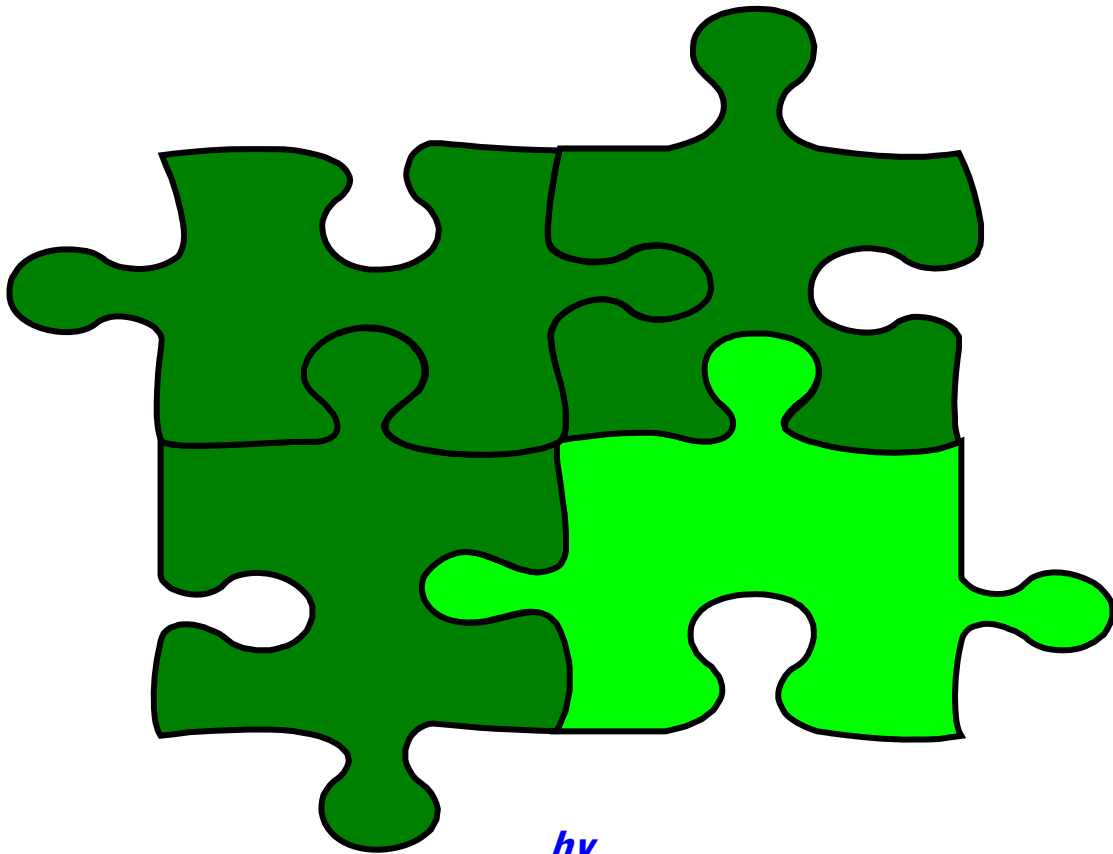


Your “Right Fit” Job:

Guide to Getting Work You Really Love



by

Julia Erickson

Career Transformation Coach

&

Twitter Career Expert on Careerealism.com

INTRODUCTION

This workbook is a practical guide for anyone seeking their “right fit” job: work that is fulfilling, doing what you love. It can be used whether you are unemployed, currently working, newly out of school, or re-entering the workforce. It’s your “virtual coach” taking you each step of the way through your successful search. And it uses simple techniques adapted from marketing to ensure that you reach your market: the employer and job you really want.

Why do I focus on finding your “right fit” job? It’s simple: You will be spending a lot of time on your job search. You can spend that time more effectively. ***Since you have to look for a job anyway, it makes sense to look for one that will make you happy.***

We spend 8 or more hours a day, 40 or more hours a week, 48 weeks a year at work. Some of us see the people we work with more than our families. To spend any of this time unhappy is a truly horrifying prospect. Can you imagine getting up for work to spend time with people you don’t like, doing things you don’t enjoy, earning less than you are worth, in a place that is depressing and just not the right place for you to grow and be happy?

I’ve been there, in a job where I worked ridiculously long hours, suffered criticism and backstabbing, and earned much less than my peers. Many days, I could barely pull myself out of bed and make myself face those people and that office. I began getting back pain and gaining weight. I rarely saw my friends and family, and barely had time to make phone calls, see a doctor or do laundry. One night, I found myself in tears on the street after finally leaving a last-minute, hours-long meeting. I cried from frustration over the evening’s cancelled plans. And I cried because I knew I’d just have to turn around and come back the next morning for more of the same. It was too much. I felt I couldn’t do it any more.

Of course, I did go back the next day. But that night I resolved that I would look for a new job, a job that I would love doing. I determined that, soon, I was going to love going to work. That night, I made a promise to myself that I wouldn’t settle for anything less. I decided that I deserved to be happy at work.

I succeeded in reaching that goal, using tools from my many years of personal development work and with help from some great friends. After two years of trial and error and great perseverance, I finally landed the job of my dreams as Executive Director of City Harvest, a NYC hunger relief charity. I stayed there 11 years, growing it to help feed more than 265,000 a week by delivering over 25 million pounds of food each year and raising more than \$11 million a year in private donations. I loved going to work every morning, knowing I would do work I really loved and believed in, work I was great at, and with people I truly admired and loved.

After leaving City Harvest, I realized I was at another crossroads. It was time for me to do something else. And so I used the techniques contained in this guide to help me find my new “right fit” calling as a career transformation coach, helping others find and then get their “right fit” work.

All of the content is proven to work. I’ve used the techniques over 25 years with colleagues and friends, and most recently with clients who identify and then get jobs and careers they love and find deeply satisfying. While the time it takes varies, the end result is the same.

Thank you for reading this and good luck in your search!

Julia Erickson

September 2009

Twitter: @juliaerickson



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9 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL JOB SEARCH

This set of steps will result in you getting the right job for you - your "right fit" job - specifically work that you enjoy and that gives you satisfaction.

1. **Identify what you want to do**

Many people are unhappy with their jobs and careers. Perhaps you are fulfilling other people's expectations instead of following your own preferences. Perhaps you've reached a point where you want to do something new.

You CAN work at a job you like. My rule of thumb is that you should be 70-80% satisfied with your work. In a down economy like this one, perhaps 60% is more realistic. If you are waking up every day dreading going to work, you definitely are not in the right line of work or the right workplace - *for YOU*. It may be fine for others, just not for you.

We all have unique talents and abilities with which we were born, and skills we have developed throughout our lives - at home, in school, in the workplace. At base, it is our talents that determine whether we will be happy at work. If we're using our talents, we will be much happier. If we're not using our talents, it's a bit like swimming against the current and hoping to reach our destination - frustrating and likely to keep us stuck in the same place.

It can be difficult to let go of our wish to please others, especially our parents, and to follow our own hearts. And sometimes it may feel as though you can't abandon your hard-earned skills - or that they are now worthless if you want to pursue another field. Those are totally normal feelings. What's important is to allow yourself to have the feelings and yet not allow them to derail you from reaching your goal: work that you look forward to doing every day. When you are doing that work, those who love you will be happy for you and will get over their disappointment (if there is any.) And you'll find that every skill you've learned will come in handy in your new work - everything you've done so far is the foundation for this next step in your life. Many skills are transferable to another field and will get you started. Keep an open mind about possibilities.

Such a job search can take more time than you have at the moment, because you may realize you need to get additional training or education, or that you need to make a higher salary for some period of time to save enough to be able to afford a career switch. That doesn't mean you have to abandon pursuing your dreams. You simply operate on a "dual track" where you look for a job that meets a major percentage of your "must have list" for a satisfying job, and you begin activities that will eventually result in your doing your dream work.

2. **Prepare a resume that effectively markets you**

When you know what you want to do, you can then identify your “core value proposition” to a potential employer. The point of the resume is to provide evidence that you are fully capable of delivering great value to the employer with your ideal job.

The heart of any successful resume is a set of accomplishments that support your core value proposition and lead an employer to see you as potentially right for a specific job. I suggest only including tasks and accomplishments that you would be happy to repeat. If you put it in a resume, employers will assume you are willing to do it again. In every job, we have to do things we don't necessarily like (that's the dissatisfying 20-40%), so why ask for it?

3. **Networking: your first new job**

Networking is the chief mechanism people use to get their dream jobs. It's not complicated when you know what you want to do, and have a short description of your ideal work and the talents and abilities you want to use at work.

At heart, networking is just talking to people and telling them what you want to do, then asking for their ideas and help to take the next step closer toward getting that job. Most people won't have a job for you but they usually have someone else to whom you can talk. You don't know who knows who, so talk to everyone and keep following the trail of the next person to whom you are referred.

4. **Identify job opportunities**

When you know what you want to do, it's easier to identify potential job opportunities. Most of the time, opportunities appear on-line and through networking meetings. Use your “Must Have List” to evaluate opportunities and see if it's worth applying for the job. If you find a job on-line, work to find someone at that company who might put in a good word for you and help ensure that your resume is at least seen by a decision-maker.

5. **Write cover letters that win interviews**

Your cover letter is where you will make the case that your core value proposition is exactly what the job description calls for. The letter needs to position you as knowledgeable about and responsive to an employer's needs. That means you can talk about your specific abilities and accomplishments in relation to the employer's needs.

I always say "employers only care about your past as it relates to them achieving their desired future." So mention the employer's name, talk about their business or mission, use the position title, and tell them why you'd be privileged to be part of their team. In a competitive market, that is even more important as employers can be and are pickier than ever. Most will

seriously consider only those applicants who demonstrate knowledge of and even passion for the company's purpose.

6. **Prepare to succeed in your interviews**

Most people blow interviews because they are not prepared to answer some of the questions that are asked. When you've been fired or laid off, or if you quit, it can be extremely uncomfortable to answer the question "what happened?" And it also can be hard to describe your desire for a new career.

Rehearsing your answers is the solution. Rehearse, rehearse, rehearse until you are comfortable giving an answer that is honest and free of any negative tone or attitude - what is called "charge-neutral." It's also good to remember that you get to pause before answering, and use other techniques to buy some time to think through your answer. It's even OK to say "I don't know" if you then follow by saying "and I'm looking forward to learning that here, working with all of you." That's probably the most important guidance: wind up your answers to difficult questions by refocusing on the job at hand.

Other factors in successful interviewing are knowing a reasonable amount about the company to which you're applying, the job in question, and if possible, the people interviewing you. This allows you to give intelligent, informed responses to questions such as "how would you handle this situation here?" or "what would be the first things you would do if you got this job?" Finally, have your own list of questions to interview them as to whether it's the right fit for you. And pay attention to your own response to the interviewer and the information you are gathering about the company.

7. **Follow up to enhance chances for success**

In a competitive job market, follow-up is more important than ever. I've heard stories where companies don't interview people who don't call or e-mail to see if their materials were received. It's about good manners and developing good relationships. So thank people with whom you've networked and interviewed. It can't hurt and it often does help.

8. **Negotiate job offers that meet your "must have list"**

If you get a job offer, FIRST say thank you and that you are excited, and only then ask for some time to discuss it with your spouse/partner/parent/sibling/best friend/coach. You do not have to give an immediate answer unless all the terms are acceptable to you.

Usually in the job search process, one or two items rise to the top of your priority list. Often it is organizational culture and compensation. Or it may be compensation and your role or scope of responsibility in an organization. Whatever those one or two things are, focus on getting

those. If you can get those and some of the other items on your "must have list," don't be greedy.

9. **Have some faith**

You will get the right work for you. It is going to happen. The search rarely goes as quickly or easily as we would like. Yet that's no reason to give up.

When you have identified your core talents and preferences, the work that energizes you and brings you joy - it is impossible for you NOT to do it. It will happen when you work for it, and don't give up.

So have some faith in yourself and the universe. And keep your eyes open for unexpected opportunities that will start to appear all around you as you get clearer and clearer.

SUMMARY: HOW TO FIND YOUR "RIGHT FIT" JOB

- 1) **Zero in on what you really want to do.** What do you love doing? What do you do well? What, if any, difference do you have to make? In what physical environment and organizational culture do you thrive? What's your "live with" number for compensation? This is your "**must have list**."
- 2) **Develop a short professional profile and powerful resume.** The profile and resume content will be linked together for a seamless document that presents you exactly as you want others to see you.
- 3) **Come up with your networking spiel** (otherwise known as the "elevator pitch"). This is essentially your **intention** regarding what problems you want to solve for an employer and what skills you want to use in service of x, y or z.
- 4) **Identify people with whom you can (and want to) network**, and look at how to connect with people you don't yet know. This includes using LinkedIn, Facebook and other social networking sites.
- 5) **Find jobs that interest you**, and decode the job description to see if, on its face, the job matches or could match a majority of your Must Have List. Job descriptions contain lots of clues to job scope and responsibility level, organizational culture, and core skills you need.
- 6) **Develop a powerful and persuasive cover letter "format"** that will help you get interviews. Getting interviews is the only goal of the cover letter.
- 7) **Go through your interview concerns.** Get comfortable with potentially difficult questions by doing some rehearsal and role play for difficult questions.
- 8) **Talk through any issues and strategies.** Get a buddy with whom you can track your emotional state as you move through the interview process. A spouse or partner can sometimes be too invested in the outcome to be the objective support you need. You're going to be so much more successful if you have a person to help you through this process. A coach, a friend with whom you make an agreement for weekly contact, a mentor - these are all options.
- 9) **Leave no stone unturned in the search.** Keep going after every recommendation, every contact, every person you can talk with, every opportunity that may appear. Even if you think "I've already tried that," maybe there's a new approach you can take. It's important to keep busy, keep active, keep identifying and pursuing new approaches to get you to your goal. This does not mean pursuing opportunities UN-related to your target job.

