

Lesson 5 — Workplace Job Searching Strategies (finding and winning the job)

Now that you know more about the world of work and being professional, it's time to get out there to find and win the job you want.

In order to mount a successful job-searching effort, you first need to understand that finding a job is a job in itself.

That is to say, finding a job requires hard work, special skills, and time. Don't approach this task in a half-hearted manner. If you do, you will move too slowly and the competition will swiftly pass you by. So start your job search by making a commitment to pursuing it with all the energy, hard work and time needed to be successful.

Next, remember that each job is filled in a competitive way. When an employer is looking for a new employee, they want the best person they can find. In order to have a good sampling to choose from, they'll invite as many applicants to apply as they can. This means you'll be in a competition with many others for that job – and winning any competition means you must outperform the other competitors or applicants.

Since you may not always be the most experienced applicant or have the best-looking resume, you can still win the race if you work the hardest to impress the potential boss with your passion for the position. When the job interviewer or potential new employer sees your passion and desire for the job (including the company or organization and its mission), it can propel you to the head of the pack. So dedicate yourself to working harder and more enthusiastically to get the job you want than your competitors. After all, hard work and a passion for the job is often what the employer wants most of all. If you show yourself as that type of a job applicant, you will likely gain an edge over your competition, thereby improving your chances to win the job.

Also, be alert for those negative feelings inside of you that say, "It's a tough job market," "It's a bad economy right now," or "I need more education before I start looking." While these types of thoughts may have some truth to them, they are more likely a smoke-screen hiding your general fears about your potential for success (the fear of failure).

With regards to the job market, economy or education level, no matter how bad you might be telling yourself these things are, employers are hiring somewhere. If you take yourself out of the job search process with these types of excuses, you've made these things true for yourself. Many people talk themselves out of the job hunt – so let the other job seekers be demoralized by such fears and doubts, not you. If you avoid these fears and traps, you're a step ahead of your competition.

With regards to the unavoidable "fear of failure," know and accept the fact that you are likely to have such a fear. When looking for work, the core of this fear is the fear of rejection. It's the fear of being told

“no, I’m not selecting or hiring you.” This fear of rejection is normal. So, let’s be realistic. You’re very likely going to get some “no” answers when applying for jobs. It’s a given. It’s a fact of life. And the “no” response hurts us deeply. It’s discouraging. Everybody feels this way.

With this reality in mind, think about the “no” response as a routine part of the process. Most job seekers, especially first-time job seekers, discover the following truth about looking for a job.

Expect this pattern of replies:

Job application #1 = No

Job application #4 = No

Job application #2 = No

Job application #5 = No

Job application #3 = No

Job application #6 = YES!

The number of “no” answers will vary, but they will always be there.

And, the “YES” is inevitable when you keep trying.

It’s also important for you to understand that a “no” is not a rejection of you. In fact, a “no” may really mean “yes” in the sense that this job is not for you; and as a result, you wouldn’t be either successful or happy in it. You may feel overwhelmed in the position, then have to start the job hunt all over again. So, in that case, you’re better off getting a “no.” Always accept the “no” answer as a sign that the job wasn’t right for you.

In addition, every “no” gets you one step closer to the “YES” that’s out there waiting for you.

Plus, with each “no” you might hear along the way, you’re gaining valuable job seeking experience which will make you better prepared for the next job search. One way to get the most out of not getting the job is to ask the employer, after they’ve made their decision to hire someone else, if they would give you some “constructive feedback” on your application or interview. This way, you can improve in your next job application. When you make this request, do so without any feelings of regret or anger about the outcome. Congratulate the employer on getting the right person, and thank them for considering you. By asking them for feedback about what they noticed during this process, the employer may even recommend you for another job at either their organization or elsewhere because you will have impressed them with your zeal to improve.

This is networking at a high level.

Networking

What is networking? Networking is the art of communicating to people what you want. In a professional development context (the purpose of this book) it’s telling people something about yourself which includes information about your ambition for a particular job.

It's amazing how well this works. There seems to be a fundamental truth that people want to help other people get what they want – at least, when they like somebody and if they can. We're social animals. We want to be of assistance to those we like. It makes us feel good about ourselves when we are able to help someone else who seems deserving of our help. If helping that other person also helps us in our personal or professional lives, we are that much more willing to lend and

This is the underlying principle of the art of networking. This is why networking is so important and why it works. When you tell people (always in a nice and appealing way) that you're hoping to begin a career in a particular field, the listener is going to naturally want to share with you any information or ideas they may have which might help you. This information can come from almost anyone, including family, neighbors, teachers, friends, employers and even strangers.

