!!!

## ORGANIZATION

First you need a space to be organized. Whether it's a desk, kitchen table or card table, it needs to be your place to do your work. It should be free from interruption by family and pets. Your work area should be kept neat. Use files or binders to keep your paperwork orderly. It's very uncomfortable for a prospective employer to call and set up an interview only to have you fumbling for pencil, paper and that list of questions you wanted to ask this particular person.

Write things down and record them as necessary into your daily planning sheets. Don't count on your memory to remember appointments. Use a calendar and mark it up.

You should have an answering machine with a short (non-cute) message, so you are sure to get all those important calls. Brief your family on how to answer the phone and take messages from prospective employers. Make sure there is a pencil and pad near every phone for whoever answers.

It is imperative that you have a computer, or access to one. Checking companies out on the Internet, preparing your resume and cover letters, email, etc. are needed in today's environment to get a job. Your new employer will expect you to have some basic computer skills. If you don't have these, take a class at your local library or junior college.

## DISCIPLINE

Since you are going to be your own boss during the job-hunting period, you have to establish the discipline. It is important to keep to your tasks and deadlines. Develop standards for yourself that you must meet to realize your objectives. Impose realistic but firm deadlines.

Establish a routine and stick to it. When you were working, you had to be on time, so avoid the temptation to sleep in. Remember, unemployment is only temporary, so don't develop bad habits now.

Set priorities to focus on the most productive areas, not the easiest. Don't start and stop. Get the task done the first time. Try to handle each piece of paper only once - don't put it back on the bottom of the pile.

Recognize when you are procrastinating and scold yourself for it. Replace bad habits with good ones. Reward yourself when you complete a task.

Keep an active list of all your current job prospects. This list should contain employer name, address, telephone number and contact name. Keep track of time and dates of phone and personal contacts. It's also good to keep track of key interests or "hot buttons" identified during each contact. See the sample at the end of this chapter. You can impress your prospective employer by being prepared to talk to him/her, and by referring intelligently to your last conversation with your notes in hand.

You may want to keep a personal probability of success status on each of your prospects. This may help you to prioritize your activities.

Time management is important to your success in your job search. You have full control over how you spend your time. Spend it wisely.



TARGET EMPLOYERS

EMPLOYER: \_\_\_\_\_

(NAME AND) \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS) \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

E-MAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

CONTACT: \_\_\_\_\_

DATE/TIME: \_\_\_\_\_

FOLLOW-UP/  
HOT BUTTONS \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Chapter 5

# Resumes



## Chapter 5

# Resumes

**“Ask and it will be given to you, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; they who seek find; and to those who knock, the door will be opened.” -- Matthew 7:7-8**

Your resume is the most important document in your search. The resume's job is to get you an interview. By itself, it will not “get you a position,” since there is no substitute for selling yourself in a personal interview. It is, however, a prime-source document for discussing your background with any audience. Think of it as your calling card, designed to make a positive impression.

The resume is a summary of your work history, skills, and education. It is your advertisement of “YOU” and should demonstrate to employers that you are capable of doing the job. The resume is generally the first step in marketing yourself to a prospective employer. It can give you a competitive edge if it demonstrates that you are the best candidate to meet their needs. The resume should also create enough interest that you will receive an invitation for an interview.

In drafting your resume, you must consider both substance and style. The substance of your resume should clearly portray your strengths and skills to a prospective employer. It should put particular emphasis on past accomplishments.

Remember, however, that most people skim resumes - often in a matter of seconds. They take a closer look only if the “first pass” left a favorable impression. Therefore, presenting the substance of your career in an attractive, easy-to-read format is vital.

To write an effective resume takes time. Your initial draft will probably be too long. You will need to go back and review, edit, consolidate, and revise your resume several times. Also allow time to have it critiqued by someone who knows you and someone who doesn't know you but sees a lot of resumes. Your final draft should highlight your work experience in two pages or less. If you can get it on one page, that's all right. Don't try to stretch it to two pages if it isn't necessary. But don't try to shorten it to one page if you have enough background information to fill two pages.

Choose the type of resume (chronological, functional, or combination) that is best suited to describing your strengths and accomplishments.

## CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

The “Chronological Resume” is a summary of your work and educational experience written in reverse chronological order. This format is the most well-known and widely used type of resume.

Employers can easily review your information with the “Chronological Resume” because it allows them the opportunity to review your past responsibilities, skills, achievements, and project probable future performance. You should use this type of resume when you have experience that is directly related to a position for which you are applying. You should also use the “Chronological Resume” if you have had steady advancement in your career field. You generally need to go back only 10 – 15 years.

The work experience section should include the names, addresses (usually city only), a brief description of the company (unless very large and well known), and dates of former employment, beginning with the most recent employer. This should be followed by a brief statement of your responsibilities, skills and accomplishments. Stress your accomplishments and skills rather than your formal duties (job description) and responsibilities. You want a “results oriented” resume that indicates you are a productive and responsible person who gets things done.

It is acceptable and recommended to list your last employment as “to present” even though you may have been out of work for some time. There is no reason to show a gap between the time you lost your job that may require explanation on your resume. If necessary this information can be provided at the interview.

The chronological format can be a plus if

- You worked recently for an organization that is well known and respected in its field
- You are seeking a similar position or a natural progression from the one you recently left.
- Your career has been marked by a rapid or consistent progression up the ladder in your organization(s) or discipline.
- You have no chronological gaps in your education/work experience.
- You have not “job hopped”

A “Chronological Resume” may ***not*** be for individuals who are changing careers or have an unstable employment background.

## FUNCTIONAL RESUME

The “Functional Resume” helps to emphasize your overall skills and accomplishments. This format is the best choice for individuals who may be considering a career change, entering the workforce for the first time, or re-entering the job market after a lengthy absence.

This resume format stresses your skills and accomplishments, regardless of your work history. Accomplishments from outside the work setting, such as volunteer work, can be included. Names of employers and dates of employment may be omitted.

The functional format may be a plus if:

- You are making a major career change and wish to highlight relevant skills but downplay previous titles or employers.
- Your formal experience has been limited or narrow, or you have been in one job too long.
- You seek to return to something you did early in your career. That early experience could get lost in a chronological format.
- You have chronological gaps in your background, or you have worked for a number of different employers in a relatively short time.
- You seek to make a career out of what has been a hobby or outside activity.
- Your most recent position was a special assignment or not in the area of expertise you wish to pursue.

## COMBINATION RESUME

The “Combination Resume” is an excellent compromise between the “Chronological” and “Functional Resumes.” This resume has a number of advantages over the other formats and is most effective for individuals who are making a career change with related work experience.

This format provides you the opportunity to present your skills and accomplishments as well as include a work history. Your work history appears as a separate section following your accomplishments and skills. It is not necessary to include dates unless they enhance your resume. The “Combination Resume” is an excellent format for individuals in mid-career who wish to change to a job in a related field.

## PARTS OF THE RESUME

**CONTACT INFORMATION** - Always include your name, address, email address and telephone number with area code. Be sure the phone will be answered at all times by a person or an answering machine. There is no need to use the word “Resume” in the first page heading or as the heading on the second page.

**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS** - This is an important section in your resume because it gives you the opportunity to advertise your experience, knowledge, skills and abilities. A brief paragraph, consisting of 20-50 words is used to highlight your qualifications as they relate to the employers’ needs. The purpose of this section is not to tell the employer what you are looking for; rather, it features the strengths and qualifications you have to offer to them.

Don’t tell them what YOU want, tell them what you can do for THEM.

It is recommended that you do not use an OBJECTIVE in place of the SUMMARY, unless you are a recent college graduate or if it is not clear from the rest of your resume what kind of job you are looking for. It is best to develop your PERSONAL OBJECTIVE (see Chapter 3) and use it in preparing your resume. The problem an “Objective” presents is, it can be utilized by employers as a screening tool or knock-out factor. Therefore it is best to state your strengths in a “Summary of Qualifications” or “Summary of Skills” (there is a difference). This encourages the person reviewing your resume to continue reading to learn more about your specific accomplishments and experience. You can always identify a specific objective in the cover letter.

**WORK EXPERIENCE/PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE** - Begin this section with your most recent job and go backwards covering your work experience for the past ten years. It is usually not necessary to go back further unless there are significant accomplishments in earlier years.

- Give a brief description of all your responsibilities for each position held.
- Describe your accomplishments using a results orientation. Use “quantifiers” - numbers, percentages, project names, dates, etc. - that will quantify and qualify your experience to your prospective employer.
- Use action words (see list at end of this chapter) when listing your accomplishments and responsibilities on your resume. This implies that you are a “doer” and also leaves a positive impression with the employer.

**EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND** - List your highest degree first and then proceed backwards. Include the degree attained, the name of the institution, city, state, and date of graduation. Include continuing education if it is relevant.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION - Include professional memberships, licenses/certifications, honors/awards, elected offices, publications, volunteer service, special skills, military experience, patents, or interests that highlight your ability to meet the prospective employers needs. Be very selective about what Additional Information you include. It should be relevant and help to sell you for the job.

PERSONAL INFORMATION - It is recommended that you do **not** list any personal information unless you know it is a requirement for the particular area in which you are seeking employment. Hobbies are optional, and should be included only if relevant to the position.

REFERENCES - It is generally understood that a reference check will be made before hiring an individual. It is not necessary to add the words "References available upon request" at the bottom of your resume.

Do **not** include references with you resume. Your list of references should be on a separate sheet to be provided at the end of the interview or when if requested.

Get permission to use the reference's name and make sure you know what your references are going to say about you. Keep them informed about your objectives and goals and who you are interviewing with during your search. They should have a copy of your resume.

## GETTING STARTED

The first step in constructing a resume is to gather the necessary information - usually in four major areas:

- Work experience and accomplishments
- Education/training and accomplishments
- Military service and accomplishments
- Professional/personal/civic activities and accomplishments beyond your daily work life.

Use the Resume Worksheet at the end of this chapter to write down your experiences and accomplishments. Accomplishments may be the most important part of your resume. They go beyond describing the basic elements of your position/responsibilities. They are designed (by you) to show a prospective employer that you were effective in your position. Whether in work, education, military service, or outside activities, they highlight your achievements.