YES, I'M GRATEFUL TO HAVE A JOB...

But isn't there something more?

For people who are now working and not happy in their jobs, it can be stressful to even think about asking this question in today's economic climate. In fact, however, this is a great time to ask such a question. Think of it as beginning to invest in your career future. Ask and explore now, and you'll be ready when the economy opens up and recovers. You can find your "right fit" work.

Think of it as the career equivalent of "buying low." You're putting time and energy into figuring out what you want to do in the future that is more fulfilling. Just as people are spotting economic opportunities, there are career opportunities that will emerge from this horrible, scary economy. Invest in yourself today for a better result tomorrow.

Start looking at what you dream or fantasize about doing.

Don't worry so much about whether something is achievable or not. Now is not the time to ask "Is what I want a fantasy or achievable?" First of all, Dreams are achievable. Second, fantasy is useful to guide us toward our "right fit."

Now notice what you are interested in and drawn to.

What websites do you visit? Which items pull your attention first? What magazines do you subscribe to? When you open a newspaper, what articles do you read almost or all the way through? If you decide to take a class, what are you drawn to? Even if you decide not to take it and instead take something "practical," what sparked your interest?

Actually, pay close attention to the class you "wish" you could take but it really isn't practical or realistic or useful or something you should spend any time on. That may be the biggest clue to what your potential passion is, to your future "right fit."

In the noticing, you will start to identify things and activities that are meaningful to you and in which you want to invest time and energy.

Think back to times you did something that you really enjoyed and that you felt you did well.

Using the form in this guide, make a list of all the projects, activities, and accomplishments you can remember, back to your childhood, including school, play and work. Write down what you liked about each one of them. What is it that makes you especially proud, satisfied and/or

happy? What impact did your effort make? Looking at all of them, can you identify any common themes? Perhaps you liked helping

people, or making things look beautiful, or improving a system, or building something. The themes will tell you what makes you happiest.

Take one of these and write in great detail how you went about the project. Talk about how it made you feel. There will be clues here to how you like working and to the kind of culture you enjoy.

In the exploring process, it's helpful to put aside judgment.

This is merely the exploration phase, the time when you get to know a little more about the topic or issue or field that sparked your interest. There's no lifetime commitment called for, simply "information gathering."

When you start to explore a new field, by definition you know very little about it. In gathering more information, you will start to be affected by the new information – it may resonate with you and spur you on to learn more, or you will shy away from further exploration.

A gut reaction is a fantastic guide during your "information gathering." Scientists have found that we actually have a second brain in our stomachs. So your gut is literally processing information, especially emotional information, to help us make better decisions.

CURRENT SITUATION ASSESSMENT

These questions are to help you get to know yourself regarding work. Answer them honestly and completely. Even if you know the answers in your head, it will definitely help you to write them down. You will refer back to the answers as you move through this guide.

- 1) What are you doing now?

- 2) How did you get there?

- 3) Why do you want to explore other options now?

- 4) What is dissatisfying about your work life right now?

- 5) Is there anything you like about your current work life?

- 6) What do you want from work?

- 7) How do you want work to relate to your overall life?

- 8) What are your life circumstances right now – financial status, family obligations, health, etc.? And what kind of boundaries might they place around your search?

- 9) What's your career goal or objective? In other words, if you could have any job you want right now, what would it be?
- 10) What kind of time frame do you have for finding your "right fit" job?
- 11) Have you explored other jobs before? What were they?
- 12) Have you had any interviews or job offers? For what? If you turned down a job, why? If you didn't get an offer, do you have any thoughts about why?

SAMPLE

CURRENT SITUATION ASSESSMENT

1. What are you doing now?

I was the Director of Corporate Real Estate Strategy for Fidelity Brokerage Company, a division of Fidelity Investments. Evolved into *Director, Fidelity Personal & Workplace Investing*.

I developed a process for managing space requirements based on the individual company business plans. I did this by building relationships with finance managers, and creating models, reports and various communication tools. They had confidence that I would make sure they had the facilities to achieve their goals and I would do so in the most cost effective manner.

Translate between different groups – translate needs – representative of the business liaising with the real estate group that did the actual build-out – IT (telephone and data folks), security, art curator, some kind of special need – lab, secure areas, etc. – bridge between business and build-out – degree and past experience gave her credibility; also had worked in real estate group so maintained relationships – layered positions and past experience in order to build great experience – always able to use past experience, past relationships to enrich current job.

Specialty is trading floors, office space, conference space, libraries, communications/phone centers, network/operations center, cafeterias, executive space, chart room to display charts and house people, storage, archiving, kitchens, public space (lobbies), branch offices – retail space. Did a template, hired architects and contractors in localities. In US and some UK.

2. How did you get there?

I was approached by the CFO (Laura), who knew of my real estate skills, about filling a need they had in the central finance team for a real estate management process. I had been looking for a way to combine my real estate planning experience with my recently acquired financial analyst skills. This seemed like a perfect fit, meeting my goals and their business needs.

Had gotten bored after 7 years

Wanted to explore something else, technology

Woman boss helped her get EMBA

Moved to finance – took a lateral money move but a title demotion (from Director to Analyst)

3. Why do you want to explore other options now?

I was laid off as part of a large reduction in force.

4. What is dissatisfying about your work life right now?

I was dissatisfied with the lack of customer (business rather than finance managers) interface involved with this job. That function which I had enjoyed in my previous space planning jobs had been taken over by the Corporate Real Estate division in a political move and they were vigilant about keeping me away from the business customer interface.

*Clients were too busy so they trusted her; she was the **gatherer, weaver of information into a coherent story**. Finance managers were talking about business plans, growth, site needs, expansion – loved the finance people but not the substance as much as before. 20% of it would be fine – not 100%. Needed the analytic ability to do cost/benefit analysis of various moves.*

5. Is there anything you like about your current work life?

Your “Right Fit” Job

<http://julieannerickson.blogspot.com>

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I liked my boss, the great camaraderie of the work group, the location (walking distance from my home, and the frequent interaction with the Sr. Executive team.

High level conversations about how group will grow, different groups and the interactions between them, effect on performance – how success and performance of fund managements is affected by space, placement – it affects culture. Interaction between culture and space and performance. Bring those needs to head of corporate real estate, learn about sites, go visit potential sites, then bring information back to Sr. Executive – decision-making central part of your job. Access to big-wigs, empowered to sift through needs and translate them into the different format – taking concepts and making them solid, tangible. Loved working with teams of people to get input, the most unlikely people would come up with great ideas.

e.g. how to let people know who's here meeting with which part of company, so can pop head in – like a airline departures board

Communications, relationship management

6. What do you want from work?

I want intellectual stimulation and camaraderie. I want to jump out of bed each morning, eager to get to work and I want to be involved in an interesting project that I am proud to talk about.

7. How do you want work to relate to your overall life?

I want work to be central to my life. I want to be part of our changing world, learning new skills, until the day I die. (My mother retired at 81, although her employer kept trying to get her to stay!) I would be embarrassed and feel guilty to have a job that I would give anything less than 100%.

Husband is a workaholic, don't have children. Likes a city, the bustle, being involved, 25% business travel. Husband a fanatic, competitive sailor from May to mid-October. Travel to Caribbean every Christmas because it's a big sailing center. She reads.

8. What are your life circumstances right now – financial status, family obligations, health, etc.? And what kind of boundaries might they place around your search?

I have severance pay until mid – September and as my husband and I have no children we don't have any large debt or pressing needs. I am in excellent health and the only issue that could restrain me is that my mother is 97 is blind and frail and depends on my trips to DC every 2 months for 3 days to take care of her issues. My husband says he would be happy to move, particularly to the Mid-Atlantic area, but he must be near the ocean....

9. What's your career goal or objective? In other words, if you could have any job you want right now, what would it be?

To have a senior management position in process improvement or real estate strategy and planning for a consulting or architecture firm, university or a business/corporation. I would be managing a small team and have frequent interface with executives. I would travel, one or two times a month, and would feel fully committed to the success of my team and the company

10. What kind of time frame do you have for finding your “right fit” job?

I would like to find a job by mid -summer and will get anxious if I don't have one by Labor Day and really anxious by Thanksgiving 2009.

11. Have you explored other jobs before? What were they?

I have been looking for a job since last spring. I searched daily on the Harvard, MIT, and Boston Society of Architect's websites. I also networked within Fidelity.

Wasn't giving it 100%; found the sites to be useful. Now there is nothing on them. Applied to something at MIT but they needed someone who could do CAD; she was too senior.

12. Have you had any interviews or job offers? For what? If you turned down a job, why? If you didn't get an offer, do you have any thoughts about why?

I interviewed for the Principal Planner position with the Harvard/Allston initiative. I had a great interview with the COO who was doing the hiring. He indicated to me that I would be advanced to the final three who would interview with the director of the initiative. He said that I didn't have the exact experience they were looking for but he liked the breadth of my experience as needs may change and he felt it was good to have someone who could do a variety of jobs. In the end, the hiring manger saw one resume that was perfect and only talked to that person. I think that fact that I lacked the community planning experience she was looking for was a big factor.

In September I was contacted by an Fidelity HR VP I had known for years who was working on a staffing plan for a new Sr. VP. She felt the VP needed my skills and set up an interview for me. I interviewed for the job, everyone agreed that I was just what he needed and I was told that the job was mine and that all that was need was an offer letter. At that point the market crashed and all requisitions were frozen. Two weeks later the VP lost her job and I got laid off one week later.

RESULT: Sarah narrowed her search down to targeting opportunities to use her space planning and design skills in a new industry, specifically biotech or pharmaceuticals. By August 2009, she had secured a 4 month contract position at a major pharmaceutical firm helping design the "lab of the future." With her boss leaving soon, she has the opportunity to move up in the company.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Through our lives, we have accomplished many things – small and large. We’ve succeeded in our work and our play, at school and in our community. We’ve enjoyed the experience of accomplishing some thing more than others.

Using this form, list and describe as many successes or accomplishments as you can remember. Include especially those experiences from which you got a lot of enjoyment and satisfaction, of which you were or are proud. Choose accomplishments from every age and situation. We’re looking for themes and patterns to guide you in determining what you want to do next for work.

| What did you succeed at or accomplish? | When, where and with who did you do this? | How did you do this? What actions or steps did you take? | What was most satisfying about it and why? |
|---|--|---|---|
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |

SAMPLE

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

| What did you accomplish or succeed at? | When and where did you do this? | How did you do this? What actions or steps did you take? | What was most satisfying about it and why? |
|---|--|---|--|
| Successfully trained over 200 bankers | Chemical Bank 1988 to 1991 | Developed and delivered entry level credit training | See trainees acquire skills needed to do the job for which they were hired. Seeing them use the tools they were taught and apply it to their job. |
| Putting together an excellent Board of Directors for the Troupe | Board 2008 – 2009 | Led nominating committee of 6, assess skills, experience and personalities of candidates | This Board was very very effective and worked collaboratively to effect many important changes in the Troupe. Had successful year (and they told me that it was because of the team my committee put together). |
| I think I'm very good at putting together effective teams. | I've headed Nominating committee, entertainment committee, new members committee, stage management teams | <p><i>JAE NOTES: Identify what you need – goal, basic outline of a plan, what this team has to accomplish by when (always a time frame), identify skill sets needed. Identify people from within the organization, from people you know and people who come recommended, with those skill sets. Collaborative personality, able to work well with her and with other members of team. Self-starters, work independently. Diverse voices and viewpoints.</i></p> <p><i>Assess how it worked, improve process over time</i></p> <p><i>e.g. stage management</i></p> <p><i>Project management??</i></p> | <p><i>Anticipate and plan and ask far in advance to make sure you get the right people on your team. Usually get them. Scope people out, may talk to others about your needs and who they know, and people she has in mind if don't know them well. Wants to scope out people's availability. Sets it up so she gets a yes. Wants an assured positive outcome. Then approach people to describe what's required, tell them what their role would be and why they are the only person who can fill that role – varies her presentation according to the person. Saves the ask usually until after you've actually described the task and game plan. Manage people's expectations from the beginning, outlining their tasks.</i></p> |

RESULT: After completing this form and discussing it with me, Jackie realized she wanted to lead corporate training instead of transitioning to the non-profit sector as a COO or Chief Program Officer. Almost immediately, she learned of a training leadership post in her current company. She applied for and got the job within two months.

IDENTIFY YOUR VALUES

Identifying your values and purposes will help you understand what is important to you and those things you may seek in a work environment. Asking yourself these questions and writing down the answers will help you with this process.

1. Which one of your traits would you like to pass on to your children?
2. Name *two* of the most important people in your life.
3. Now describe each of them, using one word for each.
4. What *two* qualities do you look for or need in your life partner?
5. If there were only *two* rules everyone should follow, what would they be?
6. Who is the person you **most** admire? In one word, why?
7. You have founded your own country. Your paper money has this slogan:
"In _____ we trust."
8. Finish this statement with the one thing you cannot or will not give up:
"Give me _____ or give me death."
9. Finish this statement with whatever thing you think is most important:
"... life, liberty and the pursuit of _____."
10. Describe yourself in one word.