It's amazing where job "leads" or great tips about job vacancies will come from – so tell everyone (even your classmates and teachers) what you want to do for a career. Every time we taught our "Professional Development and Disability" class, we began by introducing ourselves to each other. As a part of these introductions, students told the class about their career ambitions. Invariably, about 20% of the time, upon hearing a student mention a particular profession or career ambition, another student would speak up and say something like, "Oh, I have an uncle who works in that field, give me a call and I'll introduce you." Of course, it wasn't always an uncle – sometimes there was another family member, a friend, or even a friend's family member – but there was always a connection.

So, tell everyone about your career ambition with the idea that the more people you tell, the greater the chance that someone will reveal an important contact. Now, you're networking!

In addition to being outspoken about your career goals, be sure to observe the other two key elements of making this strategy work for you. First, be likeable. Try to establish some sort of connection with the person you're networking with. It could be as simple as a smile, a compliment, or even just saying what a lovely day it is (if that's true). Even an observation about bad weather will help to establish your likeability. Be sure to use the "workplace presence" skills discussed in Lesson 1.

Also, if you are currently a student in school, understand that you have a built-in likeability factor. People want to help students. The mere fact that you are a student is likeable and appealing because everyone you'll be networking with was a student once and they appreciate the transition-to-employment phase you're about to enter. That in mind, they'll probably want to help you in some way. So if you are a student, let that be known in order to gain this natural support.

Since the subject of being a student has come up, understand the even bigger value of currently being a student has to your employment search. Too many (most) students rationalize that they should wait until they finish or graduate from school before they begin to look for work (including using networking as a job-hunting tool). Or they think that school was hard and they should take a long and well-deserved rest before starting to look for a job. That's absolutely the worst thing you can do to yourself. If you play it that way, you're disadvantaging yourself. Understand that for each month you're out of school and not yet working, your attractiveness as a job candidate will likely get lower and lower, making it harder

and harder for you to get a job. It will be harder because employers often view people who don't yet have jobs as job applicants that others have passed over and didn't want (whether from a bad application or bad interview). So, if other people didn't view the unemployed applicant as worthwhile, why would they? The more time that passes before you start your job search and networking activities, the increasingly less desirable you might become to a potential employer. Conversely, as a student soon to be leaving school, you are a "hotter prospect" because you haven't been tagged as someone who has not been working a significant period of time. With that in mind, start networking early and apply to jobs during your final semester in school instead of waiting; because the hiring process takes time, just look for jobs that will begin after you graduate or tell the employer that you will be ready once you finish school.

Your virtual look

Social media is a great way to connect with family and friends; also, it's fun. We use Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat and other social media platforms to express ourselves every day.

People spend more time on social networks than on any other category of sites—roughly 20-30 percent of their total time online. Most people aged 25–34 use social networking at work (whether they are allowed to or not).

Social media is a good place to connect with others as well as present ourselves to the world. However, this "golden" opportunity has both its good and bad sides. We must be alert about each.

The good news about social media and your professional development (networking, look for a job and advancing your professional reputation) is these networks can market your capabilities and impress prospective employers. This is especially true about "LinkedIn" and other job-oriented sites. Those are the first places you should begin your employment campaign to market yourself for employment. The establishing of a professional looking and sounding profile will impress prospective employers and customers alike.

Conversely, a not-so-professional looking social media presence will work against your ability to market yourself successfully for employment.

Imagine that you have just met a prospective employer and you're off to a good start by making a good first impression. You give the interested employer your resume (and it looks terrific) and they tell you, "Let me look at your resume and I'll give you a call." How promising, how exciting, you're on your way!

Well, that call never comes. You never hear from that employer again. What happened? What probably or may have happened is that employer did what most employers are doing these days. They digitally checked you out. They went to your social media sites (Facebook, Twitter, etc.) and both read what you had to say and looked at the pictures you posted. Unfortunately, for you, you trusted those "privacy settings" and never imagined that any potential employer would ever see your social media sites. So, you gleefully posted the photographs of you chugging a beer at the fraternity party. And of course, you

didn't look so professional in the picture. Plus, the irresponsible comments you added to the picture about the wild party probably didn't help your cause either.

This social media background checking by employers is often called “digital stalking.” Employers want to know as much as they can about prospective hires because hiring staff is the most important decision they'll ever make. If they hire well, a manager will get their work done and look great to *their* boss. If they hire a “party animal” with an apparent drinking problem, and then it affects the company's image or the new hire simply isn't effective, the manager will look bad to their boss and might even lose their job.