Many people overlook their own accomplishments with the disclaimer “it was just part of my job.” If you were in charge of quality control, it may have been part of your job to reduce scrap rates. But a prospective employer won’t know you accomplished that part of your task unless you tell him/her about it. Accomplishments help set you apart from others.

When stating accomplishments on your resume, you create a greater impact if you quantify and qualify them. “Increased sales 15 percent” has more impact than just “increased sales.” The more specific you can get the better. But don’t include them if they aren’t meaningful. “Achieved sales quota” is better than “exceeded sales quota by 1 percent.”

In organizing the accomplishments for your resume, it is helpful to answer these three questions:

- What challenges did I face?
- What actions did I take?
- What benefits resulted to the organization?

## EDITING YOUR RESUME

A good resume can be virtually guaranteed by thorough, critical appraisal, careful editing, and rewriting.

Your rewriting should be aimed at reorganizing your resume so that it will come alive.

Eliminate extraneous information. The longer the resume, the less chance that all the information will be absorbed or even read.

Try to eliminate the following items from your resume:

- Number and names of children
- Age
- Sex
- Race
- Religion
- Maiden name
- Spouse's occupation
- Social clubs
- College fraternities
- Hobbies (unless relevant to the job you want)
- Courses studied for which no credit was given
- Languages spoken (unless relevant to the job)
- Non-work related awards
- References
- Pictures
- Official documents
- Salary history
- Plastic covers or binders (they usually irritate employers)

## LAYOUT

Design an attractive layout for your resume. Remember - This resume is your advertisement!

Be consistent throughout. It should be appealing to the eye. Watch the “borders” and “white space”. You should have some white space, so the reader can make notes and pass it on to others in the organization.

## TYPING AND COPYING

If possible, have your resume typed on a personal computer using a word processing application program. This way you can edit it often, or even have several versions of it for different applications or to target specific companies. Be consistent with type fonts and sizes. Double check for spelling and typo errors. Use a high quality (laser jet) printer to get a sharp master.

Polls show managers who review a lot of resumes prefer black type on white bond paper. Don't try to get cute with colors. White or neutral colored paper are usually best. If you use a high quality bond paper, make sure the watermark in the paper is “right side up”. Make sure the resume will copy well on all types of copying machines. Assume your resume will be copied and distributed. It should look almost as good as the original. Some “high rag content” bond paper or specialty paper don't copy well.

Don't use folded double size sheets for your resume. They look like they were prepared by a professional printer, they are hard to change and they are hard to copy by an employer.

## PROCESS OF CRITIQUING

Once you have finished your second or third draft, it is time for additional feedback. Input from family, friends, trusted colleagues, placement counselors, or past managers is imperative.

Additional feedback will provide you with information to be sure your resume does the job it is supposed to do. Ask for criticism in terms of **IMPROVEMENT**. How can I make my resume more effective?

Review your critic's observations and use the Critique Check List at the end of this chapter to determine if you need to change your resume.

## SOME OTHER THINGS TO REMEMBER

DO begin accomplishment statements with Action Verbs.

DO look carefully at your phrases. You do not need complete sentences to list your accomplishments.

DO maintain honesty and consistency.

DO watch tenses.

DON'T copy the wording or style from sample resume guidebooks. Your resume should be yours.

DON'T hire a high priced professional writer.

DON'T include salary information.

DON'T use the pronouns "I", "me", "we".

DON'T use too many adjectives or adverbs.

DON'T make your resume flashy or cute.

## RESUME WORKSHEET

### CAREER EXPERIENCE

Complete one of these worksheets for each position held for the last ten years

Position Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Years Held: From \_\_\_\_\_ To \_\_\_\_\_

Company: Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization Description (size, products, industry, etc.)

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Reporting to (title): \_\_\_\_\_  
(Will he/she make a good reference?) \_\_\_\_\_

Responsibilities	Accomplishments

## POSITIVE ACTION WORDS

Accelerated	Conserved	Edited
Accepted	Consolidated	Eliminated
Achieved	Constructed	Employed
Acted	Consummated	Enforced
Acquired	Controlled	Established
Adopted	Converted	Estimated
Addressed	Coordinated	Examined
Administered	Corrected	Executed
Advanced	Counseled	Explained
Affected	Created	Expanded
Analyzed	Composed	Expedited
Anticipated	Computed	Experimented
Applied	Conceived	
Appointed	Concentrated	Figured
Arbitrated	Conceptualized	Filed
Arranged	Conducted	Formed
Ascertained	Conserved	Formulated
Assembled	Consolidated	Founded
Attained	Constructed	
Audited	Consummated	Gathered
Averted	Controlled	Gave
	Converted	Generated
Bought	Coordinated	Guided
Budgeted	Corrected	
Built	Counseled	Handled
	Created	Helped
Calculated		Hired
Centralized	Decentralized	
Certified	Decided	Identified
Chartered	Decreased	Illustrated
Checked	Defined	Implemented
Classified	Delivered	Improved
Coached	Detected	Improvised
Collaborated	Determined	Increased
Collected	Developed	Influenced
Combined	Devised	Informed
Communicated	Diagnosed	Initiated
Completed	Directed	Innovated
Computed	Discovered	Inspected
Conceived	Dispensed	Installed
Concentrated	Displayed	Instituted
Conceptualized	Distributed	
Conducted	Diverted	

POSITIVE ACTION WORDS (continued)

Instructed	Perceived	Set
Insured	Performed	Settled
Integrated	Persuaded	Showed
Interceded	Pioneered	Simplified
Interpreted	Planned	Sold
Interviewed	Prepared	Solved
	Presented	Sorted
Introduced	Prevented	Sought
Invented	Processed	Specified
Inventoried	Procured	Staffed
Investigated	Produced	Standardized
	Programmed	Streamlined
Judged	Projected	Strengthened
Justified	Promoted	Studied
Kept	Protected	Summarized
	Provided	Supervised
Launched	Published	Supplied
Learned	Purchased	Supported
Lectured		Systematized
Located	Realized	
Logged	Reasoned	Tabulated
	Received	Taught
Managed	Recruited	Terminated
Marketed	Reduced	Tested
Maximized	Referred	Traded
Measured	Re negotiated	Trained
Mediated	Repaired	Translated
Met	Reported	Traveled
Minimized	Represented	Treated
Modernized	Researched	Trimmed
Monitored	Resolved	Tutored
Motivated	Responded	
Negotiated	Restored	Undertook
	Retrieved	Unified
Observed	Reversed	United
Obtained	Reviewed	Upgraded
Operated	Revised	Used
Ordered	Revitalized	Utilized
Organized		
Originated	Saved	Varied
	Scheduled	Verified
Packaged	Selected	
Participated	Separated	Won
Passed	Served	Wrote

## CRITIQUING YOUR RESUME

Review the following criteria to be sure that your resume represents you in the best possible manner. If you have more than FOUR answers in the “NO” or “NEEDS WORK” columns, it is time to re-evaluate and rewrite your resume.

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Needs Work</u>
<u>Conduct a Personal Inventory</u>			
Does your resume represent you effectively?	___	___	___
Is it complete?	___	___	___
<u>Review Your Assets</u>			
Have you listed your accomplishments?	___	___	___
Have you marketed your skills that are relevant for the job you desire?	___	___	___
<u>Emphasize Your Assets From The Employers' Expectations</u>			
After reading your 30-second commercial, summary of skills/qualifications, should the employer continue reading?	___	___	___
Would you hire you?	___	___	___
<u>Apply Positive Action Words</u>			
Do your sentences begin with action words?	___	___	___
Do you get a visual picture or impression after reading your resume?	___	___	___
<u>Take Time</u>			
Is your resume brief and to the point, clear and concise?	___	___	___
Are you under two pages?	___	___	___
<u>Individuality is Important</u>			
Did you select the best format to market your skills and accomplishments effectively?	___	___	___
Did you design an attractive layout?	___	___	___
Is the resume in your own writing style?	___	___	___
<u>Evaluate Yourself</u>			
Did you proofread for typographical errors?	___	___	___
Did you ask for feedback and constructive criticism?	___	___	___
<u>Effort</u>			
Is the final impression positive?	___	___	___

## RESUMEQUIZ

More than one may be correct

1. Your resume should include:
  - a. your education
  - b. your work history
  - c. your age
  - d. your health status
2. Your resume should include:
  - a. the title of each previous position you've had
  - b. your responsibilities and accountabilities with each position
  - c. all of your previous positions
  - d. your work telephone number
3. You should arrange the information so that:
  - a. it is chronological order going from the present to the past.
  - b. your accomplishments and capabilities are highlighted.
  - c. you can get all on no more than two pages.
  - d. your education comes first, so they know you have one.
4. It is acceptable to:
  - a. give just your previous employer's name and city.
  - b. exclude temporary positions held for just a few months
  - c. pad your accomplishments and responsibilities, since everyone does it.
  - d. embellish your title to make your position sound better.
5. When you are asked to FAX a resume to a potential employer, you should:
  - a. include a cover letter.
  - b. make sure the copy you are sending is on plain, un-textured paper so that the transmission is clear.
  - c. handwrite a note on the *fax* cover sheet instead of sending a cover letter.
6. If you were asked to review your resume with a prospective employer:
  - a. you could summarize your accomplishments as they stand on the resume and give a cohesive account of your career to date.
  - b. you could lead a person through your resume, but would need to add details that you didn't include on the resume.
  - c. it would be difficult for you to give a cohesive account of your career.
  - d. you would stumble on embarrassing gaps, which you cannot explain.

## **ANSWERS**

- 1. It is not necessary to include your age or health status on a resume.**
- 2. It is not necessary to include positions you have held on a temporary basis or that were unrelated to your career. You should leave your work number off your resume and get an answering machine to take your calls when not there.**
- 3. A 20-year career is difficult to compress into two pages. Only a student fresh from school should place education front and center.**
- 4. Never pad or embellish your resume.**
- 5. Don't skip the cover letter just because you are using a fax.**
- 6. After preparing your resume you must be ready to defend it by being consistent and having answers for any question a prospective employer might ask.**

**SOME SAMPLE**

**RESUMES**

**GEORGE HOWELL**  
1234 Pleasant Street  
Arlington Heights. IL 60059  
(708) 555-1198

## **SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**

Over 9 years successful sales and fund raising experience; 5 years training experience. Goals and results oriented. Strong negotiation, supervisory and human relations skills, especially in motivating others to set and achieve goals. Recently earned MBA while working full time.