VALUES LIST: circle the 10 most important to you.

| | | | | |
|-----------------|------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------|
| Abundance | Consistency | Fairness | Joy | Quality |
| Acceptance | Contentment | Faith | Justice | Quiet |
| Accessibility | Continuity | Fame | Kindness | Rationality |
| Accountability | Continuous Improvement | Family | Knowledge | Recognition |
| Accomplishment | Contribution | Fearlessness | Leadership | Reflection |
| Accuracy | Control | Fidelity | Learning | Relationships |
| Acknowledgement | Cooperation | Flexibility | Liveliness | Reliability |
| Adaptability | Courage | Focus | Logic | Religion |
| Adventure | Courtesy | Forgiveness | Longevity | Resilience |
| Affection | Creativity | Fortitude | Love | Resolution |
| Aggressiveness | Credibility | Freedom | Loyalty | Resourcefulness |
| Agility | Curiosity | Friendship | | Respect |
| Alertness | | Frugality | Making a Difference | Responsibility |
| Altruism | Daring | Fun | Mastery | Results |
| Ambition | Decisiveness | Generosity | Maturity | Revolution |
| Appreciation | Delight | Giving | Meaning | Rigor |
| Assertiveness | Dependability | Going the Extra Mile | Mellowness | Righteousness |
| Attentiveness | Depth | Goodness | Merit | Risk-Taking |
| Audacity | Desire | Grace | Mindfulness | Romance |
| Awareness | Determination | Gratitude | Modesty | |
| | Devotion | Gregariousness | Money | Safety |
| Balance | Dexterity | Growth | Motivation | Security |
| Beauty | Dignity | Guidance | Non-violence | Selflessness |
| Belonging | Diligence | | Obedience | Self-esteem |
| Bliss | Discipline | Happiness | Openness | Seriousness |
| Boldness | Discovery | Harmony | Opportunity | Service |
| Bravery | Discretion | Hard Work | Optimism | Simplicity |
| | Diversity | Health | Order | Sincerity |
| Calm | Dominance | Heart | Organization | Skill |
| Camaraderie | Dreaming | Helpfulness | Originality | Speed |
| Candor | Drive | Heroism | Outstanding Service | Spunk |
| Carefulness | Duty | Honesty | | Spirit |
| Caring | Dynamism | Honor | Passion | Stability |
| Celebrity | | Hope | Peace | Strength |
| Certainty | Eagerness | Hospitality | Perceptiveness | Style |
| Challenge | Education | Humility | Perseverance | Systems |
| Change | Effectiveness | Humor | Persistence | |
| Charity | Efficiency | | Personal Growth | Teamwork |
| Cheerfulness | Elegance | Imagination | Persuasiveness | Timeliness |
| Clarity | Empathy | Impact | Philanthropy | Tolerance |
| Cleanliness | Encouragement | Independence | Pleasure | Tradition |
| Collaboration | Endurance | Influence | Poise | Tranquility |
| Comfort | Energy | Ingenuity | Popularity | Trust |
| Commitment | Enjoyment | Inner Peace | Positive Attitude | Truth |
| Communication | Enthusiasm | Innovation | Power | Understanding |
| Community | Equality | Insightfulness | Practicality | Unity |
| Compassion | Excellence | Inspiration | Precision | Variety |
| Competence | Excitement | Integrity | Preparedness | Vigor |
| Competition | Expediency | Intelligence | Presence | Well-Being |
| Composure | Experience | Intensity | Privacy | Winning |
| Concentration | Expertise | Intimacy | Proactive | Wisdom |
| Confidence | Exploration | Intuition | Progress | Wit |
| Connection | Expressiveness | Inventiveness | Prosperity | Youthfulness |
| Consciousness | Exuberance | Investing | Punctuality | Zeal |

THE PUZZLE PIECE NAMED YOU

These questions will help you identify what makes you tick, what gets you excited, what issues you care about, and your core values. The answers provide clues to the kind of work you want to do, the field you want to go into, and the impact you want to have. We'll refer back to the answers.

1. What do you first read when you look at a newspaper or a news website? What articles are you most likely to read all the way through?
2. If I asked your best friend to describe you in three words, what would I be told?
3. If you had \$1 million, what would you do with it?
4. Which issues or causes do you support? Which would you support if you had unlimited funds? Why?
5. What are your core values, the ones that guide how you interact with the world? From the prior page, choose your three to five top values. Are they the same as those in your "Identify Your Values" worksheet? If not, why not? If so, you've arrived at your core values.
6. Think about the last time you were really excited about life. Briefly describe what you were doing, who you were with, and how you felt.
7. What are things you can do at the good to excellent level?
8. What do you *love* doing? Make a list.

9. What would you like *never* to do again? Make a list.

10. What are you tolerating in your life? List as many things as you think of.

11. If today were your last day on earth, what (if anything) would you regret?

12. If you had *no* money worries, what would you do to occupy your time?

SAMPLE

THE PUZZLE PIECE NAMED "YOU"

1) What do you first read when you look at a newspaper? What articles are you most likely to read all the way through?

I don't usually look at a newspaper, but if I did, I would go to the main page and read the headlines, but I would read articles having to do with studies on education, or health or Latino issues. I would probably read the personals! *CNN.com – looks at major headlines to get a basic glimpse of what's going on, clicks on political stuff (election), something controversial – e.g. woman talking about her divorce on YouTube, woman who spent 2 years in the bathroom – psychological stuff; murders of children by parents. Not on entertainment or gossip anymore (used to do it all the time). Cut down on her reality shows – only watches ones that don't make her feel bad about herself – more about competitions – likes Top Chef, Project Runway, Dancing With the Stars – also watches Rock of Love (reminds her of someone she used to date, cool dude, nice even though lascivious, and had a crush on him), the Bachelor (nice dates). How people use their talents and creativity. **Curiosity** about people and **Motivation** for people doing things. No longer likes when people get into fights. Subtlety of how people operate. Books she picks are sort of subtle and challenging – *The Alchemist, The Witch of Portobello* by Coelho.*

2) If I asked your best friend to describe you in three words, what would I be told?

Intelligent, funny and loving. *She asked a friend. By herself, she would have wanted people to see that she is: Funny and caring. Would have wanted to put "smart" but for a long time didn't think of herself as smart – or at least as smart as other people. Has always thought people who are funny are really smart – especially witty people. Subtle humor.*

3) If you had \$1 million, what would you do with it?

I would save some of it for a home preferably with a view of the water, give some of it to my parents, go on an amazing trip around the world, have a nice wedding and put some of it in a trust fund for my kids. I would also buy some new clothes and definitely move out of the BX! I would go see plays and musicals. **I would produce my own play!** I would go back to school for a degree—just don't know in what. I would start my own business, just don't know what! Quit my current job.

Themes for play: immigration family raising kids in NYC – one gets pregnant young, one goes to school, one explores homosexuality and religion. Community, religion, change (cultural, family dynamics), love. What gets lost, transformed, meshed, added. Choices being made based on what kids are exposed to – which parts of US and native culture do they adopt? How does it affect their lives and how they view themselves.

4) Which issues or causes do you support? Which would you support if you had unlimited funds? Why?

I don't really support any issues or causes right now besides giving \$ to ORGANIZATION X for their fundraiser. If I could support an issue or cause it would be education for all kids, illness research, animal rights/shelters and money to protect nature. **Education for kids because it**

just means a better and more equitable world. I feel very lucky to have received the education I have and each child should have the same opportunity and this will just be better for everyone. If one group is oppressed, hurts everyone – so if I help one group, I’m helping everyone. Illness research to cure diseases because it just doesn’t seem fair that illness can strike down the loveliest of people. Animal rights and shelters because I love Bean (*her dog*) and I hope that all of the Beaners of the world get adopted. Nature because it is a part of life and a part of all of us. It is God in a pure form.

5) What are your key values, the ones that define you and guide how you interact with the rest of the world? Make a list.

- a. Honesty
- b. Love
- c. Compassion
- d. Understanding

Talked about judgment – I felt she was more of an observer than a judger. Accepts people are who they are – can help them to be better “them” not to be what I want them to be – help them work with what they have so they can be happy.

6) Think about the last time you were really excited about life. Briefly describe what you were doing, who you were with, and how you felt.

I was dancing salsa with my friend Vinny and I felt free!

7) What are things you can do at the good to excellent level?

- a. Teach
- b. Counsel
- c. Dance
- d. Create (projects, frames, dance, themes, etc.)
- e. Plan
- f. Problem-solving

8) What do you *love* doing? Make a list.

- a. Dancing
- b. Teaching dance to kids
- c. Choreographing/Creating
- d. Talking with people about their problems/helping them resolve
- e. Planning a party/trip/event
- f. Spending time with family/boyfriend/friend/Beaner
- g. Learning
- h. Reading
- i. Going to see musicals and plays
- j. Walking
- k. Eating
- l. Traveling
- m. Watching tv (but not as much anymore)

- n. Doing things that are good for me (watching Joel, reading inspirational things, treating myself right)
- o. Going to the beach
- p. Being in charge!

9) What would you like to *never* do again? Make a list.

- a. Fill out any forms!
- b. Insurance
- c. Worry
- d. Do law for a living/work at a law firm
- e. Live in a bad neighborhood and deal with bad neighborhood issues/people
- f. Deal with a boss
- g. Have to dress up to go to work
- h. Have to spend so many hours at work
- i. Call any government agency

10) What are you tolerating in your life? List as many things as you think of.

- a. Where I live
- b. Where I work
- c. My appearance

11) If today were your last day on earth, what (if anything) would you regret?

- a. Not having had children
- b. Not having lived in a nice neighborhood in a quiet home ✓
- c. Not having gotten married ✓
- d. Not ever finding my passion
- e. Not having performed again
- f. Not having produced an exceptional piece of art
- g. Not having traveled as much
- h. Not having been successful
- i. Not seeing my parents living peacefully
- j. Not having found true happiness/enlightenment

12) If you had *no* money worries, what would you do to occupy your time?

I would dance, act and write. I would create. I would work with kids once a week. **I would volunteer all over the city and work with people, maybe counseling or working with groups of kids.** I would travel. I would take **classes** that interest me such as art classes, but also psychology classes. I would go to museums. I would spend time taking care of myself and eating right and exercising. I would spend time with family/friends/Beaner. I would read. I would go to plays and musicals.

RESULT: Ingrid left her previous job and almost immediately got another position working for a charter school management company as head of Human Resources. Most importantly, she realized she wants to be a social worker and is now attending Social Work School part-time. When she gets her Masters of Social Work, she will work with families and children in the Latino community, and hopefully incorporate dance and the arts into her work to heal people. Oh, and she is married, living in a suburb in a house she and her new husband purchased before the wedding.

YOUR PERSONAL SWOT ANALYSIS

There are many methods for getting to know yourself in terms of work. Here's one more – a quick method that requires only honesty and some objectivity. When you've finished, find someone to read it to, and get their feedback on whether you nailed it or missed some crucial items.

Strengths: What are my strengths? What am I really good at? What are my talents? What skills do I have that I love using? What makes me happiest? Where do I feel best about myself? Doing what? When? With whom?

Weaknesses: What am I not so great at? What don't I like doing? What do I wish someone else could take care of for me? How's my attitude? Am I asking for help?

Opportunities: What exists in the outside world that could help me realize my dreams and achieve my goals? Who do I know? What kind of information is out there for me to gather? What networks could I join? Are there opportunities for me to develop my skills, to discover my talents, to build my confidence, to feel more hopeful and positive? What can I do to give value to others, to be of service? Am I willing to leave no stone unturned in my quest?

Threats: Are there things in the external environment that could upset my plans or hopes? Have I put too much emphasis on one or two options? Do I know as much as I can about myself and my abilities? Do I have ideas and negative thoughts that could trip me up?

The point is to identify those attributes, beliefs, thoughts, behaviors, and attitudes that you can:

- a) Capitalize on (S);
- b) Compensate for in some way (W);
- c) Maximize (O); and,
- d) Minimize (T).

ON-LINE PERSONALITY ASSESSMENTS

For Career Planning & Positioning

The most useful on-line personality assessments give you more information about yourself and enable you to better match your personality and tendencies to a work situation/culture/people so you are happiest, most productive and effective. It is important to adapt the findings to aid your job search. An interpretive report will help, and you can get even more value by discussing the findings with a career coach or certified assessment provider.

1) The [DISC Profile](#) gives you a look at how you respond to your environment especially geared toward work. The basic on-line assessment currently costs \$25.95, which I think is all you need. More in-depth reports are available that bring the cost to \$59.95. Click to see a [sample report](#) so you can make a more informed decision.

2) The grandmother of assessments, the [Myers-Briggs Type Indicator](#) (MBTI), can be taken on line. It involves a bit more work on your part, and a substantially greater financial outlay of \$150. The cost is not only for taking the assessment but for going over it with a trained interpreter. That review will be helpful for you to gain more understanding of how/why MBTI can be useful in your work and life. You also get some booklets sent to you along with a tailored report. For another \$15, you can get a personalized career report.

3) A free assessment based somewhat on MBTI is the [Keirsey Temperaments](#). It is a "70 question personality instrument that helps individuals discover their personality type." You will get a free report after taking the assessment on-line.

4) Other free and pretty accurate assessments are at [HumanMetrics.com](#); [PersonalityTest.net](#) which has more thoughtful questions, in my humble opinion; [SimilarMinds.com](#); and, [41Questions](#). Three of the four pegged me as ENFJ and the last said I was ENFP. I usually test at ENFP through Myers-Briggs but my last one was several years ago. Thus these assessments may be telling me that I've changed somewhat over time.