Given what's at stake, and the ability they (or the investigators they contract) have to bypass your “privacy settings,” you must begin to realize your possible digital weaknesses.

According to an Ohio State study, 91% of employers admit to reviewing their job applicant's social media sites as a part of their screening process. Another study on this subject by “Career Builder” reported that 60% of employers review applicants' social media sites to confirm what their resume says, 56% say they're trying to see if job candidates “look professional,” and 61% say that they stopped considering job candidates as a result of their social media searches (because of an unfavorable impression). The top reasons which lead to unfavorable impressions were: 46% had inappropriate photos; 34% wrote negative things about prior employers, professors or their schools; and 29% made discriminatory comments related to race, ethnicity, religion or gender. And every day that passes sees increases in this activity by employers.

Knowing this, you can make social media work for you, not against you. As you begin your employment search, study your social media sites for postings and pictures that reveal the “dark” or nonprofessional side of you. Clean up your sites, just as you should clean yourself up for an interview. Another way to turn this potential liability into an asset is to post or tweet positive comments about your encounter with an employer after your meeting with them. For example, right after the meeting, tweet, “Met this fantastic employer and would be honored to get to work for them.” You don't need to lie (never do), but if you really are excited about the new employer and the job, say so with a secret thought that they might read your positive comments.

So, social media is a force for good marketing and a danger zone for bad marketing. Now, you know what you need to do to make it (net)work for you.

Resumes

Here's a subject that everyone has an opinion about. You can take even a “super” resume to anyone who pretends to know something about resumes and they'll always tell you where it can be improved. Everybody is an expert (about what they like) and has an opinion.

The truth is there are no absolute truths about resumes. However, there are some general tips to follow which can help you approach the subject. Here they are.

- Have a resume – You need a resume as soon as possible. Don't delay another minute. When you begin networking, the first thing a potential good contact will say to you is, "Send me your resume and we'll talk some more." If you don't have one already prepared, by the time you might write one, this contact may have forgotten all about you and the opportunity will have passed. Many people delay the writing of their resume because they don't think they have enough to say. Remember: just because you've written a resume now, doesn't mean you can't re-write it as new experiences and facts reveal themselves to you. So, write a resume immediately. Also, be sure to have two versions of that resume: 1) a print or hard copy resume and 2) one better suited for electronic usage and is digitally or computer friendly. What makes a resume computer friendly? It's more "searchable" and scanner friendly but doesn't need to look as flashy as a print version.
- Study and choose a resume format you like — There are dozens of great-looking resume formats on the internet to adopt as your own. Some document programs, like Microsoft Word, have resume formats built in. Just search them out and pick the one that looks the best to you. If you like it, it will both show your personality and encourage you to share it more freely.
- Create the resume content – Of course, having content is step one to developing a resume, but often the exact words you'll use depend on the format you choose. The guidepost on how to develop the content for your resume is described in Lesson 3, "Workplace Job Skills" (KSAs & the "deeper" skills). With these prompts or tips in view, try to capture all the activities and experiences you've had in school, working (including summer and part-time jobs), volunteering, and/or from your life experience which serve to describe both your KSAs and deeper skills. If you follow the KSA format or table offered in Lesson 3, you will be matching your resume's description of you with the employers' wish list of qualities they want. Also, make sure you describe results, not just experiences. If you worked at a summer job writing a report, what was the outcome or result of your effort? Employers are impressed with results, not just accomplishments. Plus, keep the resume content short. Don't write long sentences. Take the extra time necessary to edit your copy down to only the important points. The interview is the time to expand on all the items in your resume. And lastly, if there are weak things in your resume, like significant periods when you did not work or had 5-6 jobs in 3 years, explain them on very briefly on your resume. If you don't mention good reasons why you have these gaps or other classic weaknesses, your resume is likely to be tossed.
- Create an attractive resume – It's not just enough to have great resume content; your resume also has to be presented or framed in a way that catch's the employer's eye. It's just like any other piece of advertising copy trying to capture the consumer's eye. When you apply for a job, your resume is likely to be reviewed in a stack of other applicant's resumes. Imagine there are 40-80 resumes in that pile and the employer is about to wade through them. The dull and boring looking resumes, no matter how impressive their content may be, are likely to be disadvantaged by not being visually attractive. In about 6-30 seconds, employers glance at a resume and decide

whether or not to read it more carefully. So, makes your resume a piece of visual art and slow them down to want to read yours. Here's how:

- ✓ Pick a theme with related graphics, type face and use a good paper quality. For example, if you're showcasing your talents as a problem solver, place colorful lemons in the margins and say, "I make lemonade out of lemons." If you're an engineer or architect, you might give your resume a "blueprint look" to it.
- ✓ Know that when people glance at a page for the first time, they often begin by looking in the upper left-hand corner and glancing diagonally down the page to the lower right-hand corner. This is the valuable real estate in your resume. Begin your best fact or statement in the upper left hand corner of the page to slow the eye down.
- ✓ Keep your resume short and to the point. Be specific. Don't go over one page.
- ✓ ALWAYS re-write your resume to fit the actual job position description and/or vacancy job announcement you're applying for. Employers are creatures of habit: if you use the same words in your resume that appear in their job description and/or vacancy announcement, it makes it easier and more logical for them to take a closer look at you. Employers can also spot "generic" resumes easily, as well as especially generic statements-of-interest in longer job applications. Failure to tailor your resume content to fit the specific job you're being considered for makes applying a waste of time and may ensure your failure.

Here are some general tips on what not to do when writing your resume.

- ✓ Don't waste space with an "Employment Objective." Everybody knows that your employment objective is the job you're applying for at the moment. Plus, these statements get so lofty and vague that employers often laugh at them.
- ✓ Prioritize prior experiences that align well with the job you're applying for. If you need to save space, eliminate prior work experiences that aren't related to the job or career you're applying for.
- ✓ Do not include personal information like marital status, religious preference, phone numbers and social security numbers. Electronic resumes are searched by criminals for personal information which might help them hack into your accounts. Instead, list your name and email so they might communicate with you via e-mail. And make sure to check your account for replies!
- ✓ Don't include a less-than-professional looking email account name like sugarpiehoneybunch@himail.com. Set up a new email account if needed (ideally one that includes your full name or a first/last name and the other initial). It takes minutes and it's free. This way, your identity is further protected and a professional email address can be crafted.

- ✓ Generally, don't let your resume exceed one page. In some situations, more is better, especially if that more is really great and important stuff. A second page will usually list any publications or projects that you have done, which turns your resume into more of a "CV."
- ✓ Don't list your outside-of-work interests, hobbies or sports.
- ✓ Don't list your birth year and give them the chance to guess your age.
- ✓ Don't write your resume in the third person – they know you wrote it. Write your information in bullet points, not sentences that require "I" or "employee."
- ✓ Don't include your current business contact info. Your boss might be upset that you're looking for work elsewhere. Some bosses will fire you if this is where you're heading.

There are two types of resumes to consider. They are:

Reverse chronological resume -- A reverse chronological resume lists a candidate's job experiences in reverse chronological order. So, the top job experience listed on the resume is the current one, next is the prior one, and so forth. Positions are listed with that job's start and end dates. The reverse chronological resume works to build the applicant's credibility through experience and increasing responsibility, while demonstrating career growth over time, as well as showing a steady employment history. A reverse chronological resume is not recommended when the job seeker may have wide gaps of unemployment in their career.

Here's an example of a reverse chronological resume for a student.

Prior Work Experiences

Aug 2017-Present Committee member of the Student Council

- New Membership Committee: Interview and select candidates
- Administrative Committee: Review conduct cases and advise on policy rules suggesting changes

August 2015-June 2016 Teacher's Aide at St. Mary's Elementary School

- Spanish Language Reading Tutor
- Worked with K-3rd grades students to improve their Spanish reading skills
- Developed 5 lesson plans and independently initiated a "Student Needs Assessment" survey
- Created 10 reading materials and 5 games to better engage students in learning

Functional resume -- A functional resume lists work experience and skills by skill areas or job functions. This type of resume format is used to focus on key professional skills that are specific to the type of job being sought. This type of resume emphasizes the person's professional competency instead of prior

work experiences. The functional resume works well both for those with a wide range of prior work experiences or with little work history as it gives them a chance to focus more on what they know, their skills and abilities (KSAs). A functional resume is preferred for applications to jobs that require a very specific set of skills. A functional resume is a good method for highlighting relevant skills or experience, even those which were learned some time ago. Rather than focus on the length of time that has passed, the functional resume allows the reader to identify those skills right away.