## **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

Development Coordinator/Instructor 1998 - Present  
TRAINING, INC., Lombard, IL  
(a division of the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago)

Participate in all aspects of producing award-winning adult job training program. Intensive 14-week program provides basic job training and interviewing skills, builds confidence and motivates individuals often thought to be “unemployable”. Nine out of ten are placed after completion of the program.

- Coordination of fund raising projects: Exceeded goal expectations by 25% in 2002.
- Coordination of Annual Event (dinner-dance, silent auction and drawing): profit increased 9 times over 2001. Persuaded corporate sponsors and local merchants to donate services and prizes valued at approximately \$20,000.
- Negotiate and coordinate program plans with Board of Directors, working as part of team of four professionals to implement long and short-term programs.
- Implemented successful marketing program which was a key factor in securing Project Chance funding (over \$200,000 in 2002)-- critical for program continuation.
- Curriculum development and instruction for skills courses in Accounting, Human Relations, Calculator, Math, Word Processing.
- Develop and maintain corporate network relationships for course participation and placement assistance. Efforts have helped achieve the program’s remarkable 90% placement rate, vs. the national average of 33%.

## **SAMPLE: CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME**

Director. Career Development Program 1996 -1998  
YWCA - West Suburban Area, Lombard, IL

- Secured and maintained program funding in highly competitive environment.
- Responsible for budget planning, contract negotiation, public relations and overall program quality, au staffing.

Territory Manager 1992 - 1996  
HOFFMAN LAROCHE INC., Nutley, NJ

- Represented full pharmaceutical line to physicians and pharmacists.
- Managed Cleveland territory: Sales increased 25% over two years.
- Promoted in 1995 to manage expanded territory: Sales increased 20% in first year achieved market shares as high as 87%.

Sales Representative 1988 - 1990  
JOHNSON STIPHER CORPORATION, Cleveland, OH

- Suburban Cleveland territory manager: Dental supply and capital equipment sales.
- Sales more than doubled (42k to 88k) in 1990; increased equipment sales by 25%.

## EDUCATION

MBA. Management and Human Resources: 1986  
George Williams College, Downers Grove, IL

Internship: Trainer, Anderson & Associates, Hinsdale, IL

Conducted career development seminars on assertiveness training for College of DuPage, American Management Association, and the Chicago Association of Commerce and Industry.

BS. Business Education and Psychology:  
Illinois State University, Normal, IL 1984

**JANE HOWELL**  
1234 Pleasant Street  
Arlington Heights, IL 60059  
(708) 555-1198

## LIST OF SKILLS

### INTERPERSONAL/COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- Recruited, interviewed and recommended selection of staff.
- Assessed individual's needs for services.
- Evaluated delivery of services.
- Analyzed client status and made recommendations to interdisciplinary team.
- Implemented team decisions.
- Acted as liaison to community.
- Edited and assisted in sales presentations to advertising agencies.
- Planned and led workshops.

### MOTIVATION/PERSUASION SKILLS

- Increased collection of fees to record level while promoting adherence to library policies.
- Trained staff in both job and customer service skills.
- Motivated individuals to take action in their own self interest.
- Received high commendation from Director of CaII for Action" program.

### NEGOTIATION SKILLS

- Resolved consumer disputes with public and private sector agencies.
- Analyzed problems and negotiated effective solutions.
- Negotiated policy changes in University Services.

### PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

- Developed and implemented programs for diverse clientele, including classes, recreational and social activities and trips.
- Organized and implemented community fund drives, resulting in 50% increase in donations.

## **SAMPLE: FUNCTIONAL RESUME**

PROFESSIONAL  
EXPERIENCE

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION OF ENDODONTISTS, Chicago, IL  
Personnel Consultant, 2001-Present

LIEBERMAN GERIATRIC HEALTH CENTER, Skokie, IL Counselor/Case  
Manager, 1999-2001

THE ARK, Chicago, IL  
Case Manager. 1995-1999

HIGHLAND PARK LIBRARY, Highland Park, IL  
Patron Service Representative. 1990-1993

SCHOLASTIC MAGAZINES, Chicago, IL  
Administrative Assistant, 1980-1990

EDUCATION

Roosevelt University, Chicago, IL  
B.S. degree with Honors, 1981.  
Full academic scholarship.

PROFESSIONAL  
AFFILIATION

National Network of Women in Sales

**GEORGE HOWELL**  
1234 Pleasant Street  
Arlington Heights, IL 60059  
(708) 555-1198

## Background Summary

Extensive experience in corporate financial management, auditing, EDP systems coordination, organizational analysis, and staff development.

## Accomplishments

### Auditing

- Planned, directed, and administered a worldwide corporate audit program that covered financial and administrative operations of the company. Evaluated internal controls at over 175 locations in 40 countries.
- Supervised 30 high-level professionals in multi-office environment.
- Established and staffed regional audit office in London, England, with complement of bilingual audit professionals.

### Management

- Coordinated the public accountant's audits of 150 subsidiaries, handling fee negotiations totaling \$3.2 million annually. Developed program to forecast, monitor, and control the public accountant's fees on a world wide basis. Determined the public accountant's scope of review.
- Inter-faced directly in quarterly reviews with Corporate Board of Directors Audit Committee.
- Financial representative on the acquisition committee evaluated acquisitions and mergers, and assisted in planning "due diligence" requirements.
- Developed extensive written corporate wide accounting policies.
- Established extensive program to evaluate compliance with corporate business ethics policy and Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

## **SAMPLE: COMBINATION RESUME**

## EDP

- Established EDP audit function within audit department.
- Evaluated the adequacy of controls exercised over the development and implementation of major proposed financial EDP systems.
- Directed the installation and implementation of the audit software package for worldwide corporate multi-environment application.

## Staff Development

- Provided the main corporate source of middle management financial positions. Twenty professionals from Audit Department promoted to line jobs during last five years.
- Upgraded the professional quality and performance of the audit staff by developing more sophisticated and complex audit programs and practices and a formalized training program.

## Employment History

FRYE-ROBINSON INC., Baltimore, Maryland - 1957 to Present

One of the world's largest health care companies with estimated sales of over \$4 billion for 1984.

<u>Director Corporate Audits</u>	1976 - Present
<u>General Auditor</u>	1966 - 1976
<u>Audit Section Head (Pharmaceutical)</u>	1964 - 1966
<u>Mechanization (EDP) Coordinator</u>	1961 - 1964
<u>Machine Accounting Section Head</u>	1958 - 1961
<u>Internal Auditor</u>	1957 - 1958

THE PETERSON COMPANY, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Various positions in budgeting, cost control, internal auditing and data processing.

## Education

M.B.A. Program, all course work completed, Brown University. B.S., Business Administration, Brown University.

## RAYMOND J. LINDER, JR.

13969 Berkhansted Court  
Orland Park, Illinois 60462

Business: (312) 984-4346  
Residence: (708) 460-0691

### CAREER SUMMARY

Human Resources Executive with 19 years of results oriented experience in corporate and plant environments. Expertise includes:

- Compensation programs including merit and incentive plans.
- Benefit programs involving acquisition, sell insurance, and managed care.
- International and expatriate human resources management.
- Labor relations and union avoidance.
- ANEEO policy planning and Implementation.
- Safety and loss prevention.

### BUSINESS EXPERIENCE

ANDREW CORPORATION, Orland Park, IL 1984 to Present  
\$400 million international manufacturer and supplier of telecommunications systems and related products.

#### Human Resource Administration Manager (1986-Present)

Reporting to Senior Vice President of Corporate staff, responsible for compensation, benefits, EEO, and HR policies and procedures. Domestic and International responsibility for alt pay, bonus, and sales incentive programs. Design and implement insured and self-insured benefits programs, disability, and retirement plans. Handle all liaison with government agencies. Manage staff of seven.

#### Achievements:

- Developed and implemented market competitive job grades and salary ranges for \$1.00 million payroll.
- Saved \$500 thousand by integrating benefits programs of newly acquired companies.
- Designed and implemented managed health care program resulting in \$2 to \$3 million in cost avoidance as compared to national medical care cost trends.
- Established first international HR function. Conducted studies of local personnel policies, programs, and practices. Established competitive compensation and benefit programs for locations in Australia, Canada, Switzerland, France, Germany, Spain, Italy, Mexico, and the United Kingdom.
- Improved quality of employee selection through implementation of entry level testing program.

### Compensation Administration Manager (1985-1986)

Established first corporate compensation function with full wage/salary, and EEC responsibilities supporting eight international and domestic locations.

#### Achievements:

- Instituted and administered coordinated US merit pay program.
- Conducted benchmark surveys to ensure salary competitiveness to applicable markets.
- Developed and implemented affirmative action plans for all US locations in full compliance with OFCCP guidelines.

### Personnel Manager, Denton, Texas (1984-1986)

Established and managed all HR activity for largest outlying location prior to establishment of corporate HR function.

#### Achievements:

- Set up policies and procedures for employee selection, compensation and benefits, accident prevention, and employee relations programs.
- Demonstrated abilities resulted in transfer to home office area participation in establishment of first corporate HR function.

### WALKER MANUFACTURING COMPANY, Racine, WI

Division of Tenneco Inc.

(1973 to 1984)

World-wide manufacturer and distributor of automotive exhaust systems with current annual sales of over \$1 billion.

Personnel Manager, Greenville, TX (1981-1984)

Corporate Manager, Compensations & Benefits, Racine, WI (1979-1981)

Corporate Supervisor, Salary & EEO, Racine, WI (1977-1979)

Personnel Manager, Memphis, TN (1973-1977)

Employment Manager, Seward, NE (1973)

#### Selected Achievements:

- Reorganized plant HR function incorporating productivity enhancement programs and taking plant from last to first place among 13 US locations.
- Implemented standardized compensation and benefit programs for all domestic plants.
- Managed labor relations activity from contract negotiations to grievance handling a arbitration. Coordinated company efforts in several de-certification campaigns and directed work efforts during strike and work stoppage situations.
- Decreased workers' compensation premium by more than \$250 thousand per year through reduction in lost time accidents from 43 to 0 over two years.
- Coordinated outplacement efforts and developed severance packages for employees during sale of three divisions in company rationalization program.