If you use these free assessments, make sure you go to this [Wikipedia article](#) to get some interpretive information. Getting the MBTI itself would provide you with a baseline, as well as more interpretive information.

5. Assessing what motivates you can help you make a better job, career or business match. The [MAPP](#) (Motivational Appraisal of Personal Potential) Assessment is a motivation-based assessment that helps you identify your strengths. The free version gives you a general overview of your strong suits and what motivates you. A \$19.95 paid version gives much more detail and 10 job matches for someone with your motivations, while a \$29.95 package gives more job options as well as two more assessments: Career Satisfaction and Success Likelihood.

Employers Use On-Line Personality Assessments, Too

Some of the biggest employers are now using Kronos Workforce as a way to screen applicants and identify people whose reported personality traits match the characteristics identified by the employer as critical to the job. After looking at the test, I see that it assesses personality traits and values, and I can see how the test would give an employer some idea of how one might make decisions, set priorities, operate in the work world, and fit into an existing culture.

Satisfied employers (CVS is one) say that successful employees - meaning those who match the company's culture, meet performance expectations, and stay for a long time - are those who get a "green" rating from the test. People with "yellow" ratings are rarely interviewed and only if there is a staffing crunch. People with "red" ratings are not interviewed because they are viewed as a poor match and unacceptable risk.

It makes sense for companies to use these tests, even if they are not perfect. Companies spend a lot of time and money on recruiting and training staff, so they seek ways to ensure that those resources are invested wisely.

It also makes sense for you to use whatever information you get from taking the tests and then getting or not getting interviews. If you are honest with your answers and don't get interviewed, it is possible that you would not have been happy in that job anyway.

LINKS IN ORDER OF MENTION

<http://www.discprofile.com/paperbooklet.htm>

<http://www.discprofiles.com/downloads/Classic2Plus/Classic2PlusAllSupplements.pdf>

<http://www.capt.org/take-mbti-assessment/mbti.htm>

<http://www.keirsey.com/sorter/register.aspx>

<http://www.humanmetrics.com/cgi-win/JTypes2.asp>

<http://www.personalitytest.net/cgi-bin/q.pl>

http://similarminds.com/jung_word_pair.html

<http://www.41q.com/>

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mbti>

<http://www.assessment.com/MAPPMembers/Welcome.asp?accnum=06-7069-000.00>

“MUST HAVE” LIST

This is a list of those aspects of a job or work that you **MUST** have. This is not “want to have.” This list is of the things that you must have in order for you to be satisfied and content in your work, the things that will make it possible for you to be excited to start the day when you wake up every morning.

You’ll want to have a “must have” in most or all of these categories:

- 1) Work you will do
- 2) Role you will play
- 3) Impact of your efforts
- 4) Physical environment
- 5) Colleagues, culture, emotional environment
- 6) Compensation

1) **Work you will do**

What do you like doing? What gives you great satisfaction? What industry or subject area do you love, care about? In what field does your expertise and talent lie? What do you want to occupy yourself doing for work? What are your skills, talents, preferences, likes and dislikes? What brings you joy? What can you lose yourself in so time flies? Do you prefer to have a single focus or are you happier with a variety of tasks?

2) **Role you will play**

What position will you have in the organization or company? Will you work for someone? For yourself? With others? Be a leader or a follower? Do you like working alone or in a team? Being visible or behind the scenes? Playing the same kind of role consistently, or do you like to move around? How much time do you want to spend working? Do you want to be someone others depend on or free of responsibility for others?

3) **Impact of your efforts**

Does your work need to matter to anyone other than yourself? Do you want to make a difference? If so, what difference do you want to make? Does it matter what kind of company or organization you work for? If so, what kind of company? And what impact will it have? Is there anything that will make it worth doing drudge work?

4) **Physical environment**

What do you need to be at your best and do your best work? Do you need privacy, light, quiet, noise, open floor plan, a desk and comfortable chair, no desk and always being outside? There are many variations – only you can decide what kind of physical environment you thrive in. Also can be about location, commuting, hours.

5) **Culture and colleagues**

What kind of emotional environment do you want? What kind of people? Do your values need to mesh with the values of your workplace and colleagues? What kind of atmosphere helps you do your best? Fast-paced or laid-back? Lots of deadlines or little pressure? Competitive or supportive, or a little of both? Structured or flexible? Formal or casual? 9-5 or varied? Task or mission focused? Start-up or established organization/company? Close supervision or self-direction?

6) **Compensation**

What's the bottom line dollar pay or salary that you can live with? A figure that covers your basic needs and then some? You can have a figure you request that's higher than your "I can live with it" figure. Are there other ways you can be compensated, such as time off, benefits, recognition, or travel? How much compensation do you need to reflect your value to your employer, or to quit a temporary or maintenance job to work full-time for yourself?

Next Steps

After answering these questions, try to boil down your responses to short phrases of one to five words. You know the intention behind each phrase, and can explain them to people when you tell them what you want.

As you go forward in looking at potential jobs, it is probable that one or two of these items will rise to the top of your list as the most important variables for you to have your best work experience. That will help you decide whether to accept a job or not – if it doesn't meet those top "must haves," it's likely that you won't last there very long.

"He can who thinks he can, and he can't who thinks he can't. This is an inexorable, indisputable law." Pablo Picasso

SAMPLE

MUST HAVE LIST

1) **Work you will do:** *What do you like doing? What gives you great satisfaction? What industry or subject area do you love, care about? In what field does your expertise and talent lie? What do you want to occupy yourself doing for work? What are your skills, talents, preferences, likes and dislikes? What brings you joy? What can you lose yourself in so time flies? What are your hobbies?*

I enjoy doing the following:

- **Business development - Streamlining** operations into profitable, successful accounts. Create **new concepts** or menu items, run promotions and increase overall **customer satisfaction**. I thrive on employee, client and customer satisfaction.
- **Project Management** - Planning and executing tasks with variety of people and setting up timelines and individual tasks.
- **Analyzing data** from operating reports.

The 2 industries I have worked in are **food service** and non-profit and strictly considered a food service manager. Overall my greatest satisfaction was in non-profit and being involved in the emergency food network. There is great satisfaction in taking part in community initiatives. I consider myself a visionary and **entrepreneurial**.

2) **Role you will play:** *What position will you have in the organization or company? Will you work for someone? For yourself? With others? Be a leader or a follower? Do you like working alone or in a team? Being visible or behind the scenes? Playing the same kind of role consistently, or do you like to move around? Do you prefer to have a single focus or are you happier with a variety of tasks? Do you want to be someone others depend on or free of responsibility for others?*

I would have an **operations manager** position or similar. I take pride in **positive, strong leadership** and take ownership of my work and others if necessary. I feel most comfortable working for someone but not micro managed. I enjoy working with others and being part of a **team**.

As an introvert I tend to sway to the behind the scenes but have managed quite well when given the opportunity to address groups of people. I enjoy having a **variety of tasks** and moving around. Sometimes I wish I can be **responsible for my own work** but be **involved with others in large projects** - maybe even in **leadership capacity**.

3) **Impact of your efforts:** *Does your work need to matter to anyone other than yourself? Do you want to make a difference? If so, what difference do you want to make? Does it matter what kind of company or organization you work for? If so, what kind of company? And what impact will it have? Is there anything that will make it worth doing drudge work?*

I want my work to have a **positive effect for the company and customer/client**. I want to work for a company that has a culture of shared values and practices and **adaptable to change**. The company should have highly effective leadership and a commitment to empowering employees.

4) **Physical environment:** *What do you need to be at your best and do your best work? Do you need privacy, light, quiet, noise, open floor plan, a desk and comfortable chair, no desk and always being outside? There are many variations - only you can decide what kind of physical environment you thrive in. Also can be about location, commuting, hours.*

My only expectations for work space is that it's **somewhat clean and sanitary**. Not too hot or cold. No major obstacles surrounding my space (i.e. boxes - lack of storage space). Meetings held in quieter space - not in the middle of a cafeteria during lunch. I would prefer to have **my own desk with computer**.

Willing to commute by car to Long Island or Queens. By railroad to Manhattan. Would consider other locations if there were accommodations, such as reduced cost for parking, flexible hours or some work from home.

5) **Culture and colleagues:** *What kind of emotional environment do you want? What kind of people? Do your values need to mesh with the values of your workplace and colleagues? What kind of atmosphere helps you do your best? Fast-paced or laid-back? Lots of deadlines or little pressure? Competitive or supportive, or a little of both? Structured or flexible? Formal or casual? 9-5 or varied? Task or mission focused? Start-up or established organization/company? Close supervision or self-direction? How much time do you want to spend working?*

The emotional environment should be professional, upbeat and positive with mutual respect. The people I like to work with are honest, respectful and understand effective leadership. Leadership represents shared values. I feel my values should absolutely mesh with the values of my workplace and colleagues. What's good for one should be good for all.

I am best in a fast paced atmosphere with some pressure. I like a little of both competitive and supportive. Prefer semi formal but ok with casual and prefer office hours Mon thru Fri 9-5 and don't mind coming in early, staying late or occasionally weekend day. I put in the time to get the job done. Previously worked 12-14 hour days. Nice to have some flexibility. Prefer semi established but quite driven if need to jump into start up. I am self directed and can't stand being micro managed. A 50 hour work week would be suitable.

6) **Compensation:** *What's the bottom line dollar pay or salary that you can live with? A figure that covers your basic needs and then some? You can have a figure you request that's higher than your "I can live with it" figure. Are there other ways you can be compensated, such as time off, benefits, recognition, or travel? How much compensation do you need to reflect your value to your employer, or to quit a temporary or maintenance job to work full-time for yourself?*

The bottom line dollar pay I can live with would be **\$66K**. This was my last salary. The compensation that would be ideal - minimum **\$75K** plus benefits (medical, dental, paid time off, etc).

RESULT: From this, Greg developed a short Must Have List and a statement of intention for networking.

Statement of Intention:

"I'm looking for a food service company that's growing and entrepreneurial that where I can bring operations to profitability. I am very interested in contract food service, catering and special events."

Within three weeks, Greg secured a position as Food Service Director for local university, doing exactly what he wants to do, at more than his minimum pay request.

RESUMES THAT WORK

You're looking for a job, so you put together a resume. Do you know what your job is when you put together that resume? Sure, a resume summarizes all your work experience, education, and related facts and activities (the word resume comes from the French for "summary").

More important, a resume's job is to make it really, really easy for a reviewer to read and understand that information. So your job is to do **all** the work for the reviewer. That is critical!

Effective resumes have two essential components: **content** and **format**. *Both* are vital to an applicant's chances of getting an interview.

1. RESUME CONTENT

Your resume is a **marketing** document. Its job is to position you to get your "right fit" work. Thus, its content is crucial. It must convey to potential employers exactly what you have to offer them, as well as the results you are likely to produce for them based on your past record of accomplishments. Here's how to do that.

PROFILE

To begin, I advocate putting a **profile** at the very start of the resume, just under your name and contact information. A profile is not an objective (of course you want a job), nor is it a litany of your skills (boring!). It's a succinct description of who you are in the workplace.

Your profile presents your **unique value proposition** – what you love to do and are good at doing, the skills you want to use in the future, and the attributes you want to highlight. Your profile also will capture your personality through a judicious use of adjectives. In sum, your profile conveys the substance and flavor of who you are in the workplace.

In some ways, the process of creating the profile is more important than the final product. Developing it gives you the chance to think carefully about your "unique value proposition." In fact, the reader will usually catch the first five or six words of the profile and then move on to Experience. They might come back to it but even if they don't, the profile will make an impression. It says that you've thought about and know who you are.

Everything you say in your profile must be backed up by your accomplishments, which are listed under each employer and job. Essentially, the profile is the thesis that you then go on to prove with concrete examples. It also is useful as a way to ensure that your resume is internally consistent in terms of the message you intend to convey.

BODY OF RESUME

The first thing read by a prospective employer is the name of the company for which you worked. Then they usually will glance at the title and years worked - some will read title first while others read years worked first.

Here's the order of information that I recommend for the basic information:

* **Employer's name first**, in bold, followed by its location, not in bold. Use the city in which employer is/was located. Only include the state if the city is not immediately recognizable e.g. Wareham, MA, or is easily confused with something else, e.g. Springfield, MO vs. Springfield, IL vs. Springfield, MA. Otherwise, New York or Boston or Chicago or Los Angeles is sufficient.

* **Dates of employment**, not in bold, on the same text line as the employer's name and location. The dates should be tabbed over so they are on the far right of the page, preferably lined up with the right side of your address block.

If you worked at the company in more than one position, put the complete block of time over the far right. Next to each position title you can put in parentheses the dates you held that position. For example, **Vice President, Sales** (3/02 to 7/05).

Job titles can either be grouped together if your job responsibilities were substantially the same with the most recent encompassing the previous responsibilities plus more. If the jobs were substantially different, I treat each one as a separate job under the same employer.

* **Title of your position**, in bold and italics, directly underneath the employer name and location.

My experience is that most readers go through the entire resume once just glancing at employer, years and title. If all seems to be complete and consistent, then they glance at education to see if you have any degrees. So make sure you have no holes in time, and no major typos!