Achievements

Research Information and Analyze Data

- Researched and implemented a new marketing campaign designed to promote campus student services to new students, which resulted in a 10% increase in their participation
- Collected research data for improving campus entertainment events, which resulted in a 14% increase in ticket sales
- Completed customer satisfaction survey for community theatre, which was used to create the next year's performance schedule

Manage People and Projects

- Organized and managed a team of 10 staff to re-organize the company's marketing campaign
- Successfully completed a year-long project which changed campus events team's strategic plan

Effective Communications

- Created marketing campaign materials for print, electronic (social media) and presentations to key official and groups
- Wrote press releases and articles which were published by school, local newspaper and other media outlets

Experience

- Senior Marketing Specialist, 2017 – Present
Hay Street Theatre, Berkeley, CA
- Activities Chair, Campus Event Planning Committee, 2015 – 2017
University of California, Berkeley
- Sales and Marketing Staff Member, 2013-2015
Berkeley Department Store
Berkeley, CA

Remember: there are plenty of people available to you to give you feedback on how to make you resume better, but only you can first write it. So, get started now. You can always improve it as you move forward, but you can't make it better if you don't have one to begin with.

Cover letters

Often, when you are applying for a specific job, it will become necessary (or required) for you to submit a cover letter with your resume or job application. Here are some tips on the art of crafting a winning cover letter.

First of all, think about the importance of the cover letter. It's not just a meaningless or boring requirement to be done. It's your chance to create a powerful and compelling short story about your experiences, qualities and passion for a specific job. It's likely that your cover letter will be read first – and if it's poor or dull, that might end your chances for the job. So, you must put as much thought and effort into your cover letter as you do in preparing the resume or job application.

Think of the cover letter as your first chance to be evaluated and considered (and it may be your only chance if it's not so good).

Here some important considerations in its preparation.

Make it interesting to read. Tell an interesting story about yourself. Tell it briefly. The letter should be one page if possible, but no more than two. Remember the reality that it takes more time to write a short, meaningful and powerful letter than it does to write a long one. So, put the time in that's required to get it just right. Be sure to have someone else read and review it with you.

As already mentioned, you should adjust your resume to best match the specific job you might be seeking. Similarly, always customize your cover letter to match the specific requirements of the job being sought. Read the job vacancy announcement or job description and actually use some of their language in your cover letter to build your case. Don't just use the same cover letter for every job – employers can spot a “generic” cover letter a mile away.

The cover letter (not the resume) is the chance to make your sales pitch on why you might be a great candidate for the job. Be sure to make your claim in a good way. Be a good bragger (see Lesson 1 the “Art of Bragging”). Be sure to back up your claims with examples such as related experiences and accomplishments or results. And write your letter in the first person (“I have experiences in...”).

Always express a passion for the line of work involved as well as an enthusiasm for the job you are seeking. Employers like to know you might be bringing those added dimensions to the workplace. Such qualities are worth a great deal to them and can help you get picked for an interview.

Target the letter to a person, not “To Whom it May Concern.” Almost all vacancies identify a person to send your resume or application to and that might be the person to whom you should address the letter. Better still, if you can determine who the actual hiring manager is, address your cover letter to him or her. Also, if you know someone at the company or organization who may have encouraged you to apply, mention this person's name. Do so in a way that expresses both some familiarity with the person as well as appreciation for their encouragement.

Lastly, if you don't have the time to prepare a cover letter, and none is required or suggested, you would be better served not to submit a hastily-prepared one. Of course, if it's required, follow the suggestions above and put the time in it that it deserves.

The art of the interview

The interview is an art form.

It's a performance.

The employer has a script of questions to ask you; and you, as the person being interviewed, must also have prepared and practiced your lines in reply. As is true with any performance, in order to be successful, you must create, edit, practice and learn your lines before the curtain rises. No actor takes the stage without a script and rehearsing. Nor should you before a job interview.

Far too many job candidates think they can show up at the job interview, without any preparation, and perform to the best of their ability. Too many job applicants think that they'll be able to spontaneously listen to the employer's interview questions and make up their answer on the spot. They further fool themselves into believing that these answers will be their best work. Unfortunately, this approach to the interview is likely to end in disaster and no job offer. Don't make this mistake – prepare like you would for a stage performance. Only with a lot of preparation and practice will you be at your best. And you must be at your best to have a strong chance to get the job.

Preparation and practice

After you apply for an advertised or open job you want, you should immediately begin to plan what you will want to say during a possible interview. Make notes while you wait to see if you'll be getting an interview. Don't wait for the interview invitation before you start this process, as often the interview appointment will happen only a few days after the notice may arrive. So, use your time wisely.

Begin your preparation by studying the job's vacancy announcement and/or position description, as well as general facts about the organization or company involved. Learn as much as you can about the job you're going after before an interview gets scheduled.

When you study the job vacancy announcement or position description, you'll find key information about the job which will become the basis for anticipating and preparing for your interview questions. Here's an example of a job duties listing for a budget analyst position which should be reviewed, understood and establish the basis for your preparation for your job interview.