### EDUCATION

BBA. Management. Memphis State University, 1972

## Chapter 6

# Cover Letters



## Cover Letters

### **“I’ve read your letter and would like to meet with you”**

The networking process emphasizes face-to-face communication. However, you will also need a variety of high quality written materials to carry out an effective search. You will need a cover letter to transmit your resume in response to newspaper or professional journal advertisements. You will need a transmittal letter to forward your resume to recruiters. You will want to develop a targeted letter, which you can send to decision-makers in organizations. Finally, you will need some basic follow-up and thank you letters.

To help avoid these letters getting lost on someone’s desk, they should be concise (not more than one page), professional, and to the point. Remember that most of your audience is very busy and inundated with reading material, especially correspondence.

Most letters should cover the following points:

- Why am I writing? (To respond to an ad; to introduce myself to your search firm; to help you solve a problem.)
- Who am I professionally? (Outline career highlights and key accomplishments.)
- Who am I personally? (The characteristics, insights, proven personality traits that make me distinctive.)
- What’s the next step? (Try to take the initiative for follow-up responsibilities.)

Writing cover letters can be a tough job. They need to be short, but summarize your long and successful career. Sometimes our egos want to get in the way. It takes trial and error to come up with the right words to convey those important things about you that will make someone want to read them carefully. Talk to any author and they will tell you they can write thirty pages in two days. But they need thirty days to condense those thirty pages into three. You are faced with the same problem. How to get everything that needs to be said into a one-page letter.

There are some rules that can be followed to make the task easier and more successful.

Don't use form letters. Your cover letter should be fresh and reflect you. Form letters are usually spotted by the reader, who recognizes that you didn't take the time to prepare a personal letter. It's a turn off.

Whenever possible, address your letter to a particular individual rather than the firm. Ordinarily, you can obtain the name and title of the person who should receive your letter by telephoning the company or checking annual reports. Get the correct spelling of the name and the proper title.

Capture attention early. If you can, use a name of a referral early in the letter. If the reader knows the referring person there will be a tendency to read on. Or turn the ego factor around. Tell the reader why you are interested in talking to him/her or why you are interested in the company. This, of course, requires some research.

Explain why the company should be interested in you. This requires a review and condensation of your skills and accomplishments. They should be presented in a way to match the company's needs.

Your letter should be professionally packaged. Always type your letter, unless a handwritten letter has been specifically requested. Use simple, easy to read type. It is all right to send handwritten thank you letters. If you have access to a computer with word processing, use it. Word processing makes customization of your letters easy. Use easy to read words and sentences. Check carefully for typo and grammar mistakes. Read your letter out loud. Sign with non-smudge ink.

The employer's first impression of you will probably be based on your cover letter.

## TYPES OF COVER LETTERS

### Responding to Advertisements

An advertisement for a job in a major newspaper like the Chicago Tribune, may generate 600 or more responses. That puts your resume in an extremely competitive arena, so it is not surprising that the return on your investment of time and energy is relatively low. It can also lead to frustration and wondering if it is worth it to pursue an ad.

These realities dictate staying focused on the following points as you write your ad response letter

- Be brief. Hit a couple of key highlights in your background and let it go at that.
- Standardize your letter. This does not mean use a form letter. You may vary your letter occasionally to discuss specific items mentioned in the ad, or you might have two or three standard letters for different types of positions. Extensive redrafting for every ad is, by and large, a waste of time.
- Attach your resume. If one portion of the ad is right up your alley but other parts of your background do not fit, the combination resume may be helpful. For example, if you have relevant experience and skills, but they were gained in a different industry the letter probably needs to be longer and more tailored to the individual ad.
- Send a letter immediately and another seven days after the ad has appeared in the newspaper. This puts you on top and on the bottom of the pile. Sometimes, as the initial rush of responses tails off, there may be a better chance that your second letter and resume will be read more thoroughly.

Two theories exist about whether to include salary data in your letter if the ad asks for it. Some people argue that salary information is only used as a means of screening or as an “excluder” and therefore advise not to include it. Others argue that resume screeners will eliminate an otherwise appealing resume if the applicant fails to provide information that was specifically requested. This is especially true if the ad generated a large number of responses.

Ultimately you must consider the alternatives and decide for yourself based upon your situation. If you do decide to include salary information:

- Provide a range rather than a specific dollar figure.
- Provide it for your most recent position only - not for your previous jobs.
- Include it with some language indicating that compensation is only one factor that you consider important about the position.

If the hiring organization is clearly identified in the ad, you should do some homework about the company before responding. If the hiring organization is not identified, it may be possible to determine the company through some investigative calling to the newspaper or by looking for clues in the ad itself.

Occasionally, you may be able to speak to the resume screener and have an opportunity to put in a plug for yourself, or learn more about the decision maker, the decision making process and the decision making timing. If you attempt this type of follow-up, be prepared and know what you want to say when you get through. This is easier if you’ve done some homework.

If you are able to determine who the department head for the job is, use a “targeted” letter to him/her in addition to the ad response cover letter. (See below)

Most often, the hiring organization is not identified in the ad and the only address is a newspaper box number. Organizations use blind ads intentionally to cut down on phone calls or to protect the confidentiality of the search. In this situation, you must rely on their contacting you after receiving your resume. In today's environment, most companies don't provide an acknowledgment or any response to your letter and resume. In some cases you may get a post card. A letter response, telling you what has happened as a result of the search, is rare. In the rarest case, you will be called in for an interview as the result of your ad response. Don't rely on ad responses as your only search method. It is best to try to improve your chances with job ads through homework and networking.

### Targeted Letters

Targeted letters are used when you have the name of a department head who has a job to be filled. You generally get the name only after some hard research. This research may include but is not limited to:

- Calling the company and asking questions. This could be the telephone operator, someone in the department where the job is, the manager's secretary. You don't have to identify yourself as looking for a job. If you get someone who is willing to talk, get proper spellings, proper titles and proper mailing addresses. Generally if you are polite and prepared, the person you are talking to will probably try to help you.
- Calling friends and asking what they know about the company.
- Checking with your network contacts to determine if anyone knows the hiring manager or anyone else in the company. If you can find someone who knows the manager or anyone in the company, ask if they can be used as a reference.
- Get annual reports, product bulletins, price lists, publications about the company. Research the company on the Internet.

If you are successful in your information gathering, you should be prepared to write a focused target letter. The cover letter should be brief but packed with information you have learned that will enhance the interest level of the reader. If you can, name a reference in the first line. Highlight your skills and accomplishments that meet the needs of the company. Tell the reader why you would like to work for that company based upon what you have learned. But don't be too gushy. Keep it professional and to the point.

The targeted letter should contain the elements outlined on the first page of this chapter. If you take the responsibility for follow-up, do so with a phone call to the targeted individual in a week to ten days.

A variation on the targeted letter is one that does not include a resume. This type of letter is very targeted and requires more research of the targeted company to be successful, but it can hit the "bulls-eye" if done properly. Most stand-alone letters get read. Letters with resumes attached may not get read.

In order to prepare this type of letter, you need to know the name of the person you want to work for and some strengths and weaknesses of the targeted company. This will allow you to prepare a letter that includes sentences like:

"I recently learned that your company is quite active in Northern Illinois in the financial management area."

"My personal experience is in that area, I am a CPA."

"Like you, I went to Purdue."

"I developed a new costing system that allowed us to become highly competitive in our area."

"I reduced cost in my department by 27%."

"I can duplicate these accomplishments in your company."

“I would imagine that small to medium companies (to \$100M) would be most interested in my background.”

“Relocation is no problem.”

The key in this type of letter is to pick a few major accomplishments from your resume and direct them at specific needs of the targeted company. You do this in a one-page letter that is easy to read and makes the reader interested in talking to you because he/she recognizes you can help.

### Letters to Search Firms

First a few words about search firms. There are two types - contingency and retained. The contingency firm generally maintains a large database of resumes and tries to fill any and all jobs that may be out there. They generally send “information sheets” (like short resumes) to prospective employers saying, “if you’re looking for this type of person, I’ve got him/her.” If they are successful, they get paid by the company doing the hiring. Sometimes a contingency search firm will “guarantee” to get you a job for a fee. Watch out for these. Usually in a search the hiring company pays.

The retained search firm is “hired” by the company to find some candidates for their open position. The search firm gets paid for this service whether the position is filled or not - as long as the search firm sends in some qualified candidates.

Usually search firms specialize in certain disciplines. If you can identify some good ones who work in your field, it is probably a good idea to send them your resume. You can find the Directory of Executive Recruiters on the Internet.

When sending your resume to a search firm you should attach a cover letter that:

- Is brief and to the point in summarizing your skills and accomplishments.
- Indicates the types of jobs for which you are qualified and the types that interest you.
- Includes a compensation range.
- Requests that your resume not be forwarded to a prospective hiring organization without your consent (if a contingency search firm).

There is more information on Search Firms at the end of this chapter.

### Thank You Letters

After any contact meeting, whether with a prospective employer, a reference, hiring firm or search firm, you should send a brief letter thanking the person for giving you the time and opportunity to discuss your background. The fact that you took the time to send such a letter is as important as what you say. It can set you apart from others in the job market.

You can also use this letter as an opportunity to reinforce points about you or to inquire about the “next steps” in the interview process. It’s also an opportunity to make points you may have forgotten, or to clarify something that was not adequately covered in the interview. This letter can also be used to provide something that might be of peripheral interest based on what you learned during the interview (i.e. news clippings, articles, etc.).

Follow-up thank you letters should be sent promptly.

## SEARCH FIRMS

Search Firms may be used by companies looking for employees in lieu of going through their own Employment Offices, or direct. There are two types of search firms - retainer and contingency. Each type ultimately provides the same results; someone gets hired, but it is important to understand their differences.

### RETAINER FIRMS

If a search firm is engaged by a company to find a person to fill a specific job, and is placed under contract to fill the position, it is a “retained” or “retainer” search firm. When dealing with a Retained Firm you can assume:

- There is a job
- There will be a thorough selection process
- All information will remain confidential
- The search firm may do initial interviews

If you send your resume to a retained search firm, it may not match the current requirements for which the firm has retainers. However, your resume will go into a database for future review. Retained firms are generally working on fewer searches.