Only after that first quick read will they go back to look at individual jobs, starting with your most recent one first. After rereading your employer's name and title, usually readers will move to the body of the entry. Here's what it should contain:

- * **a brief paragraph describing your job**
- * **bullet points that highlight your accomplishments**

JOB DESCRIPTION

In a four to six line paragraph that starts on the line directly underneath the title of your position, briefly describe the company you work for and your job responsibilities. Say "Led all communications and marketing efforts for Fortune 1000 technology firm (STOCK SYMBOL)" or

"Oversaw day to day operations for 45 year old non-profit teaching literacy to adult New Yorkers" or "Managed entire recruiting and on-boarding process for 300 person homeless services agency."

Use as many numbers as possible to give readers a good idea of the scope and depth of your responsibilities. For example, say "oversaw \$3.5 million advertising budget" or "supervised team of 12, with four direct reports."

Readers' eyes are drawn first to numbers, then to CAPS, then to bold. Italics are rarely an eye-catcher, so use them only to indicate the title of an article or project, not for anything substantive.

BULLETS ARE FOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I recommend limiting yourself to 5-7 bullets for your most recent job, 4-5 for your next most recent, maximum 2 for the next most recent and none for the oldest ones. Quantifying these bullets is important. Those are the things that will get you the interview. The interview allows you to fill in more detail and also to talk about accomplishments that weren't listed.

Here are tips for great accomplishment bullets:

- * **Lead with the results and impact of your work**, when writing accomplishments. Use active, directionally positive words like "increased," "improved," "advanced," "optimized," "enhanced" and "expanded." Use action verbs and directional language. These words engage readers because they tell a story, and who doesn't love a story?
- * **Use numbers** as much as possible, especially with dollar signs and percentage signs; they are real eye-catchers and speak to many employers' focus on the bottom line.
- * **Split the accomplishment into "what" and "how"**: the impact or result, and how you achieved that result. For example, "Increased revenue year over year by 80%, through redeploying sales team."
- * **Ask "so what"** to get to the impact of the activity you want to include. If you want to cite it, it's probably important but only if you can tie it to an impact that is measurable – as in "increased" and "improved" and "enhanced" and "expanded" – or gives clear evidence of major responsibility, as in "directed," "led," "managed," "launched," and "created."
- * **Brevity is best.** Limit each bullet to one, maximum two lines.
- * **Give leading information** to cause the reader to ask a follow up question. Remember, the point of a resume is to get you an interview. The interview is where the reader can ask you to explain how you redeployed the sales team and why that resulted in 80% revenue increase.

* **Only include things you really want to do again** – similar or greater scope of responsibility, the type of work or project, specific skills you really want to use again, or attributes you want people to notice.

2. Words Matter in Resumes

In a crowded marketplace, you can stand out with an out-of-the-ordinary resume. These are five great words for resumes that are not yet overused:

Spearheaded (instead of *led* or *played a key role*)

Created (instead of *helped make* or *facilitated*)

Initiated (instead of *began* or *started*)

Accelerated (instead of *sped up*)

Consolidated (instead of *brought together, merged, combined, or united*)

Other non-run-of-the-mill words I like to use instead of *managed, oversaw, led, developed, supervised, coordinated, assisted, conducted, and facilitated* include:

Enhanced

Analyzed

Extended

Exceeded

Generated

Conceived

Won

Strengthened

Secured

Restructured

Transformed

Streamlined

Delivered

Achieved

Leveraged

Empowered

Championed

Use these acceptable but not ideal words when you have so many accomplishments that you don't want to repeat a word:

Produced

Designed

Crafted

Organized

Directional words are always useful when accompanied by numbers modified by \$ or %:

Increased
Improved
Grew
Added
Expanded
Doubled
Tripled
Reduced

I like positive directional words instead of downward trending words - subliminally it conveys that you are a positive person, an addition to the team.

I also like adjectives and adverbs, such as "*dramatically increased*" and "*substantially improved*." Again, back this up with numbers, so they are not simply taking your word for it - because they WON'T! Resume reviewers have antennae for identifying a line of garbage, and most will toss resumes that contain generalizations without any backup figures or verifiable results.

Remember, the thesaurus function on Word is your friend, as is thesaurus.com. Instead of using an ordinary word, look for an extraordinary one that conveys your talent as vibrantly as you would in person.

3. Resume Format Matters!

You can have the greatest content in the world and still not get interviewed - if you have a bad resume format. The resume format I use is very effective because it's simple, direct, easily sent electronically, and logical to read. It showcases all the wonderful aspects of your experience.

Format really matters because it repels or attracts readers.

The content and format of resumes are interrelated. My experience is that format is even more important at first than content. If someone doesn't read your resume, all that content is wasted. Developing a successful resume involves an iterative process of writing and editing the content to make sure that key accomplishments and duties are highlighted by both words **and** format. There is a constant interplay of font, format and content involved in producing a successful resume.

Successful resumes are resumes that a recruiter reads and responds to by scheduling an interview or somehow responding in a personal way. Period. If you are not getting interviews, phone calls, e-mails, or "gee, loved your resume, you're not right for this, can I keep you in mind and call for something else" - you need to review and change your resume. And if you are getting calls and interviews for jobs you don't want, it's time to review and change your resume.

My philosophy is that it's our job to do most of the work for the recruiter. They get so many resumes, we want yours to stand out as the one that makes it easy for the recruiter to know THAT they want to interview you. To get an interview, your resume needs to make you a friendly and familiar person from the get-go. So we want to make sure that the humans reading your resume find you approachable, "easy on the eyes", and able to quickly convey important information.

Direct Mail Tips

There are fairly common ways humans read. By using that information, we can create a readable format and invite someone in. I spent more than 25 years writing direct mail copy that raised millions of dollars, and learned tools and tricks that apply very well to resumes.

* We definitely want good use of white space so people have a chance to focus and to rest their eyes. That enables them to move easily from section to section.

* Short sentences are easier to read than long ones. Take note of the direct mail pieces you actually read. How do they look? What language do they use? The best ones use short paragraphs, sentences and words.

4. Specific Formatting Tips

Aim for a two-page resume. Currently, most career professionals believe resumes should be no longer than two pages. Some felt it could be one page for someone relatively junior in their careers, and two for a more senior person. One person said it could go as long as three pages, and one felt it should be no more than one - no matter what.

My experience tells me that successful resumes are as follows:

- one page for a relative newcomer to the world of work - zero to ten years
- two pages for someone with more than 10 years of experience
- possibly two and a half pages for someone who is incredibly experienced and has many awards or publications or affiliations or something really extraordinary. Really, though, all those things should be distilled into two pages with headings that say "AFFILIATIONS (selected)," "PUBLICATIONS (selected)" and the like. If you just can't leave anything out, put them into separate attachments instead of in the resume!

In my opinion, **someone who is experienced should always have two pages**, because a single page subliminally tells readers "this is a junior person" and "don't bother reading this one." If you're applying for a senior position, that is *NOT* the message you want to communicate. You want to communicate "I am experienced enough for anything you throw at me" and "I deserve your consideration for this job." On the flip side, if you have more than two pages, the subliminal messages are "this is an arrogant person" and "this person doesn't respect my time." These are

messages designed to get your resume put in the NO pile if not the recycling bin.

There are times when people have to produce a resume or curriculum vitae that conforms to a specific format or standard. One person I know, a medical doctor, has a ridiculously long CV - 8 pages at least - because his institution mandated the format. If he is looking for work, however, I'd advise him to develop a two page resume with attachments.

No matter its length, a resume needs to be easily read. The point of submitting a resume is for someone to read it. If the reviewer has to reach for his/her reading glasses, that's a point against you. Our job as applicants is to make it as easy as possible for the reviewer to see our skills and abilities. That means they should encounter no obstacles.

Use an ordinary font, one that comes standard on Word software. I like Calibri and Garamond, sometimes referred to as the "more elegant version" of Times Roman. *Serif* typefaces (*with "hooks"*), like Times Roman or Garamond, are normally easier for people to read, as well as very familiar and sort of expected. However, they now appear somewhat old-fashioned. *Sans serif* type faces (*without "hooks"*) are modern and more commonly used in digital media.

For Times Roman, use at least size 11 font; Garamond is smaller, so size 12 is better. If you really want to use a sans serif typeface, go with one that is elegant while commonplace. While many people use Arial, I think it's boring because of its ubiquity. Calibri is a more elegant sans serif typeface. Gautami is another nice sans serif font. For these typefaces, use at least a size 11 font.

One woman I knew sent me her resume for review. A previous version used a very fancy but totally undecipherable type face, so I was quite pleased (though surprised) when the next version used Times Roman. I made comments, sent it back, and was very surprised when she asked me why I changed her type face. Apparently, the type face she chose was so uncommon that Word simply switched to the default typeface. That's why I'm so cautious about formatting, because it can often get garbled.

Avoid fancy formatting, including any lines, text boxes, macros and offbeat tabs. The goal is to make it easy for the reader to read EXACTLY what you want them to read. Fancy formatting often gets garbled, such as bullets on your screen turning into question marks on someone else's. The last thing anyone should see is a question mark before one of your accomplishments. While they may understand that it's a formatting error, it is likely to raise a question about your competence, even subliminally.

It's best to avoid lines for the simple reason that a prospective employer needs to see you as a whole package, not as separate pieces. Lines are visual cues to compartmentalize things, separate you from your accomplishments, skip something or cut something out. You've probably put in a line because you want to look like you understand design or want to stand out. If you're really a designer, you understand that lines are usually intended to create clear distinctions between things.

For example, a box within a larger article generally is for a complementary yet unnecessary piece of information - or for an ad, or some other extraneous item. NOTHING in your resume is unnecessary, so keep it visually one whole document, all of which is vital.

Be consistent and predictable throughout your resume. Use a single typeface. Use the same format for each job experience. Skip the same number of lines between jobs and sections. Whatever you decide, stick to it. Otherwise it comes across as sloppy - not creative.

5. Basic Resume Format

Put your employer's name first, followed by the city and then the date on the same line. Bold the employer's name, but not the city or the date. Tab over for the date. On the next line, put your job title in bold and italics.

Line up your dates on the right side of the page. All should be aligned with each other, and all should have the same format. It's up to you whether you use 10/02-10/04 or October 2002-October 2004. I prefer the former simply because it takes up less space and leaves a fair amount of white space between the name of the employer and the dates worked.

Describe your basic responsibilities in a short paragraph immediately under your job title. Make sure to convey the kind of employer you work for, the scope of your job, and range of responsibilities. Sometimes you will need to skip a space before you list your accomplishments, depending on how text heavy this paragraph is. Try to stick to 4-5 lines, with very short, compact sentences.

Under that paragraph, *use bullets to list your accomplishments.* I generally prefer 5 or 6 bullets, and never more than 7. With fewer bullets, people are far more able to focus in on what you believe is really important.

Skip one line between each job.
Skip two lines between each section.

Have a few commonly expected sections. First is **EXPERIENCE**, second is **EDUCATION**, and third is **PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS**. If applicable, fourth is **AWARDS & RECOGNITION**, fifth is **PUBLICATIONS** and sixth is **PUBLIC SPEAKING & MEDIA APPEARANCES**. Headings are always all caps and bold.

The only time EDUCATION is first is when you have just graduated from college or graduate school and are looking for your first professional job. I've run across two exceptions: one was for a professor who had to conform to a format established by the academic institution. The second was for a lawyer whose schooling was far more impressive than his work history, given the places to which he applied. Had he been out of school more than five years, however, no exception would have applied.

EXPERIENCE means all your work experience, paid and unpaid. Include everything, in order to have a complete time line. Skipping years in a chronology simply raises questions in a reviewer's mind. The only questions we want from a reviewer are those asking you to elaborate on something in your resume.

Some people have significant volunteer and/or non-profit experience. If you want to transition into working for a non-profit organization, I recommend inserting a VOLUNTEER EXPERIENCE or NON-PROFIT EXPERIENCE section between the EXPERIENCE and EDUCATION sections. Format it like you format your work experience, to convey the message that you take it as seriously as your paid work.

For AFFILIATIONS, AWARDS & RECOGNITION, PUBLICATIONS, and PUBLIC SPEAKING & MEDIA APPEARANCES, it's wise to add the word "selected" in parentheses after the headings. When in doubt, cut it out. It's better to list three or four really great items than induce a yawn with a minutiae-laden laundry list. The word (selected) should not be bold.

Use white space intelligently. Any reader needs a place to rest his or her eyes; that's what white space is for. White space is that space that contains no text. Something that is too text-heavy feels overwhelming to a reader and the tendency is to skim rather than read. Enough white space balances the text and helps the reader make it through your resume with ease.

White space is your friend in other ways. It allows you to highlight special things, as well, such as your name and your accomplishments. Your name should be on top, centered, in 16 point bold type. Your contact information goes below, spread wide apart toward either margin. Address, including e-mail address, goes to the far left, with telephone numbers to the far right. This creates tons of white space around your name, allowing it to stand out.

A special education teacher told me that readers of English and other Western languages naturally start reading about a third of the way down on the left side of a page. As we read, our eyes naturally go up to the top center of a page, and then fall back down on the right side. So a reader is definitely going to notice your name in the top center position. This positioning also makes it very easy for people to find your resume in a pile.

Look at the following samples to see these principles in action. The first resume uses Gautami and the second Verdana. Both people got interviews and jobs that they wanted – in 2009.

SAMPLE RESUME *(with fictional company names)*

NAME

Address
Address
[LinkedIn Profile](#)

telephone
[email address](#)
[blog address](#)

PROFILE: Accomplished, strategic marketing professional. Extensive experience in exceeding revenue goals and developing new audiences for world class non-profit institutions. Skilled in strategic planning and brand articulation. Strong, creative communicator with impeccable copywriting and editing abilities. Proven track record in producing results through multi-faceted print and media campaigns.