Duties

- The primary purpose of this position is to serve as a budget analyst performing a variety of budget functions involving the formulation, execution, and/or analysis of budgets and provide financial management services.
- Formulates and justifies major segments of the department's budget, including all acquisition and annual service contracts. Performs multi-year budget formulation work involving

preparation of detailed analyses and estimates for assigned organizations/programs into a consolidated budget request for one or more future budget years.

- Performs budget execution and administration work involving the monitoring of obligations incurred and the actual expenditures of a budget with different sources and types of funding, such as direct annual, multi-year, and no-year appropriations; apportionments; allotments; transfer of funds from other agencies; reimbursements and refunds.
- Provides advice, assistance, and guidance on budgeting and related information. Devises and recommends the adoption of procedures to implement budgetary processes, policies, and regulations issued by headquarters.
- Conducts analyses, reviews and special studies of budgets and/or related information.
- Develops and prepares necessary correspondence, documentation, budget policy papers, reports, training materials, and special projects. Specifically, prepares exhibits for annual Execution Plans, Budget Execution Reports and Program Objective Memorandum inputs.
- Protects classified information.

When studying the vacancy announcement and the job description, seek to identify the key responsibilities and tasks that are involved. Make a list of all of them because you're likely to be asked questions about your ability to perform them. Also, make notes about the current status of the office or department where the job is located, the organization's mission statement, as well as the general circumstances facing the organization. To this end, study their website and search the internet for articles and information about the organization's latest news and developments. Take a look at any trends in their industry if you have time: an Internet search, following the right news sources, or even downloading some podcasts are good places to start.

Next, alongside the job/company-specific information you have gathered during your research effort, add the listing of top general skills employers are known to be looking for such as:

- ✓ Ability to work in a team structure
- ✓ Ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization
- ✓ Ability to make decisions and solve problems
- ✓ Ability to obtain and process information
- ✓ Ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work
- ✓ Ability to analyze quantitative data
- ✓ Proficiency with computer software programs
- ✓ Ability to create and/or edit written reports
- ✓ Ability to sell to or influence others

In addition, consider adding a listing of classic or typical job interview questions to those indicated by the study steps above. Here's a sample of these types of questions you might add – also remember that employers often follow general questions by asking for specific examples, so keep some stories on hand.

Frequently Asked Interview Questions:

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. Tell me about your background and how it qualifies you for this job.
3. Why do you want to work for our organization?
4. How do you think you can make a contribution here?
5. If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you ask about?
6. What do you know about our organization?
7. Why did you leave your last job? Your last three jobs?
8. What do you look for in a supervisor?
9. Can you explain any gaps in your work history, if there are any?
10. What are your strengths and weaknesses?
11. What personal qualities make you stand out?
12. What you find most/least attractive about this position?
13. What motivates you to do a good job?
14. How do you organize or prioritize your work?
15. How well do you handle pressure?
16. Have had any challenges getting along with your supervisors? Coworkers?
17. How do you handle criticism?
18. What was one of your major accomplishments or achievements?
19. What have you invented or created to find a new solution?
20. Tell me about a time you had to take a chance and risk your job or position for the greater good of your cause or organization.

And, lastly, come to realize that every question that an employer asks a job applicant centers on one single question. That core concern or question is, “What can you do for me?” In the end, this is the heart of the interview, so approach any and all questions with this most important concern upper-most in mind as you give your answers.

While you should prepare yourself to answer all the questions suggested above, be careful about the last three (18, 19 & 20).

With regard to question #18, part of what the interviewer is looking for is your sense to teamwork. When you answer this question, be sure to use the pronouns “we” and “us” at least as much as you use the word “I.” Show your sense of teamwork, even at the expense of sounding more powerful.

Question #19 is looking for an answer that shows you have the ability to think and act “outside of the box” or are able to find solutions in new and innovative ways. You don’t need to have invented a robot to do your homework. Rather, look for examples of where you may have devised a new and different approach to correcting a problem or situation.

Question #20 is about passion. Develop an answer which shows that you have the courage to take a chance to do something bold because you care more about the good of an organization rather than

protecting yourself. It's designed to see if you have the passion to succeed which is greater than your instinct to survive.

Behavioral Interviewing Questions:

An increasingly used interviewing technique is called "behavioral Interviewing". It's considered by many employers as the most effective type of interviewing technique for nearly any type of organization. Behavioral interviewing focuses on a candidate's past experiences by asking candidates to provide specific examples of how they have demonstrated certain behaviors (knowledge, skills and abilities) in key performance areas.