## CONTINGENCY FIRMS

A contingency search firm only gets paid if someone the firm “found” gets hired. Contingency firms generally have large databases of job hunters and are trying to match them to many identified openings. The contingency firm representatives will try to sell both ways - to you as the potential hire, and to the company as the potential hirer. When dealing with these firms you can assume:

- There may be a job
- You may be one of many interviewing for the job, but the recruiter will probably go to bat for you.
- Lots of information will get passed around
- Your resume may get wide distribution

Contingency search firms read the same papers you do and may try to push their database information into all the companies that advertise for positions. Some specialize in certain fields or professions and may be very good at placing people. A good contingency firm will try to sell you, because if they are successful, they get paid a big fee (generally 20-40% of your first year’s salary).

When talking to a recruiter, try to qualify them with the following questions:

“Do you have an exclusive?”

“Do you operate on a retainer or contingency fee basis?”

“What can you tell me about the hiring company?”

“Will you notify me before sending my resume to anyone?”

# LETTER FORMAT

I. M. Available  
123 Main Street  
Anywhere, IL 12345  
708-555-1234

jsmith@alta.com

January 3, 2000

Mr. John Bigshot  
Vice President, Toys  
ABC Corporation  
1234 Fifth Street  
Sometown, NY 10001

Dear Mr. Bigshot:

Body of letter should include:

Why am I writing?

Who am I professionally?

Who am I personally?

What's the next step?

Sincerely,

Joseph Smith

Enclosure (resume)

# GOOD COVER LETTER

I. M. Available  
123 Main Street  
Anywhere, IL 12345  
708-555-1234

May 2, 2001

Jack Smith, Vice President, Sales  
Panduit Corporation  
17301 Ridgeland Ave.  
Tinley Park, IL 60456

Dear Mr. Smith,

Larry McDonough suggested that I send my resume to you. He told me that Panduit is entering the computer connector market. With 23 years of experience in the computer business, I can bring to Panduit a thorough knowledge of how to be successful.

I know this market. I have sold to this market. In fact, while at Apple Computer, I helped launch their new laptop computer, the PowerBook, and was able to develop new distribution channels for it.

Since you travel a lot, I know that getting a few minutes of your time may be difficult. I will work with your secretary, Jean, to determine if there is a convenient time we could talk.

Sincerely,

M. Available

## Chapter 7

# Using the Telephone Effectively



## Chapter 7

# Using The Telephone Effectively

**“No one really listens, we’re just waiting for our turn to speak.”**

The telephone/cellphone can be your best tool during your job search. Or it can be the biggest obstacle in getting to the interview. In this chapter we will discuss how you can be sure that the phone will be your best tool.

The telephone/cellphone is a great technological device and today has all kinds of enhancements - answering machines, voice mail, touch tone routing, etc.. You must be prepared to make each of them work for you. There is a good chance that before you get to the person you are calling you will get into one of their technological devices.

### ANSWERING MACHINES

Answering machines work both ways. You should have one and be prepared to talk to one when calling a prospective employer or reference. Your answering machine should have a short, professional message. Don't use cute messages and it is probably best not to have one of your children do the recording.

How many times have you heard, “DAD, IT’S FOR YOU! I DON’T KNOW WHO IT IS!” Even if you have an answering machine, you should train the rest of your family on how to answer the phone when you are not there. You may want to suggest that they are helping you in your job search by learning how to answer the phone properly and professionally. Or you may want to consider not letting children answer the phone during your search and let all calls go to the answering machine. You should try to imagine what an important caller will hear when calling your home. If it is not good, you need to fix it.

Always have paper and pencil by the phone so that you or anyone else answering the phone can take and write down a message.

When you call a prospective employer or reference, you should assume that you will get into their answering machine or voice mailbox. Before each call, prepare a short statement that can be used if asked to speak into a recording device. The statement should cover all the important points you want to make including your telephone number (with area code).

## ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANTS

Administrative Assistants (used to be called Secretaries) can be an ally or a blocker. If you can, try to get the secretary to help you in your attempt to talk to his/her boss. Find out what the secretary's name is, and then use it when you call back. Ask if there is a good time to call. Ask for the proper spelling of the boss's name and for the correct title. Ask if there is anyone else you should be talking to. If you can, use referrals like, "Your Mr. Smith, in Personnel, suggested that I call your boss." Be friendly and don't get pushy. A secretary can be a big help inside the company you want to work for.

## OTHER APPROACHES

Other ways to get to the person you are trying to contact might include:

- If the telephone number looks like it might be a rotary number, call another number in the series and tell whoever you get that you were trying to reach Mr. Whoever, and ask to be transferred. But before being transferred get their extension in case you get disconnected.
- Use referrals if you can. "Ms. Smith, in your Human Resource Department, suggested I call you." You can usually get a referral just by asking, "Do you know who I should be talking to about this matter?"

- Speak directly into the telephone. Keep the mouthpiece about one inch from your mouth. Do not smoke while on the phone. Phones can pick up and amplify background music and voices, especially young ones. They also transmit the sound of food or gum being chewed or smoke being inhaled or exhaled.
- Take notes. Anyone you may talk to in your target company may provide some important piece of information. Be prepared to jot it down.
- Perk up mentally and emotionally before making or taking a call. Sound enthusiastic and upbeat. Stand up when talking on the phone.

Once you get through to the person you want to talk to you must be prepared and should have three objectives (in this order):

- I will arrange a meeting.
- I will arrange a time to talk further on the phone.
- I will ask for a lead to a promising job opening elsewhere.

You should have an opening statement prepared. It should resemble a short version of your three-to-five minute presentation (see chapter 8). It should be brief, specifically vague, arouse interest and encourage questions.

Remember AIDA.

A - get Attention

I - get interest

D - create Desire to know more about you

A - encourage Action by the called party

Use open-ended questions and try to get the person you have called to do some of the talking using:

“wouldn’t you?”

“didn’t you?”

“won’t you?”

“couldn’t you?”

“shouldn’t you?”

“don’t you?”

Use referrals if you can. Mention names of people you both may know. If you have done your homework about the company this should be relatively easy. Preparation is the key to a successful phone conversation.

## Chapter 8

# Verbal Presentations



## Chapter 8

# Verbal Presentations

### “Tell me about yourself.”

There will be times when you need to respond to some very basic questions. These questions can come from prospective employers, references, networks or friends and neighbors. It is important that you answer these questions with carefully prepared responses.

The two most common questions that you should be prepared for are “Tell me about yourself.” and “Why did you leave your last job?”

### YOUR 3-5 MINUTE PRESENTATION

How many times has someone asked you to tell them something about yourself? Many interviewers tend to use this opening since they don't know what else to ask and it is a good opening to get you talking. By expecting this type of opening and being prepared for it, you can take charge of the interview. It allows you to tell what you want them to hear about you - business facts, accomplishments - not hobbies and pastimes.

Others, besides interviewers, may ask you about yourself and you need to be prepared with the proper response for them also. You never know when a job might be identified if you are prepared to go through your 3-5 minute presentation about yourself.

You can also work into your three-to-five minute presentation without being asked. Simply introducing yourself and proceeding smoothly into your presentation is one method. Another is to respond to a question by saying, “Perhaps it would be useful to summarize my experience, I.....”

Your 3-5 minute presentation must be prepared carefully, rehearsed often, and be consistent with your resume. It can be prepared in much the same way as your resume. The “Your 3-5 Minute Presentation Preparation” form at the end of this chapter should be used to start the process of preparation. This form has five sections that should be completed with a single or a few words that evoke a memory or accomplishment. After getting the single “reminder” words down for all the following sections, you can go back and “flesh” them out into full sentences.

#### MOST RECENT POSITION:

People are generally interested in what you did most recently. Do this briefly, with enthusiasm, including examples of your accomplishments. You also want to make sure you get some of your best accomplishments into the first part of your presentation, in case you get cut off by the interviewer.

#### EARLY LIFE/EDUCATION

Use a transition phrase to get from you Most Recent Position to your Early Life/Education section. Something like “I got interested in engineering while at Purdue University”. You don’t need to go into much detail in this section but should try do identify what shaped your values and attitudes. List any honors and awards received as long as they are relevant. Try to use “interest provoking” words, those that will remain in the listener’s mind and perhaps invite some amplification.

#### WORK HISTORY AND PROGRESSION

In this section you want to be selective. You should identify where you worked, starting with the earliest and working up to the most recent. You should end up where you started with this presentation - your most recent position. You do not need to go back to your very first job as a newspaper carrier, but you should list those jobs where you had specific accomplishments. It is the accomplishments, not the jobs that you want to highlight in this section. It’s not what you did, but what you got done. This is a good place to put in some quantifiers (increased by xx%, reduced by \$xxx).

## REASON FOR LEAVING

You need to have a clear, short and consistent statement that explains why you left your last job. In today's environment, words like "downsizing", "reduction-in-force" and "layoff" are well understood. Don't get bogged down in your explanation and don't let anger or hostility show. Make a short statement and then focus on the future. Your reason for leaving statement should be ready for answering anyone who may ask what happened at your last job.

## STRONG POINTS/FUTURE GOALS

This is where you rap everything up on a positive note. Identify your career options as developed by your work history and accomplishments. Highlight your strong points and tie them to the kind of job you are going after.

## WRITING YOUR 3-5 MINUTE PRESENTATION

Your 3-5 minute presentation should be written out using the words and descriptions from the preparation form. You should read it out loud to yourself and to close friends for comments. Rehash it and rehearse it. It should start out strong and end strong. Put enthusiasm into it. Let your strong points shine in this verbal presentation.

YOUR 3-5 MINUTE PRESENTATION PREPARATION

MOST RECENT POSITION \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

EARLY LIFE/EDUCATION \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

WORK HISTORY AND PROGRESSION \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

REASON FOR LEAVING \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

STRONG POINTS/FUTURE GOALS \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SAMPLE

### YOUR 3-5 MINUTE PRESENTATION PREPARATION

**MOST RECENT POSITION** Sales and Marketing Experience -14 years  
International and U. S. (Domestic)  
(Tele)communications  
Technical Background TeleSciences (Motorola) - 2 years  
International (Sales) - Business Group  
Built international team, opened new offices, developed new business

**EARLY LIFE/EDUCATION** Scotland - South Africa - USA  
Educated-University of Sheffield

**WORK HISTORY AND PROGRESSION** Andrew Antenna Systems  
(Lochgelly, near Edinburgh) - EE Design Engineer, Project engineer,  
Q.A. Manager  
Transferred to Headquarters (1976) Corporate Engineering  
Manager (Satellites) Production Planning and Marketing,  
International Sales (Africa, Middle East) Coordination of  
International Sales  
International Sales Manager (1984) - Third World, Japan, Mexico,  
Egypt, Taiwan, Israel  
Progressive experience - engineering, marketing, sales  
Opportunity to join Telescience

### REASON FOR LEAVING

Business declining - 300 of 600 gone

**STRONG POINTS/FUTURE GOALS** Challenging opportunity in business  
management or sales and marketing taking advantage of career progression.