EXPERIENCE

Your Name Consulting

6/08-present

Marketing services to non-profit organizations. Clients include [Funkytown Stage](#).

[Midtown Center for the Performing Arts, Inc.](#)

5/03 to 5/08

Director of Marketing

Planned and executed marketing campaigns for all Midtown Center revenue generating programs, including Splendid Entertainers, Midtown Center Festival, Simply Salieri, American Tunefile, and Midwinter Night Prom. Developed and managed annual marketing budget in excess of \$3 million. Oversaw the promotional component of Midtown Center's non-revenue generating programs, such as Taped at Midtown Center and Midtown Center OutDoors. Served as marketing consultant to Midtown Center Institute, Midtown Center's educational arm. Managed staff of 7 and two seasonal interns.

- Met and exceeded annual income goal of approximately \$8.5 million.
- Significantly increased use of e-Marketing and other cost-effective marketing strategies while reducing print and radio promotions.
- Enhanced content of www.Midtowncenter.org through such initiatives as audio and video podcasts, streaming video, media rooms, and online program notes and interviews.
- Extended brand alignment throughout Midtown Center initiatives, including rebranding the American Tunefile series.
- Created marketing strategies for Midtown Center Development department to support corporate sponsorship, foundation, and government relationships.
- Initiated and led execution of successful targeted audience development campaigns for such events as Black History Month, Russian orchestra performances, and GLBT Pride Night.

[United Ballet Theatre](#)

7/02 to 12/02

Director of Marketing

Promoted the company's annual seasons at Gotham City Center and The Gotham Opera House, with income goals exceeding \$1 million and \$10 million respectively. Represented Marketing department at Board of Trustees meetings. Supported brand-related activities of in-house Press and Development departments.

- Exceeded City Center revenue goal by 20%.
- Established creative direction for all media campaigns.
- Led successful effort to articulate UBT brand and select external creative vendor.
- Ensured smooth coordination of promotion and pricing strategies by collaborating with City Center and Gotham Opera House staff.

The Oates Theater

7/97 to 7/02

Director of Marketing

Responsible for all activities related to promoting the Theater, Managed all aspects of customer service. Created copy for all direct mail, print and radio advertising. Edited *Playbill* copy. Worked with Theater's Board of Trustees on marketing related issues. Hired and worked with market research firm.

- Generated approximately \$1.6 million in annual income.
- Established Theater's institutional brand and seasonal identity, working with advertising agency.
- Advised Executive Directors of dance companies on promoting their Joyce seasons.
- Collaborated with Theater's press agent in writing press releases and pitches.

The Performing Arts Center, Acquire College

1/95 to 7/97

Press and Marketing Director

Spearheaded all press and marketing activities related to promoting the Center's series.

- Wrote press releases and pitched ideas.
- Conceptualized the Center's creative direction, using external advertising agency.
- Created copy for all direct mail, print and radio advertising.
- Interacted with appropriate college administrators and Conservatory department chairs.
- Supervised Assistant Marketing Director and six box office employees.

Assistant Marketing Director, Group Sales Director

7/92 to 12/95

- Supported Marketing Director in performing press and marketing duties.
- Identified interest groups and developed community outreach campaigns.
- Directed group sales initiatives.

Gotham Law School

Legal Writing Specialist

1986 to 1992

Taught legal writing, with emphasis on clear thinking and organizational skills.

EDUCATION

The University of North State, Community Hill. PhD in English. Focus: contemporary literature, history of drama.

The University of State. B.A. with Honors and Distinction in English.

PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

National Festival Managers Conferences. Midtown Center Marketing representative. 2003-2007.

Gotham University. Guest lecturer in course in Non-Profit Management. 2006.

Dance U.S.A. Conference. Session Leader in Marketing. 2002.

Women's Gotham College. Guest Lecturer in Arts Marketing. 2002.

Style Institute of Technology. Guest Lecturer for Graphic Design class. 1998 to 2001.

North County Arts Network. Panelist. June 1996 to May 1997.

The National Endowment for the Humanities. Panelist. May 1993.

201 West [REDACTED]
New York, New York 10023

(212) [REDACTED]

PROFILE: Resourceful senior project leader and trainer with deep knowledge of financial services and non-profit industries. Extensive, highly varied experience in leading teams and producing projects aligned with business goals. Passionate about creating and delivering practical training projects. Creative, analytical and skilled communicator and relationship-builder. Thrive on new challenges.

EXPERIENCE

[REDACTED] **Bank, N.A.**, New York, NY 2006-Present

Sr. Vice President/Risk Manager, Government & Tax-Exempt Risk Management Group

Founding leader of group that structures, negotiates and approves bank financings to non-profit organizations. Partner with team of salespeople who identify credit relationship opportunities. Manage relationships with 24 customers, comprising \$173MM credit portfolio.

- Collaborate with tax-exempt sales team to establish and grow non-profit business.
- Dramatically increased credit portfolio by 863%, from \$30MM to \$289MM over 2+ years.
- Train sales team to analyze financial statements and assess credit risk for non-profits.

[REDACTED] **Bank**, New York, NY 2000–2004

Vice President/Senior Relationship Manager, The Not-for-Profit Region

Managed \$2 billion in credit extended to healthcare, social service, cultural, and higher education sectors. Structured, and negotiated credit transactions involving conventional bank financing and tax-exempt bond issues. Managed and trained 4 credit analysts and geographic NFP reps.

- Developed and taught non-profit credit training modules to expand entire bank's business in non-profit.
- Maintained and grew relationships with 25-30 existing credit clients.
- Won two major new capital project clients, \$40MM bond issue for Children's Hospital of LA and \$20MM bond issue for Ballard Acute Care Hospital in Seattle.

[REDACTED], Greenwich, CT 1996–2000 ***Vice President, Credit & Risk Management Group***

Responsible for wide range of special projects. Developed and managed US-based Management Training Program. Managed US team that created technology architecture and database as well as business process to monitor \$11 billion in credit commitments. Deputy Credit Officer of \$3 billion US based credit and investment portfolio.

- Enhanced inter-departmental cooperation by producing cross-operational training program to help all staff understand interrelationships of various functions.
- Led effort to train new credit analysts who reported throughout the US banking operation.
- Improved capacity to assess credit quality of loan applicants that were not investment-grade.
- Increased ability to track, monitor and report on complex loan portfolio.

[REDACTED], New York, NY 1985-1996

Vice President, Middle Market Division I (1995–1996), The Not For Profit Region (1991–1995), The Credit Training Department (1988–1991) World Banking Group, (1985-1988)

Analyzed and structured credit transactions in a broad cross-section of industries, including non-profit, Fortune 500 and mid-cap companies. Part of management team for \$4.9 billion commercial credit portfolio including \$1.3 billion Not For Profit Region. Shaped transactions involving tax-exempt bond issues and conventional financing. Served on team that developed, tested, launched, and revised new entry-level training curriculum for entire commercial bank.

- Improved division management by developing standard operating procedures.
- Secured teaching services of and managed twelve NYU and Columbia University professors.
- Developed and oversaw implementation of fast-track training program for new MBA hires.
- Created and implemented training in non-profit finance.
- Eased integration of newly acquired Texas Commerce Bank through adapting commercial bank training.
- Established forum for officers and analysts to discuss credit issues/policy.

██████████ Insurance, NJ 1980-1983
Project Manager

NON-PROFIT EXPERIENCE

██████████ College, New York, NY 2007-08
Member, Advisory Board that developed inaugural 5 course banking certificate program.

██████████ Troupe, Ltd., New York, NY 1998-present
Backstage Member of not-for-profit organization that produces Gilbert & Sullivan operettas to benefit local charities such as *Urban Pathways*, *The Children's Aid Society*, and *Student Sponsored Partners*. Raised over \$1.4 million in 10 years.
Board of Directors: 2005-08; President, 2006-07
Committee Chair: 2002, 2004-05, 2007-08
Stage Management: 2001, 2004, 2007, 2008

████████████████████, Inc., New York, NY 1994-2007
Member of the Board of Directors for not-for-profit theatre organization dedicated to the development of new works, new talents, and to serving and cultivating a diverse audience, as exclusive musical theatre studio for NYU Tisch School of Drama.
President: 1997-2002
Treasurer: 1995-1997, 2002-2007
Chair, Space Committee: 2006-07

██████████ College Alumnae Association, MA 1995 – 2000;
Treasurer, Class of 1980 2005 - 2010

United Way of ██████████ 1981-82
Corporate Representative for ██████████ Insurance

Junior Achievement of ██████████ 1980-83

EDUCATION

██████████ University Graduate School of Business. MBA, 1985. Accounting/Finance concentration.

██████████ College. BA, 1980. Biology major; Dean's List.

RESUME PROFILE

On a resume, I advocate having a **profile**. It appears just under your name and contact information, and is 2 to 4 lines long. Its purpose is to summarize your core value proposition - in other words,

- What you do really well and want to do again.
- What distinguishes you from other people.
- A dollop of your personality.

It's the thesis, the core concept that you will go about proving in the resume to follow by listing your achievements in especially the two most current positions. Think of a profile as a way to summarize your career progression and provide a snapshot of yourself to a prospective employer. Everything you say in the profile can be substantiated when people look at your bullets of accomplishments. And when they meet you, you seem familiar because they caught a glimpse of personality in your judiciously chosen adjectives.

The process of coming up with these two to four "profile" lines will be invaluable to you - even if you are convinced that an employer won't read it. Simply by having it on your resume, you will demonstrate to the prospective employer that you did your homework, that you reflected on your career progression, and that you understand what you bring to an employer. Of course you need to back up your assertions in the body of the resume. The profile is simply an introduction, while the rest of the resume is the substance.

Here are profile examples. More are listed in the Appendix. Feel free to use any language here in your own profile.

PROFILE: Progressive, intuitive executive leader. Sound, resourceful decision-maker skilled at identifying and successful solving organizational problems. Strong analytical, organizational and long range planning abilities. Excellent communicator accomplished at establishing rapport and credibility among diverse internal and external constituencies.

PROFILE: Accomplished, strategic marketing professional able to exceed revenue goals and develop new audiences for world class non-profit institutions. Skilled in strategic planning and brand articulation. Strong, creative communicator with impeccable copywriting and editing abilities.

PROFILE: Insightful, creative producer adept at conceptualizing, developing and managing media projects. Intuitive team player, proficient at initiating and guiding complex projects. Experienced in hiring and supervising producers, crews, vendors and consultants. Resourceful, sensible, calm under pressure, and comfortable working with all levels of talent and leadership.

PROFILE: Resourceful, inventive Executive Chef passionate about creating a consistently excellent dining experience in high-volume venues. Understanding and firm leader skilled at talent management to maximize performance and productivity. Bilingual in English and Spanish.

PROFILE: Award-winning interior architect unusually able to perceive clients' fundamental needs and create stimulating business environments that foster creativity and growth. Exciting problem-solver who designs effective projects in public and private sectors. Consistently capable and collaborative team leader.

PROFILE: Strategic, growth-focused marketing and communications executive able to collaborate in challenging situations and improve bottom line results. Hands-on problem solver skilled in developing and implementing multi-platform initiatives to raise the institutional profile.

PROFILE: Strategic marketing professional who delivers results and exceeds revenue goals. Director level company/product start ups and roll outs. Astute new business development leader opening new markets/regions and establishing distribution channels. In top 10% of marketing leaders in region against sales gain and profitability performance metrics. Passionate about working strategically and tactically with sales teams. Talent for rapidly assessing problems and devising out-of-the-box solutions. Committed to developing and mentoring employees.

HIGH-IMPACT OPERATIONS LEADER AND CHANGE AGENT

Strategist and tactician who delivers financial and operational results. Exceptional people and business acumen combined with strong scientific and technical skill. Executive positions in Operations, Supply Chain and R&D. Skilled communicator who effectively influences all levels of the organization. Global experience in Europe, Asia and Latin America. Team-builder adept at aligning organizations across functions and geographies to realize objectives.

UP-TO-DATE AND WELL-SEASONED JOB SEEKERS

As the title implies, experienced workers can present themselves as **both** seasoned and up-to-date. The two are not mutually exclusive. And in fact there might be some advantage to being both, for employers are getting current thinking along with the wisdom that often comes from longer experience.

How exactly does one show a prospective employer that you are this rare combination of hip and experienced?

Start with your initial approach - the cover letter and resume.

Highlight your familiarity with the internet world and all things digital - as well as your interest in keeping current with technology and the marketplace, your curiosity and open mind, your adaptability and flexibility, and your willingness to keep learning and doing new things. These are the hallmarks of a "young" worker, regardless of chronological age or experience.

It's easy to immediately and visually convey your "young mind" to a prospective employer. Use the following techniques in your resume and cover letter to powerfully demonstrate your up-to-date thinking and current skills, as you list your double-digit years of employment on your resume.

1. Have an e-mail address as part of your contact information on your resume and in your cover letter.

Make sure you have enabled the e-mail address to be a hyperlink so the employer can actually send you an e-mail by clicking on that address. If you are using Word, this is done automatically as long as you go one space beyond the e-mail address. You'll know it's activated when the type color turns blue and the address gets underlined.

2. Add your LinkedIn Profile url to your resume's contact information.

It goes without saying that you need to create a LinkedIn profile to which you can direct potential employers.