It is believed that behavioral interviewing is the most accurate predictor of future performance since it measures past performance in similar situations. You should be ready to respond to these types of questions.

Here are some behavioral interview questions based on some of the top ten (10) qualities that employers generally look for in job candidates.

Q1: Describe a time when you were working on a team, and you and another team member did not agree on how to proceed. How did you handle this (teamwork)?

- What did you do/say to bridge the difference?
- Did you reach a compromise?
- What was the result?

Q2: Tell me about a time when you realized you weren't able to complete an assignment for your supervisor by deadline. How did you handle this (solve problems)?

- How did you communicate this to your supervisor?
- When did you communicate this?
- What was the outcome? (When was it completed?)

Q3: Tell me about a project you had to complete with multiple stakeholders. How did you keep them updated on progress (plan, organize and prioritize work)?

- Tell me more about your communications with the stakeholders.
- Tell me more about how and when you updated them.
- What was the outcome?

Q4: Tell me about a time when you knew that your customer might not get what he or she needed on time. How did you handle this (sell or influence others)?

- Tell me how you communicated with the customer.
- What did you do?
- What was the result?

Understand that certain job-specific questions are likely to be also asked depending on the job opportunity – and it's important to prepare for these ones as well. Using the information about the

budget analysis position example above, here's a good guess on the job interview questions to anticipate and prepare for:

1. Tell me about yourself (education background, work experiences and career goals).
2. What are your strengths? And what are your weaknesses?
3. Tell me about your ability to formulate, execute, and analyze budgets as well as provide financial management services.
4. What experience have you had formulating and justifying budgets?
5. Why do you want to work for this department and organization?
6. What kind of a workplace culture do you like?
7. Give me examples of working in teams. What do you or don't you like about teams?
8. How would you handle the situation where you discovered that money was not appropriately handled?
9. What questions do you have for me (your interviewer)?

From all of the information above, you are now in a good position to begin to create a listing of anticipated questions that you might be asked in the interview. It's really not that hard to anticipate job interview questions when you analyze the job description and vacancy announcement.

While the lists above suggests many possible questions, these groups and types of questions can be distilled down to a more manageable number, depending on the specific position you are applying for. Still, test yourself on all of the possible questions suggested above, because while you can trim this listing down somewhat, it's a great idea to have prepared some kind of a response for them all. That way, you will give yourself a competitive edge over the other applicants who might prepare less thoroughly.

The purpose of this preparation strategy is to identify the most likely potential questions you will be asked for a specific job, so that you can more easily answers those expected question. It's like knowing what the questions are going to be on a final exam. If you know them in advance and prepare for them, you'll be ready to get an "A" on the exam. With serious preparation, you'll be able to get close to guessing what the interview questions will be. And that's a great advantage to your performance in the interview. Plus, preparing like this even helps you to manage your nerves because you've increased your self-confidence.

The next step in the process is to write down your answers to these anticipated questions. Yes, write them out. The value in doing this is it gives you an opportunity to re-think, re-consider, and add onto that written answer as you continue to consider your best answer. By writing your answer, you can engage in a process of continually improving your answer. Since it's in writing, you have your prior thoughts documented, which makes your editing and improving process more productive. You'll have a written answer and when your read it a day or two later, or ask someone else to read it, that new perspective will help you get better and better with your answer.

The act of writing also creates "memory muscle" which makes key thoughts come more readily to mind because your eyes, hands, and thoughts essentially memorize your written statements. Of course, when

you enter the interview, DO NOT try to say these points as written. Say them in your own words of the moment. Your answers will sound more fluid and natural, and not rehearsed. Plus, if you try to memorize and repeat your answers and get lost, that's likely not to end well (ouch).

Following the strategy above will greatly increase the likelihood that you'll get the job. And even if you don't, you won't feel as badly because you will know that you did your very best.

Take the stage

Okay, you've prepared well for the interview. Now, it's time to enter the interview room. It's show time!