Skills - good grasp of things technical  
solid business background  
international perspective  
strong ability in strategic process

### 3-5 MINUTE PRESENTATION WRITE UP

#### SAMPLE

I have twenty years technical experience, both domestic and international, starting in design engineering and progressing to management roles in marketing, and, most recently, in sales. I am an analytical and strategic thinker with a sound business background and a good understanding of economic and technical aspects of sales opportunities.

With responsibility for marketing microwave radio products globally, I was most recently Manager of the International business group of TeleSciences (a company formed through acquisitions of Avantek Microwave and Motorola Microwave). In this role, I built up an international team and opened new sales offices. I developed new markets addressing multimillion-dollar sales opportunities.

I am British born and educated, although am now a U.S. citizen. I spent the early part of my life in South Africa. I graduated from the University at Sheffield in England.

From University, I joined a division of the Andrew Corporation (a US company). I was based near Edinburgh in Scotland where I started as an electrical engineer. During my four years there, I progressed through assignments from Project Engineer, responsible for design and testing, to Quality Assurance Manager for the factory.

In 1976, I was transferred to Andrew's headquarters in Orland Park, Illinois, where, as Earth Station Antenna Systems Manager, I was initially responsible for the engineering design and development of large earth stations. I jumped into corporate Marketing two years later as Product Manager responsible for global planning and strategies, first for satellite earth stations and later terrestrial microwave systems.

### 3-5 MINUTE PRESENTATION WRITE UP

#### SAMPLE (cont.)

When I joined the International Sales team, I was responsible for Andrew's customers in the Middle East and Africa. We sold directly through agents and distributors, as well as indirectly through OEMs. During this assignment, I also coordinated every large multinational multi-channel bid handled by the company's global sales teams. This involved setting bidding strategies, a complicated process requiring integration of many internal tactics and forces, along with the need for an understanding of international customer situations.

I was promoted in 1984 to International Sales Manager, responsible to markets in Latin America, Middle East, Africa, Far East and Asia. We targeted several key countries or markets and successfully increased sales in Mexico, South Africa, Egypt, Israel, Taiwan, and Japan. I was especially pleased with our Results in Japan where we spent many years developing local presence through our office in Tokyo.

I left Andrew Corporation in 1990 when the opportunity to join TeleSciences came along. I was attracted by their need to develop an international team and open new markets.

Unfortunately, TeleSciences' domestic business has declined drastically in the last nine months and the company has down sized several times to the point where more than half of the original 600 people have now left. I was caught up in the last round of cuts.

I am looking for a challenging opportunity in business management, or sales, or marketing, taking advantage of my career progression from engineering to corporate management, and utilizing my skills - a good grasp of things technical, a solid business background in the marketplace, an international perspective, and strong ability in strategic processes.

## Chapter 9

# Interviewing



## Chapter 9

# Interviewing

**“Interviews are like blind dates and they are just as unpopular. They involve two people with an eye towards a relationship and only the most basic information to work with.”**

Interviewing is communicating. There are at least three types of interviews in which you may participate, namely: informational (networking), search firm, and employment. Within the employment category, there is the screening interview, which may be done only by someone in Human Resources, and the selection interview, usually done by the department manager or supervisor. Sometimes there is also a stamp-of-approval or ratification interview.

The interviewee should not do all the talking. The whole purpose of an interview is to obtain information that you can't get from a resume.

Successful interviewing is a learnable skill. The two most important elements are preparation and practice. If you prepare well and practice thoroughly, you can significantly improve your ability to sell yourself effectively in an interview.

What is the purpose of an interview? It allows the hiring company to meet and interact with you in order to make judgments about the kind of person you are - before inviting you to join their organization. Will you “fit”?

Interviewers generally look for:

- Assertiveness
- Decisiveness
- Energy/Enthusiasm
- Intellectual Ability
- Social Sensitivity
- Maturity
- Results Orientation
- Tough Mindedness

Think of the interview as a sales call; you are selling yourself.

You should gather and evaluate as much information as possible about each interview situation. Read the company’s annual report and product literature. Visit the library and review the company in publications like Standard and Poors, Dun and Bradstreet, etc. Research the company on the Internet.

Who is the interviewer? Get their name and title. Where do they fit in the organization?

What do I know about the position? Who will I work for? What job skills are required? Do my skills and attributes fit the requirement? How?

What do I know about the hiring organization? How big is the company? What do they do? Are they making a profit? What are their major markets?

Some people perceive their role in interviews as passively responding to questions thrown at them by others. This is potentially dangerous behavior. Instead, your role is to get across your marketing theme, by talking about the attributes that are most likely to be persuasive to this customer. Approach interviews as opportunities to showcase your attributes. You will probably be better prepared than the interviewer. Most non-human resources interviewers are not good at it. Your role is to give the interviewer short, specific examples that illustrate the positive attributes about yourself.

You should be well practiced, not rehearsed.

You should anticipate questions. When answering questions, take your time, frame your response carefully, pause and ask for clarification as needed. There are three types of questions you can anticipate in an interview:

Positive Questions - invite you to say something about yourself, be prepared.

Negative Questions - Potentially damaging traps. Try to turn them around so that they work for you. Be honest, but be prepared.

Neutral Questions - seeking information only. Try to get your attributes in here. Sometimes these are called “Non-experience Questions”. They have nothing to do with your ability to perform the job but are intended to:

Test how quickly and easily you may adapt.

See if you can think on your feet

Test your communications skills

Check your business sense/street smarts

See if you are going to “fit in”

You should prepare for all kinds of questions. Some sample questions you might expect are found at the end of this chapter.

You should be prepared to ask questions. They will help you decide if you want to work for the company and they will allow the interviewer to evaluate you by the kinds of questions you ask. Don't ask about salary and benefits in the early stages of the interview.

When faced with a panel interview, ensure that you are introduced to each person by name and title. Be sensitive to the group dynamics and try to determine who are the group leaders. When answering one person's question, maintain eye contact with others in the group as well.

Always dress up for an interview. Even if you know the company you are interviewing with has a casual dress code, men should wear a coat and tie, and women should wear a dress or pants suit. Shoes should be shined, hair trimmed and combed, hands and nails clean. It's usually a good idea to visit the washroom before starting the interview to check yourself out in the mirror. This is especially important if you have traveled a long way to get to the interview.

Interviews consists of three parts:

**OPENING** - Smile and firm handshake. Put the interviewer at ease. Your appearance and manner are crucial. If the interviewer has an opening statement about the company and what they are looking for, pay close attention for valuable clues you can use in responding to questions or asking your own.

**GATHERING INFORMATION** - Stay alert and focused. This is where the questions get asked. Listen to the questions and avoid answering before the interviewer has finished. Maintain good eye contact. Stay alert to body language, yours and the interviewers.

**CLOSING** - Stay positive. Have some questions ready, based on your research of the company, you can ask if the interviewer asks, “Do you have any questions about our company?” This will indicate that you know something about the company and have a real interest in getting hired by them. Restate your interest in the position. Make sure to ask about and get a commitment about the next step. Who’s going to do what? Thank the interviewer and those outside the office you may have had contact with. Close with a smile and a firm handshake.

If you didn’t take notes during the interview (see below), make some notes as soon as possible after the interview. Ask yourself how it went. What went right? What didn’t you like? What did you learn? What are agreed upon next steps? What items were left hanging? Keep written records of all your interviews and refer to them often.

Send each interviewer a brief, professional letter of thanks. If you forgot an important point in the interview, include it in the letter. If there was a particular strong point or bond, reemphasize it. Restate the agreed upon next step with the appropriate interviewer.

Some general things to remember about interviewing (some are pretty basic but very important):

1. Know where you are going and how to get there.
2. Bring extra copies of your resume.
3. Bring something to demonstrate your writing skills but don’t “show and tell”. Show only if asked about your communication skills.
4. Be on time. If you get there early review the company literature in the lobby, like the President’s letter to shareholders in the Annual Report (if you haven’t already done so).
5. Be cordial and friendly with everyone you come in contact with - the receptionist, secretaries. Watch what you say in the washroom.

6. Initiate a firm, but not hard, handshake. Don't sit down before the interviewer unless invited to do so.
7. Never smoke or chew gum, even if invited to do so. Don't accept a cup of coffee or cold drink if offered.
8. Try to find out during the opening, how much time has been planned for the interview. Make sure you adhere to it.
9. Find out who you will be reporting to. If not the interviewer, ask to meet him/her.
10. Sit naturally and comfortably without slouching. Maintain good eye contact. Lean forward slightly when you want to show increased interest.
11. Never put anything on the interviewers desk.
12. Maintain your professionalism at all times.
13. If a question is not clear, ask for clarification.
14. Allow the interviewer to talk. Don't rush in to fill a silent void.
15. Be confident, not cocky.
16. Avoid negative statements, especially about your last employer.
17. Always protect the confidences of your past employer. Don't volunteer company secrets.
18. If you don't know the answer to a question, say so.
19. Be prepared to talk about accomplishments, skills, strengths.
20. Ask questions that reveal genuine interest.
21. LISTEN CAREFULLY.

22. Don't volunteer your reference list. The interviewer will ask for it. This is a good sign.

23. When you sense the interview is coming to an end, don't overstay your welcome.

24. If referred by a search firm, ask the counselor for feedback.

## TAKING NOTES

There are two theories about taking notes during an interview. One is don't take any notes. The other is to use a small portfolio or day planner that will fit comfortably on your lap and allow you to take notes without leaning over the interviewer's desk. Note taking should not detract from the interview but allow you to jot down key words that can be used to be thorough in your answers. If you can't take notes easily and comfortably, without losing your train of thought, you shouldn't take notes. But always jot down your thoughts after the interview.