The *url* is the web address for your public profile, and it is listed on your LinkedIn profile page as Public Profile. My public profile's url is <http://www.linkedin.com/in/juliaerickson>. I've used HTML to make it a hyperlink, so you can see how it will look in your resume in this format.

You can use the entire *url*, or you can follow the same steps in the suggestion below to make

the label "LinkedIn Profile" a hyperlink directly to that web address. It will look like this on your resume: [LinkedIn Profile](#).

If you have a blog, Twitter account, website, VisualCV or other virtual "address" with relevant content, you can put these addresses in your contact information. You do not have to include these, and don't do it unless you are comfortable with a potential employer reading anything and everything on these sites. I would NOT put my Facebook or MySpace or Tumblr *ur/s* on my resume, for any reason, unless I want to work at one of these places and need to show my familiarity with them.

3. Make the names of your employers past and present into hyperlinks.

Hyperlinks have a powerful visual impact; they scream "familiar with Internet!" and "comfortable with digital tools!" and "Modernista!" These are very good sentiments.

Here are the steps for doing that on a Word document.

- On your resume, highlight the name of an employer and copy it.
- Go to your web browser and whatever internet search engine you use, and paste the employer name into the search box.
- Click "search."
- When you see the search results, click on the correct home link for the employer and go to the home page of the site.
- At the top of the screen will be the http:// address for the employer's home page. Highlight and copy that address.
- Return to the Word document. On the top toolbar, click on the "Insert" command to see the options.
- When you see "hyperlink" on the menu, click on it. A new window will open up.
- Put your cursor on the box labeled "Address" and hit "Control" "V" (that's the Control Key followed by the letter V). This command will automatically enter the copied http:// website address.
- Hit "Enter" and the employer name will be transformed into a hyperlink to the employer's website, as indicated by the type turning blue and the name being underlined.

Repeat this for every employer. If you are a consultant and have listed some clients, create hyperlinks to the clients' websites. You don't have to make all the names hyperlinks, just a sprinkling of the most interesting, highest profile, or relevant to your search. In fact, having too many hyperlinks will distract a reader and may lead them not to focus on the substance of your resume. Only do hyperlinks where they will serve your purpose of focusing attention on your accomplishments and your consequent value to your next employer.

Here's what hyperlinks look like in my resume. These are live, so you can actually reach the company sites.

EXPERIENCE

[New York Restoration Project](#) 2005-2006

Executive Director

[text of responsibilities and bullets with accomplishments]

[City Harvest](#) 1994-2005

Executive Director

[text of responsibilities and bullets with accomplishments]

On the sample resume a few pages back, I used blue type and the underline function to show how a complete resume looks with hyperlinks scattered throughout.

If you have written or published anything, you can list those publications in a section entitled PUBLICATIONS with their *url*, if there is one. It's a subtle, effective way to immediately convey your digital currency.

The "age" dilemma: whether to include dates for degrees, early career jobs

Many experienced workers are leery of putting down all their years of work and most positively shudder when asked when they received their degrees from college or graduate school.

My philosophy is that you have to be comfortable with what you put in your resume; I simply provide information and ask questions to make sure you make an informed decision.

It can seem like you are inviting the reader to do the math and come up with your age. If you provide the information, it leaves fewer questions unanswered, yet can perhaps unconsciously bias the employer. And, like it or not, the "how old is this person" calculation pretty much always happens even though employers are not permitted to ask about age or discriminate on the basis of age.

If you choose not to include years of graduation, understand that the reviewer will probably assume you are older. Younger people normally do not hesitate to include the year they received a degree.

Of course, without the year, they don't know exactly how old you are. Perhaps they will assume you are "too old" without a year; perhaps they won't.

Your "Right Fit" Job

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The goal is to use whatever legitimate and honest method you believe will get you an interview. Once you are in the door, you can persuade the interviewer of your skills and abilities.

The folks I talk with end up making their own decision about adding years to their degrees in the resume's education section. My sense is that adding the hyperlinks throughout your resume can counterbalance much of the potential bias against interviewing and hiring a very experienced person.

SINGLE PAGE JOB SEARCH SUMMARY

NAME

Summary description of your core value proposition e.g.

Seasoned finance and technology executive with deep expertise in hedge funds and start-ups

LinkedIn Profile (hyperlink)

CORE EXPERTISE: summarize your experience (e.g. 17 years progressively responsible positions in financial services IT)

3 columns of three items in each column
Preferably related thematically to each other
No more than 3x3 because no one can read & absorb more

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

- list at least three measurable accomplishments, one from each of your last positions (if you have that many) and
- naming the company and length of time there (in parentheses, at the end of each accomplishment)
- This is a way to give a snapshot of your experience and how you use your skills to have an impact, deliver results
- For example, Established US operations for UK-based software provider, which grew to 30% of firm's revenues and 55% of client assets under management (Chief Operating Officer, **Such&Such Hedge Fund Service Provider** 2001-2007).

SEARCH GOAL: short sentence that summarizes the scope, level, role, subject matter, and industry you are targeting. Examples:

- Senior-level position helping spread effective early childhood education practices throughout NYC non-profit industry.
- Senior leadership position in a university or international organization, especially one that is growing.

TARGET POSITIONS

- use bullets to list a few
- titles of desirable positions
- maximum 4 or 5 bullets
- is optimal
- otherwise too much to read

EDUCATION

List the degrees you have and institutions you received them from.

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JOB SEARCH RESOURCES

This list is extensive yet by no means exhaustive. There are new on-line job search sites emerging almost every week. The best bet is to search on-line for key words relevant to your industry along with the word “jobs” to find the most up-to-date sites and listings.

Basic Job Search

www.monster.com – the biggest job search site; has information on specific industries; also has lots of tips about how to prepare resume, cover letter and for interview

www.CareerBuilder.com – a mainstream site with all sorts of jobs

www.hotjobs.yahoo.com - another mainstream site (joint venture of Yahoo! and HotJobs – HotJobs no longer exists on its own)

www.craigslist.com - has a bunch of jobs, not terrifically well-organized, but still worth looking at

<http://jobzone.promomagazine.com/> - everything with a focus on marketing and new media

www.simplyhired.com - collects jobs from a lot of different sites, so is a worthwhile central location; takes you to the site itself, so if it's a Ladders job, you'd still have to join and sign in

www.careerjournal.com - linked to WSJ, seems to draw mostly on other sites

<http://www.job-search-engine.com/> - JuJu job search engine

www.jobs.myspace.com – jobs from the social networking site (powered by SimplyHired)

www.jobbankusa.com – national site based in Florida

www.jobsonline.com – gathers information from all sites

Requires a little More Work to See Jobs – & Worth It!

www.jobfox.com – their tag line is “be hunted” – their focus is to match seeker with best jobs for them, using their “**10 Dimensional Matching (sm) Technology**”

www.notchup.com – a site that gets employers to pay YOU to interview – for people happy at their jobs

www.linkedin.com – the professional networking site has its own job search site

www.employmentguide.com - you have to sign up to see jobs, but it's free - linked to some specialty sites like www.healthcareerweb.com

Population and Location-Specific

www.latpro.com – targeting Latinos and jobs that require Spanish; lots of Latin American employers

<http://www.cbaanetwork.com/> - sub-site of CareerBuilders for African-Americans and diversity

www.hirediversity.com/ - diversity recruitment

www.collegerecruiter.com – for recent college graduates

www.vetjobs.com – for veterans of the armed services

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www.jobcircle.com – jobs in the Mid-Atlantic region of the US

www.jobing.com – jobs in the US Southwest and California

www.workopolis.com – jobs in Canada

www.npo.net – Chicago non-profit jobs

Non-Profit Industry Sites

www.idealists.org - the workhorse of non-profit job search

www.philanthropy.com/jobs/ - Chronicle of Philanthropy job site; lots of fundraising jobs, as well as executive level

www.foundationcenter.org/pnd/jobs/ - most of the jobs on idealist are here, too - some different

www.indeed.com - another central place for many for-profit jobs

www.bridgestar.org - really different jobs! Search firms seem to post here.

<http://www.dotorgjobs.com/> - part of onPhilanthropy, on-line presence of Changing Our World; based in Washington, DC – re-launched May 08, so fewer jobs than most site

www.cgcareers.org - has fewer jobs, mostly repetitive, some difference with major sites

www.cof.org/network/ - Council on Foundations site with jobs at foundations all over US and some abroad

www.socialservice.com/ - social service and social work jobs

www.execsearches.com – non-profit jobs, not a huge range

<http://nonprofit.careerbuilder.com/> - CareerBuilder's non-profit job postings

www.thenonprofitnetwork.org/findjob.php - job board on a LA-based site that offers free and low cost resources for the nonprofit sector

www.snpo.org/nonprofitcareers/ - jobs board for Michigan-based Society of Non-Profit Organizations

www.citylimits.org – a local NYC publication focused on social change and community activism and jobs related to activist and social change

www.philanthropyjournal.com – has national jobs especially North Carolina

www.nonprofitjobmarket.org/ - non-profit jobs mainly Northeast and California

Industry-specific Sites

www.shrm.org – Society for Human Resources Management, the biggest industry site

www.hr.com/careernetwork - HR jobs

<http://www.workforcehrjobs.com/> - HR jobs

www.careerbank.com - finance, banking

www.fei.com – Financial Executives International Job Center for executive-level financial jobs (must qualify and pay \$495 fee plus \$250 application fee to join)

<http://www.greenbiz.com/green-careers/jobs> - “green” jobs

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greatgreencareers.com to help you find meaningful work in the new green economy. Sustainlane.com/green-jobs is the job search function on Sustain Lane, the "People-Powered Sustainability Guide." You can search hundreds of listings on their "green-collar jobs board." Job-hunt.org has a great list of green industry job search resources - job boards and "green color" employers. Job boards include [EcoEmploy](#), [Green Career Central](#), [Greenjobs](#), [GreenDreamJobs](#), [PowerPlantPro](#), [Renewable Energy World](#), [Environmental Career Opportunities](#) and [Solar Jobs](#). "See Job-Hunt's state jobs pages for links to many more employers in each state, including those specializing in the green industry."

www.marketingprofs.com – marketing

www.mediabistro.com/joblistings - for media professionals (on-line/new media, books, newspapers, magazines, television, radio, academic, advertising, design, corporate/tech writing, PR/marketing)

www.wizmall.com – Public relations jobs (powered by CareerBuilder)

www.computerjobs.com - tech-related

www.dice.com - tech insiders - very popular site for techies and that industry

www.workinsports.com – sports and sports-related jobs and internships

www.allhealthcarejobs.com - a lot of medical, some support functions (eg HR)

www.absolutelyhealthcare.com - also lots of medical and some support

www.publichealthjobs.net – jobs in public health

<http://cfusion.sph.emory.edu/PHEC/phec.cfm> - Public Health Employment Connection run by Emory University – jobs in public health

www.biospace.com - biotech and pharma

www.hcareers.com - has a great line-up of jobs throughout the hospitality industry, including hotels, restaurants, catering, tourism, and more.

Hospitalityonline.com is another site with hospitality jobs nationally.

www.bridgcareermanagement.com/fedjobsearch.htm - federal jobs

www.jobsinlogistics.com – mainly transportation, mostly CDL truck driving (long-haul and local)

<http://museumcareers.aam-us.org/search.cfm> - wide range of museum jobs

Paid Search Sites (mostly \$100K+ jobs)

www.execunet.com (also listed as www.6figurejobs.com) – has senior executive and six figure jobs. You can search free, but have to pay \$39/month to actually apply through ExecuNet.

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www.theladders.com - \$100K+ jobs – have to sign up and pay monthly fee to actually see jobs and apply; allows you to post a profile instead of a full resume; used by recruiters. Has specialized “Ladders” for specific fields. Also has UK jobs (<http://www.theladders.co.uk/>).

FinanceLadder: <http://finance-jobs.theladders.com/>

LawLadder: <http://law-jobs.theladders.com/>

HRladder: <http://hr-jobs.theladders.com/>

MktgLadder: <http://marketing-jobs.theladders.com/>

OpsLadder: <http://ops-jobs.theladders.com/>

SalesLadder: <http://sales-jobs.theladders.com/>

TechnologyLadder: <http://technology-jobs.theladders.com/>

UpLadder: medical and science jobs <http://up.theladders.com/>

www.netshare.com – executive jobs – international - \$40 a month fee

www.bluesteps.com – high level \$100K+ jobs. Service of Association of Executive Search Consultants. Lifetime membership fees from \$239 to \$329 (higher priced include access to SearchConnect directory of 5000 AESC members)

www.risesmart.com – \$100K+ job search “concierge” that searches sites and makes matches. \$54.95 a month; 20% discount for new members \$43.95

Local and Hourly Jobs

www.job.com - has local jobs; seems to go through Yahoo! You must register.

www.careermatcher.org – local jobs, mostly hourly from minimum wage to \$86/hour

www.net-temps.com – temp, temp-to-perm and permanent jobs – aimed at staffing agencies to find recruits

www.snagajob.com – hourly, lower-paid jobs

www.livedeal.com – part of a larger local marketplace; local job search engine using classifieds from your zip code area

www.localjobsnow.net – local jobs – very few listings and you have to register

www.localjobsdepot.com – register to find local employment

Professional Networking Sites

www.linkedin.com – professional networking site. Free to join; paid upgrades available from \$19.95 to \$200 a month (recommended for recruiters and active job seekers).

www.ecademy.com - Ecademy is a social business network with over 150,000 members. 85% of the members are outside of North America, most in Western Europe, with some presence in Asia.

www.mengonline.com – Marketing Executives Networking Group on line networking site for highly compensated (\$160K+), senior-level Marketing, Sales, or General Management executives

Twitter-related Job Search

Tweetmyjobs.com is a new service that brings recruiters, hiring managers and job seekers together on Twitter. There are Twitter Channels for major cities and job types, and it's really easy to subscribe to those channels. They send job notices as text messages to your cell phone, and you can follow them on Twitter. They also send e-mail notices. They say they will "showcase US Stimulus Jobs."