- ✓ Dress and groom yourself appropriately. It's always best to err on the side of caution and look extra-professional, even if you think the office might have more of a business-casual dress code.
- ✓ Practice the "over the top" (OTT) exercise (mentioned at the end of Lesson 1) before your leave home. By doing so, you will start the interview at your peak performance, just like those athletes who "rah-rah" themselves (OTT) before their game begins.
- ✓ Be on-time. No, don't be "right on-time." BE EARLY! Plan to get to the interview location 20-30 minutes early. If you need to wait in the lobby for 20-30 minutes, that's a great time to settle yourself and control any nervousness by reviewing your key talking points, getting comfortable in the space and knowing you're there on-time. Your interviewers might have tight schedules, so they may appreciate starting early as well – and in that case, they will also have time to ask you extra questions if they really like you.
- ✓ From the minute the location for the interview comes into view, start smiling and looking confident. Continue to carry that attitude until you leave the building and are well out of sight. You never know who might see you on your way in or out: you'll get extra points if another team member asks the interviewers, "Who was that upbeat candidate?"
- ✓ Be pleasant to all you meet, especially on way into the interview room. Interviewers love to ask the receptionist who greeted you, "What did you think of that applicant?" So, be sure to leave a good impression with everyone you see. You never know who's watching and reporting.
- ✓ When you're invited into the interview room, enter with a smile and a warm and heartfelt greeting. Say something human and friendly like, "Thank you very much for seeing me today."
- ✓ When the interview is over, be sure to say, "thank you" – but also say something professional like, "I wish you the best in your search for the right employee" or "I really enjoyed our meeting, this sounds like a terrific place to work."

One last point

You probably noticed that the last question in the sample listing of possible interview questions for the example budget analyst position was, "What questions do you have for me (your interviewer)?"

This is a very important time for you to show your initiative and desire for the position by asking relevant and insightful questions of the interviewer.

Here are a few possible questions you might ask of the interviewer.

- “If I’m lucky enough to get this job, what tasks or projects will I be first asked to undertake?” The answer may tell you more about how well-suited you are for this position. Plus, the answer may spark something else you might want to say about your qualifications for the position.
- “What do you (the interviewer) like about working for this organization?” This can tell you a good deal about what it’s like to work here.
- “What possibilities are there for training in your company?” It is important to show any prospective employee that you are the type of person who is interested in growing and improving.
- “Is there anything you have seen in the other candidates which you have not seen in me?” The answer may give you a chance to say something more about that missing piece of your qualifications. Or, it may help you improve your performance in the future.
- “What is your timeline for making a decision and announcing the results of this process?” This can be especially useful information to know if you are applying for multiple jobs. Knowing the timeline between the decision and the hiring date also helps when notifying a current employer that you will be changing jobs.
- “Is my application complete? Is there anything else I can submit to you that might help?” If your application is complete, then congratulations – and if something is missing, get it to the potential employer as soon as you can.

By asking serious questions like these, you will appear more professional and a more worthy candidate.

Avoid asking questions about salary, benefits and working conditions at this point in the process. Save those technical questions for when you might be offered the job. You will be in a better position to ask such questions then. It will also be useful if you have multiple job offers and need to compare them – or negotiate a higher salary from the lower-paying opportunity.

Remember, the job interview is a complex encounter. It’s unlike anything else you may have ever experienced before. You want to present yourself as the best candidate possible; at the same time, it is also a great opportunity to learn about a potential job as you are making a major life change.

Further illustrating these points and appearing below are the typical questions going on in the interviewer’s mind as they evaluate a job applicant during an interview. These six (6) different sets of concerns or questions are not likely to be asked of you directly, but they are what the interviewer will be thinking about when scoring your answers to the questions they ask out loud. Be prepared to answer both the specific questions asked, as well as the remaining “unasked questions” below. Find ways to weave into your responses to the asked questions answers to the unasked ones below. Imagine these thought bubbles are in the room with you, waiting for you to address them.

1. PERSONALITY & STYLE

Do I like you? (Are you the right fit for our workforce?)

Are you professional?

2. SPIRIT

Do you have passion for the job? Do you want the job?

Do you have loyalty & integrity?

Do you have self-confidence & humility?

3. QUALITIES

- Do you have ability to work in a team structure?
- Do you have ability to verbally communicate with persons inside and outside the organization?
- Do you have ability to make decisions and solve problems?
- Do you have ability to obtain and process information?
- Do you have ability to plan, organize, and prioritize work?
- Do you have ability to analyze facts and data?
- Are you good with technology/computers?
- Do you have ability to create and/or edit written reports?
- Do you have ability to sell to or influence others (leadership)?

4. KSAs

What are your job specific related
Knowledge, **S**kills & **A**bilities?

5. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Did you answer the questions I asked?
- Were your answers good?

6. DISABILITY

- How can you do this job with your disability?
- Disability accommodations are expensive, aren't they?
- If I hire this person, what will my boss, fellow workers or customers say about my hiring decision?
- I have other job candidates without disabilities, why don't I just get to the next applicant?

Get ready for your job interview by studying, preparing and practicing what you want to say about yourself during the interview in a way which also tries to answer all the questions above.



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