## “YOU ARE OVER-QUALIFIED”

If you think the interviewer is saying you're overqualified as an excuse to get rid of you, ask, “What do you see that I don't see? I think you can be very helpful to me.” Then hold the pause. You will get an answer because it's the interviewer's turn to talk. Asking for evidence of the over-qualification, in a polite, concerned manner, (rather than allowing yourself to feel flattered) might be all it takes to cause the interviewer to think twice and consider giving you the job.

If the interviewer's answer indicates that you are truly over-qualified, try to broaden the responsibility of the position by determining if your skills could be applied to a broader scope in the job. You might also suggest that the company might benefit from having superior performance and greater productivity without having to pay a premium dollar. Then assure the interviewer that you would not continue to search for a job after accepting this one.

## DISCUSSING COMPENSATION

Somewhere along the interview trail, you will be asked your current (or most recent) compensation. It is generally best to defer discussion of salary to the end of the interviewing cycle. If the question is from a search firm that will be introducing you to a prospective employer, you have only one option - to give the information. If the question is asked during an employment interview, you may want to answer indirectly with a range and then ask, "What is the range on this position?" This should give you a clue early on if you are in the ballpark. It is usually always best to answer this question by stating a range within which you are seeking to be paid.

If asked what you think you should be paid in the new position, you should have some idea of the compensation market range for the position. If you don't know, you should try to find out before the interview. Salary ranges for most positions are published by several research firms and should be available at the library or on the Internet. You can avoid a direct answer early in the interview by saying, "Before I answer, I wonder if you could give me a little better idea of the job, its responsibility level, authority, number of subordinates, if any, problems that will have to be addressed, solved, etc."

When the compensation question comes at the end of the interview, you might suggest that the company knows what the job is worth, and that they are in a better position to make that judgment. Then add that you would be willing to entertain an offer because the job sounds like one where you can really make a contribution.

In the event it appears you may cause the interviewer to become upset by avoiding a direct answer to the compensation question, don't risk it, answer directly.

In any event, try not to let the question of compensation become too important before there appears to be a genuine interest in you.

## QUESTIONS TO BE PREPARED FOR

Tell me about yourself.

What do you know about our company?

Why do you want to work for our company?

What can you do for us? What can you do that someone else can't?

Why should we hire you?

What do you look for in a job?

How long will you stay with us?

How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution?

Why did you leave your last position?

What have you done to increase sales, reduce cost, increase profit?

Do you like working with figures or words?

What did your subordinates think of you?

What did your boss think of you?

What are your most significant accomplishments?

Why have you been out of work so long?

If I spoke to your last boss, what would he tell me about you?

Can you work under pressure, deadlines?

## QUESTIONS TO BE PREPARED FOR (cont.)

Do you prefer staff or line work? Why?

What are you worth?

Are you willing to relocate?

What was the last book you read?

Do you read the paper daily?

What is your best attribute?

What is your biggest weakness?

What would you change about yourself?

How do you relieve tension?

How important is money to you?

How did you obtain your last position?

What did you like most/least about your last job?

What are your short/long term goals?

What kind of performance appraisals have you had?

What do you want to be doing five/ten years from now?

What do you like to do when you're not working?

What other job opportunities are you considering?

Why should we hire you?

## Chapter 10

# Networking



## Chapter 10

# Networking

**“It’s not what you know, it’s who you know.”**

There is a saying that “you are either networking or not working.” Most people who have been successful in finding a good job will tell you it was obtained through networking. Networking is the active process of finding people, a lot of people, that will help you find a job.

If you are looking for work - advertise yourself to everyone you know. You should start your networking plan by making a list of possible types of contacts (See the list at the end of this chapter - there may be others you can think of). Then prepare a list by individual name of everyone you know in each category. You’ll be surprised to find out how long this list will be. Next sort the list of names by those you know best.

You should start by contacting the people you know best. These will be the easiest to talk to and should be the most willing to help in your networking activities. Even when talking to your best friends, you need to have a prepared statement to describe your present situation. This statement should be a shortened version of your three-to-five minute presentation. It should contain information on your most recent position, your reason for leaving and your strong points and future goals. Like your three-to-five minute presentation, this shorter network introduction statement must be carefully prepared and rehearsed.

When contacting your first network people, your objective is to have them provide you with the names of people who may know about job opportunities or provide you with information about potential employers.

Your network should be continually growing. It is not necessary that you begin your job search by developing a network of a certain size. It is best to pace your network gathering over time. It is important that you keep to its development and spend time on networking every day. Your objective should be to get two new referrals from every person you contact. The arithmetic is rather astounding. If you start with 10 friends, and then develop only three levels of your network with each person providing two names, the result is 150 names. This is not too many.

You want to become a “name-dropper”. To do this you have to have a lot of names, and a file on who they are, what they know and how they can help you. You develop this file by talking to each individual and asking questions. Generally, you are not looking for them to give you a job, but to give you permission to use their name when approaching someone who has a job. Imagine how much more powerful your approach to someone with a job opening would be if you could make statements like:

“Mr. Smith, of Acme Manufacturing suggested that I contact you.”

“I believe you know Mary Jones; she said.....”

“My brother-in-law is your finance director.”

“We went to the same school together.”

“Bob said your company is about to.....”

You first tier of networks are your relatives, friends and acquaintances. Contacting these people can be easier and less formal than contacting the lower tiers. You can approach them by phone, a note, or in person. Your objective is to get two other names of people they may know that will be influential in your job search.

When approaching the lower tier of networks, people you don't know, there are some recommended methods to make it easier and more successful.

Call and set up an appointment. Use the name of the person who referred you. Don't indicate you are looking for a job. Get to the point quickly and indicate that you are gathering information and names of people in your industry.

Try to avoid lunch meetings. The best place to meet is in the person's office. They should have all their files and business cards there. When you ask for names or information, they should be at the person's fingertips.

Before arriving at the meeting, prepare specific and pointed questions that you can ask. Arrive exactly on time. The meeting should be friendly, not like an interview. Look for common interests. Give a quick overview of your objectives - to gather information and obtain any names of others that might help in your search. Don't ask for a job or about job openings in the person's company. If he/she knows of anything, they should volunteer it. Play on the person's ego, knowledge and position. Attempt to establish a respect between you. Ask knowledgeable questions. Don't display anger or bitterness about your last employer.

Your objective is to get two more names for your network. You will probably have to ask for them with specific questions like, “Do you know anyone else who....?” or “Can you suggest.....?” Make sure you get names, addresses and phone numbers correctly. Ask permission to use their name when contacting their references. If you don’t get permission, it doesn’t mean you can’t contact them, you just have to have a reason (See list at the end of this chapter). Generally people will want to help and will give permission. But, here again, you have to ask.

If you have had a good meeting and established a good relationship with the person you might ask if you can use him/her as a reference and if they will forward your resume with their cover letter of introduction. A great personal cover letter is nothing more than:

“Bob, I’ve met Nancy and think you should talk to her.  
Here’s her resume.”

After the meeting send a thank you note.

Networking can also be performed at conventions, trade shows, seminars, professionals association meetings, alumni meetings and a variety of other “get-togethers”. Before going to these meetings, prepare yourself with a list of fact-finding questions (see list at end of chapter) and some business cards. It should be assumed that you will not have a lot of time to talk about your plight at these busy meetings but you should be prepared to “make contact”, ask a few questions and exchange business cards. You don’t need to provide your short three-to-five presentation unless asked.

Keep in touch with your network throughout the entire search. Keep them informed of any progress or setbacks. Continue to ask for their help and support. After you have found a new job, let them all know about it with a thank you letter. Write to them again in about six months, telling them how things have been going. Annual Christmas cards will keep your network alive - should you ever need it again.

## POSSIBLE NETWORKING CONTACTS

Accountant	Banker	Barber
Attorney	Broker	Church Leaders
Bartender	Sport Clubs	Competitors
Cleaner	Copy Shop	Customers
Conferences	Family	Friends
Dialog	Info Trak	Lateral Supervisors
Hairdresser	Doctor	Dentist
Librarian	Newsletters	New Acquaintances
Neighbors	Relatives	Placement Office
Peers	Trade Shows	Professional Associations
Seminars	Professors	Politicians
Teachers	American Executive	
Alumni	Directory	

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THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT  
A POTENTIAL EMPLOYER

Acquisitions	Alumni	Age
Benefits	Career Path	Competitors
Culture	Customers	Community Relations
Financial Growth	Litigation	Location
Management Style	New Markets	Marketing Channels
New Products	Past Success	Position Openings
Image	Reputation	Technology
Turnover	Ownership	Type of Business
Size	Strategic Plans	Stock Performance
Unique Needs	Vendors	Philosophy
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## Chapter 11

# Technology



## Chapter 11

# Technology

**“The number one benefit of information technology is that it empowers people to do what they want to do. It lets people be creative. It lets people be productive. It lets people learn things they didn't think they could learn before, and so in a sense it is all about potential.”**

In the twenty-first century, getting a job requires the use of technology. Your key technology tool will be a computer. It will need to have word processing software and be connected to the Internet. If you don't have a computer you need to get access to one somehow. Many libraries provide free access to computers.

Your future employer will expect you to have some basic computer skills. Note the employed people on the street that are using their cell phone, BlackBerry, iPhone, BlueTooth, etc. to conduct business on the fly. Note the people in restaurants or coffee shops that are using their computers with wireless Internet (wifi).

### JOB FINDING/PLACEMENT WEBSITES

The Internet has become one of the best places to find a job. But it takes knowledge of how to utilize these services. The big, well known sites include “Monster.com” and “CareerBuilder.com”. Some of the smaller, more local sites would be your local newspaper website of “CitySearch.com”. But if you want to see just how many there are, Google “job finding websites”. Google gives you about 33,000,000 pages. Most sites require you to “sign up”, and this is OK since you want to keep track of the opportunities you are working on a particular website. Most of these sites provide pages where you can post your resume as well as find for those employers looking for someone to fill a position. Make sure you understand how each part works.

These sites offer a variety of “other” services – some free and some for a fee. Try to get as much help as you can from these sites for free by surfing their many pages. Paying for someone else to “write” your resume is probably not a good idea. Your resume needs to be more personal. But there are a lot of free hints and recommendations that may be useful to you. Most of the bigger sites, like “Careerbuilder.com and Mosnste.com will offer a free service to post your resume. Part of this process is building your resume online via a series of questions asked. As you answer these questions, your resume is created online.

Besides inputting your resume, many sites require you to complete a profile form that provides some basic information about you. Take care in filling out the profile. Make sure you are putting in information that will capture the interest of the reader. Your profile has to be as compelling as your resume. This part of the process may make a potential employer looking at or passing over your resume. Be creative and honest.

Periodically review the job postings on these sites. There may be a job that you want, but the company posting the job didn’t find your resume when they did their search of available persons. Follow up and persistence will help separate you from the rest of the potential candidates. There is a fine line between persistence and annoyance.

If a site has a video or flash presentation on how to use their website, be sure to watch it. This makes it much easier to get started and making sure you are maximizing your time at the site, rather than just surfing around.

Many sites are “strictly local” and they might be more useful in your search. There are also business associations, alumni associations and local colleges who have sections on their websites that are devoted to helping people get jobs.

## NETWORKING WEBSITES

Today, the Internet is all about networking. It is free and instantaneous. But it is important to select a networking service carefully. FaceBook, Twitter and YouTube are probably not appropriate for getting a job, but could be helpful in networking to find opportunities.

A site like LinkedIn.com may be able to get you a job. LinkedIn provides for a member to complete a comprehensive personal and career profile that can ultimately be seen by many. You can also use their email service to invite people to view your profile and make recommendations about you. There are many group organizations on LinkedIn.com that you can request to join, like past business positions, church affiliations, alumni groups, etc.

## ONLINE NETWORKING

The Internet is an essential tool for the job seeker and Online Networking is a must. Just like every other aspect of job searching, networking has moved to cyberspace, and a wide variety of Web sites have been developed that are dedicated to bringing people together via the Internet.

Online networking provides unmatched freedom, enabling participants to post inquiries and information at any time and from any place. While you might not be able to make it physically to several different networking meetings, you can participate in many different discussions from your computer, and on your schedule.

Definition: *“Online Networking is the process of building professional relationships through internet-based social networks, discussion groups, blogs, and personal websites.”*

Online networking is a complement to, not a replacement for, traditional networking. Online networking -

- Has the same objectives and outcomes as traditional networking,
- Provides access to more people in more locations, industries, professions,
- Communicates your personal brand 24/7 and builds your online presence,
- Broadens your offline relationships and connections

Both traditional and online networking are relationship-based, give-and-take processes. Online networking makes you appear technology savvy!

For the job seeker, online networking helps because it provides another means to communicate your professional objectives and attract recruiters, business partners and others. It is one of the most effective ways to find and reach contacts, new ones and old ones, in businesses and organizations

Let's broaden the topic into a discussion of "Social Media" - *a term used to describe the type of media that is based on conversation and interaction between people online.*

Is Social Media a fad or the biggest shift since the Industrial Revolution?

- Because of the speed in which social media enables communication, word of mouth now becomes world of mouth
- Social Media has overtaken porn as the #1 activity on the Web
- Years to Reach 50 million Users:
- Radio (38 Years),
- TV (13 Years),
- Internet (4 Years),
- iPod (3 Years)
- Facebook added 100 million users in less than 9 months.
- If Facebook were a country it would be the world's 4th largest between the United States and Indonesia (note that Facebook is now over 300 million users)
- Percent of companies using LinkedIn as a primary tool to find employees....80%
- The fastest growing segment on Facebook is 55-65 year-old females

- Generation Y and Z consider e-mail passé...In 2009 Boston College stopped distributing e-mail addresses to incoming freshmen

This is a real shift in how people read and share information. But, a warning before we delve further – it is essential that the job seeker regard online networking and social media as only a part of networking. The other traditional networking activities continue.

There is a confusion of possible social web sites:



Let's look at three, especially relevant for job seekers; [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#). Why? Because they provide visibility and personal branding, and networking. It is becoming the most expedient way to gather market intelligence and search for jobs.

### **Twitter**

Provides a means for friends, family, business contacts and others to communicate and stay connected. It quickly answers the "What are you doing?" question. Note that more than 80% of Twitter usage is on mobile devices!

Simple Steps: Join Twitter and complete your bio. Follow companies and business organizations. Tweet and retweet.

### **Facebook**

This social networking site connects people with friends and families, letting them keep in touch and share and exchange information. Note that users can only see the profiles of confirmed friends and people in their network. You control your personal security.

Simple Steps: Keep and reconnect with friends. Monitor corporate fan pages and Facebook Marketplace.

### **LinkedIn**

This is the largest and most popular professional/business social network. It has facilitated millions of business introductions.

Simple Steps: Become a member and develop your profile. Again, note that you control your personal security over access to your information. Grow your network through connecting with contacts, asking for recommendations and searching for new contacts and jobs.

## **How to Get Started**

Plan an online networking strategy and set goals

Prepare a resume or profile (bio), perhaps with variations depending on the site.

Join LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Get involved.

Focus on relationship building, growing your network through the sites, making connections aimed at your career goals

Remember to manage your time. Keep online networking to about an hour a day, so that you continue your other job seeking activities, too.

Networking whether online or offline is about sharing information between you and your contacts – give and receive!

## **Other Things To Do**

Subscribe to the RSS (Really Simple Syndication) feeds for niche job boards in your industry.

Twitter job searches, and job searches on sites like Indeed.com, and apply as SOON as new jobs that you're interested in get posted. Job ads generate a TON of resumes, and a lot of people tune them out after the first few. Be in that first few.

Search for the word "job" with your industry keywords in Google (like: "air traffic controller job"), then restrict results to just the last week (or last 24 hours if you do this daily, recommended if you are actively seeking employment). The first 2-3 pages of recent results will often include job ads that might have been posted to niche boards or job sites you didn't monitor, or only appeared on a company's own web site.

## **LINKS**

Google “online networking” and you will find a host of links to articles discussing this technique. Look especially for those describing effective use of online networking, such as -

### **“Eight Secrets of Effective Online Networking”**

<http://www.techsoup.org/learningcenter/internet/page8075.cfm>

### **“Five rules for online networking”**

<http://www.cnn.com/2005/US/Careers/03/31/online.networking>

### **“Social Media Goes Corporate”**

<http://www.betagammasigma.org/exchange/summer09/coverstory.htm>

**Happy Job Search** helps out with keeping organized:

<http://www.happyjobsearch.com>

### **Careerealism**

A blog and career learning tool that offers terrific career advice through blog posts, videos and Q&As to those who are employed and unemployed.

<http://www.careerealism.com>

## Chapter 12

# My Strategic Approach To Getting Hired



## Chapter 11

### MY STRATEGIC APPROACH TO GETTING HIRED

It is important to maintain a clear understanding of every major job opportunity you are working on. Understanding your position must be honest, factual and non-emotional. The STRATEGIC APPROACH worksheet, attached, is a way to keep tabs on the opportunity, by requiring a careful review and analysis of your understanding of the situation. It also helps you to develop an action plan that will improve your chances of getting the job you want.

The STRATEGIC APPROACH worksheet is filled out as follows:

First complete the upper-left box of the form. This includes the Opportunity name, a statement of what you offer to this company and an understanding of your compensation objective.

Next circle the word that best describes how you feel about this opportunity. The line across the top of the form actually represents a circle and euphoria can jump to panic very quickly if an expected offer is not made.

The middle-top box identifies how you rate yourself vs. the competition (others seeking this job) and what the timing is. You should also prepare a brief objective statement. Something like “I will receive a job offer from XYZ Corp. by May 15, to be their accountant at a salary of \$40K.” Note there is a job description, time and salary element in this statement.

You should prepare a list of what you want your “ideal” company to be. This list could address location, management style, size, market, philosophy, etc.. Once this list is completed, it probably won’t change for other opportunities. Put your list in the upper right box and rate this opportunity using the -5 to +5 criteria. Zero is not allowed.

Moving to the middle section of the form, you list all of the people involved in the hire (these are the ones that will influence the hiring of you). You should also identify their current titles and a brief description of what they do. Hiring Influencers include the ultimate/economic decision maker, your future boss, any consultants, search firm, or Human Resource personnel that are involved, and your Coach. One person can serve several rolls, but it is important that you know who will perform in each capacity. This is especially true of the ultimate decision maker. Sometimes the consultant/H. R. Dept. will say they are going to make the decision, when in fact they won't. They will only submit your name, along with others, to the true decision maker. A Coach is someone inside the company or a member of your network that can advise you of how things are going and perhaps feed back information on how your application has been received.

A very important element of the STRATEGIC ANALYSIS worksheet is the center section where you identify the "win"- "results" for each of the hiring influencers. A "win" is the personal gain the individual will realize by hiring you. This could be prestige, money (bonus), recognition, a better department, improved efficiency, more vacation time, etc. The "result" is what the influencer perceives your hire will mean for his/her company. There is a distinction between the influencer's "win" and "result". Possible "results" might include improved profits, moving into new markets, reducing overtime pay, new expertise, new design concepts, bringing in new techniques, etc.

Next you identify how well each influencer is covered. Have you met them all, written to them, talked to them on the phone? Again use the -5 to +5 scale, but no zero.

This middle section generally gives you a fairly good idea of how well you understand the opportunity and the people that will make it possible for you. If you have been honest in completing this section, you will realize that there are areas where you need additional information. These are identified weaknesses. You probably also have identified some things that you have going for you. These are strengths. List your strengths and weaknesses in the lower left box.

Action planning comes next. This part of the analysis can usually produce a better action plan if you involve one or more other people. After describing the opportunity to them, using the information on the top part of the form, as a group, begin listing all possible things that could be done to improve your chances. Don't be pre-judgmental, don't limit your thinking, list all possibilities. This is where a "breakthrough" idea can be generated. List them all. Don't throw out any ideas. Your objective is to fill in missing information, stress your strengths and overcome your weaknesses.

After you have a good, long list of possible actions, go back and select the ones that will provide the best results. List these in the lower-right box, along with when they need to be completed. You will probably have to go back to your coach or others to gather more information.

The STRATEGIC APPROACH worksheet provides an ongoing evaluation of the opportunity and needs to be revisited and updated regularly. You also need to keep track of the results of your action plan and timing.

The STRATEGIC APPROACH TO GETTING HIRED can be a big help in understanding your situation with a particular hiring company and help you to improve your chances by identifying where you need to put your effort.