You can find the most current sites when you search for #jobs, #jobsearch, or #careers on Twitter's Search function (# means 'hashtag' and indicates a common grouping for posts on Twitter, aka tweets).

LINKEDIN AS A JOB SEARCH TOOL

[LinkedIn](#) is increasingly the place where professionals network digitally. It's a place to see who works in places you want to work, and to be seen by people who may want to hire you or work with you. Here are some ways to maximize your impact on LinkedIn.

Be honest. Your LinkedIn profile is essentially your on-line resume. Everything you say on LinkedIn can and may be checked against a written resume. Make sure they are alike in all essentials: employer names, position titles, dates worked.

Spend time on your Summary and Strengths sections. These sections will be viewed first, because of how LinkedIn is set up. Put your best foot forward.

- *Use the Summary to highlight your "unique value proposition"* - what makes you stand out from the crowd, what you do really, really well, and what you want to do again. Remember, you will always be asked to do things outside your comfort zone or skill level, so don't volunteer to do those things. Zero in on what you love and do best.

This section should be written in paragraph form. You can have more than one paragraph. I recommend using two short paragraphs (3 to 4 lines each) instead of one long one. From my long experience writing successful direct mail letters (they made money!), I know that people skim paragraphs and tend to ignore long ones as too complex and "busy." Grab your reader's attention by using short, direct sentences and paragraphs.

- *In the Strengths section*, list first the talents and skills you most want to use. People read the first 2 or 3 items and perhaps the last one. You can have 7 to 10 things listed. Use bullets to list them.

Create a key word-rich title. There's a place to describe yourself immediately under your name on your LinkedIn profile. Most people put their current job title down. In some cases, that's fine because those people may not be looking for a job. Sometimes your current title adequately describes what you want, as in "Major Gifts Officer, [name of organization]." People looking for a major gifts officer will search and may find you.

If you are not working or want to change fields, this line is a great place to target the position and responsibilities you want. For example, if you want to work in technology in the financial services field in a senior position, you can say "Senior Technology Executive, Financial Services." That major gifts officer may want to say "Major Gifts Specialist,

International and Sustainability Non-Profits" to attract recruiters who are looking for someone who can handle international fundraising.

Use the "JOBS" tab. LinkedIn has job postings, from the web at large and now from companies that post on LinkedIn exclusively.

The great thing is that you can see if someone in your network works at a posting employer, from 1st to 3rd degree of connection. If the person is in your network, you can either contact them directly or get an introduction to them from your own connections. It's digital networking. I helped someone get introduced to Feeding America, whose husband was connected to someone who was connected to a friend of mine.

Get Recommendations! Some of the jobs posted exclusively on LinkedIn say they prefer candidates with recommendations. It is essential that you get as many positive recommendations as possible posted to your profile. LinkedIn makes it pretty easy, for they have a function through which you can request recommendations from people inside your network as well as those outside LinkedIn.

For people who are not on LinkedIn, you will want to send a separate e-mail explaining that you want a recommendation on LinkedIn, asking that they join LinkedIn for that purpose, and thanking them for their support in helping you. If you ask people who don't know you're looking for a job, expect to give them a reason for wanting the recommendation.

A very nice feature of LinkedIn's Recommendations is that you get to approve the recommendations before they are posted to your profile. If you don't like what people say, you can ask them to change it or ignore the recommendation completely. If you want them to change it, it's best to suggest to them how they might change it to better meet your needs. Most people are willing to do that. I did it for a friend, because she explained more fully why she wanted it and what she wanted me to stress.

Add a picture of yourself. Photographs help people feel they know you a little bit. In any job search, it helps to become familiar TO the people in your extended network.

- Your photo needs to be professional-looking.
- Wear clothing that you wear or want to wear to your workplace.
- Project the image you want a potential employer to see.

Act as if the photo is going on an interview - because essentially, it is.

Remember this is a professional social networking site. This is a place to have only professional material. If you have a professional blog, put a link to it. Don't link to

your Facebook or MySpace or Twitter or personal blog accounts. Don't include frivolous information. Include only positive and serious recommendations.

Use Applications as appropriate. LinkedIn has added many new applications that allow us to create on-line portfolios. For example, through the SlideShare application, you can add Power Point and slide presentations about your past work, how your skills match to a potential employer's needs, and perhaps additions to your resume that otherwise would make it too long.

By using LinkedIn, you can really increase your chances of getting a job you want. One of my friends reconnected with a past colleague and landed a job through him; she's been there a year already. While the economy is different now (worse...), it's even more important to use every tool you have to differentiate yourself.

Put a link to your LinkedIn profile on your resume under your contact information. This send several messages to the potential employer:

- you are a networker
- you are digitally adept and confident
- you are up-to-date with technology regardless of your length of experience and "seasoning"
- you are transparent - no secrets

Those are powerful subliminal messages that will make you stand out from the herd - a herd that has yet to fully understood the value of LinkedIn.

NETWORK YOUR WAY INTO THE RIGHT JOB

What is Networking?

Networking can sound intimidating. Yet you do it every day without thinking about it. Every time you ask someone to recommend a plumber, you're networking. Every time you send your friend to another friend for advice about something, you're networking. Every time you meet someone at a party and end up calling that person later, you're networking.

In job search, networking can be for the purposes of gathering more information about various fields in which you are interested as well as getting connected to potential employers.

Why Network?

Networking for job search, business development, or career growth is valuable for a few reasons.

- 1) You have to get clear about what you want to do and why you want help. Writing down your intention or goal is the biggest step toward actually realizing it. And asking someone else for help both forces and guides you to get very clear about your intention.
- 2) You'll make the connections that will lead to a job or work or customers. The vast majority of jobs are filled through referrals and networking, most consultants build their businesses through referrals from happy clients, and businesses rely on "word of mouth" to generate sales and build their brand.
- 3) The very act of talking about your goal will help you reach it that much faster. When you are out there talking about your intention, the universe can step up to support you.

Remember, while you are preparing to get your "right fit" job or embark on your "right fit" career, that job or career is preparing to meet you. Employers are writing job descriptions, businesses are developing consultant specifications, people are beginning to understand that they can't do something by themselves and need to hire someone.

Personal Recommendations Are Your Best Marketing Tools

The chances of getting a job via networking are much better than any other method. And various HR and news websites indicate that recruiters want personal recommendations more and more. Why?

- 1) It's too difficult to wade through the on-line applications, many of which are completely unsuitable.
- 2) Using software to do keyword searches means that recruiters can miss someone fantastic who doesn't have the whole keyword thing down pat.
- 3) People recommended by employees in good standing will generally share that employee's values and to be a good fit with the organization.
- 4) Current employees won't risk their reputation by recommending a "dog" so trust is already built in the hiring equation, giving you a leg up on the competition.

The opposite is true, also. If someone you trust recommends you for a job, you know that you probably will like the place.

How to Start Networking

Networking is natural and easy when you start with people you know really well (your natural network) AND when you have a script!

Your **“natural network”** is family, friends, neighbors, trusted colleagues and former colleagues – people with whom you feel comfortable. Of course, there are other people who can and will help you, just later in your process. Make a list of people in various categories:

| People I Know Will Help Me Now | People I Know Will Help Me When I'm Feeling Braver | People I'll Contact As I Get More Comfortable | Long Shots |
|--------------------------------|--|---|------------|
| | | | |
| | | | |

Ask people in the first column if they know anyone who works in your area(s) of interest to whom they'd introduce you. All you want is 20 minutes of that person's time to learn more about what s/he does and the field in which s/he works.

You need a clear intention that you can explain to the person. Here's a format that works:

I am looking for a job that allows me to play this role and use x skills, and where my work will contribute to this goal and impact.

It's best if you have some idea of what you think you could do in the area of interest, so people have enough detail to grab onto. If your intention is too broad ("I want to learn more about TV"), it's hard for people to think of people you could interview.

A better statement of intent is "*I want to learn more about TV production, especially what goes into making a reality show or a talk show.*" This gives your contact enough information to think of people who work in TV production, on reality shows, talk shows, and cooking, travel or home design shows.

Sample Intention Statements

1. I'm looking for a senior leadership position in a university or international organization. Job could be something like COO, Chief of Staff, Chief of Administration. I'm really interested in highly effective groups that are growing, and am really excited especially by organizations that address women's issues and education on an international level.
2. I want to get a senior-level position helping spread effective early childhood education practices throughout NYC. I'm especially interested in COO or Program Director positions in a well-established yet still growing for-profit or non-profit. It would be great to find one working with Head Start or universal Pre-K.

The Networking Script

Once you identify someone to contact, decide whether to contact them by e-mail or phone. E-mail is easiest, especially for busy people. A phone call is better for someone you know really well.

When approaching someone you know fairly well, you can simply say "I'm exploring career options and wondered if you'd have 20 minutes to sit with me and give me some feedback and suggestions."

Often, the person will start the conversation right there with the question "so what are you looking for?" At that point you can say something along the lines of your intention - or shorter! Follow that by saying "I can tell you more when we meet."

If you're lucky, your first few contacts may actually know of jobs! It doesn't matter if they do, however.

Your goal is to get referred to at least one person who might be able to help you. Ask "is there anyone you can think of who might be able to help me?" If they have to think about it, make sure you ask them about it in a follow up e-mail or letter.

The follow-up communication should thank them for taking the time to talk to you and say that their feedback [suggestions, referrals, etc.] was really valuable and you appreciate their help and support.

Here is a script for contacting the next person along the line:

"So and so recommended that I contact you regarding my job search. S/he thought you might have some great insight and advice to offer. Would it be possible for me to get 20 minutes of your time? I'm exploring the possibilities in the _____ field, and would appreciate any advice and suggestions you might have. You can reach me by e-mail or at ###-###-####. I'll contact you if I don't hear from you. Thank you in advance! I look forward to meeting you."

If you want to make the initial contact by phone, use the same script.

I suggest practicing the conversation before you make the call. It is incredibly helpful to rehearse so you get comfortable with what you are asking. Ask a friend to go through it with you two or three times so you role play your part and experience what it feels like to make the request.

It is rare for people to refuse to give you 20 minutes in person, and even rarer for them to refuse to give you 20 minutes over the phone.

If they do refuse, it's either because they have no time or they believe they have no advice to offer. In both cases, it's about them – it's definitely NOT about you. So thank them for their consideration and say good-bye. No burning of bridges is necessary. Who knows? You might run into them again in another context, and it can then be a pleasant introduction: "oh, I'm so glad to meet you! So and so has said such nice things about you." And you might gain a new friend or colleague.

Focus to Help Your Search

Don't worry about being too specific about your job goals. You won't be locked out of potential jobs by being targeted. In fact, it's more likely that you won't hear about potential job unless you are **more** specific. People need detail on which to focus, to spark their memories and imaginations. If you are too broad, people don't know how to help you.

Figure out what you want to say to people about what you are looking for and be clear on what kind of help you want. By all means, tell people you are looking for a job. Make it clear that you don't expect *them* to get you a job. Hopefully, they can pass you on to someone in an area related to your interests. Eventually, you will get to someone who actually has a job opening.

You also can lay the groundwork for being considered if a job does open up, by targeting your desired employers and becoming known to them. One colleague found work after deciding the kind of work she wanted to do, identifying companies that engaged in similar work, and networking her way into informational interviews. The companies had no open jobs at the time, so she essentially invested in the future by establishing relationships first. After several informational interviews, the top people at one company were so impressed by her thinking, skills and approach that they actually created a job for her.

My colleague got her foot in the door in a new industry by networking. First, however, she found places she wanted to work within that new industry by doing her research.

Access The "Hidden Job Market"

In this challenging economic environment, networking is more important than ever. I consulted with several career counselors, and each told me that 65 - 80 percent of jobs are obtained through networking. Only 15-20 percent of job openings are even publicly advertised, and only about five percent of job-seekers end up getting jobs through ads or job postings. Vera Gibbons, CBS

The "hidden job market" is one accessed by networking. It involves the jobs that are not posted on CareerBuilder or Monster or Indeed or Idealist. This market is one where people leave jobs and their position is refilled.

These are not additional jobs or new headcount; these are mission-critical jobs that must be filled for the company to deliver its product or service. Often they are not posted publicly because the company does not want a deluge of resumes, or because they want to fill from within, or because they have a drawer of resumes already. Maybe the company works through a recruiter, who already has a stable of job seekers. For whatever reason, the only way you will find out about these jobs is by getting told of them by someone on the inside.

So how do you find someone on the inside? Well, the inside of what company? Here's where you have to decide where you want to work. Then you can find people inside - through colleagues, friends, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, JobAngels, recruiters - there are tons of ways to network into a place - once you know that's where you want to be.

The key is you doing the legwork to identify companies for which you want to work. The adage "you won't get anywhere unless you know where you're headed" applies to job search as well as travel. Have a destination in mind and you can more easily map out how to get there.

Identifying companies for which you want to work starts with your **Must Have List** (remember that?) - what you must have in order to do a great job, happily.

- 1) **Work you will do.** What do you love to do? What gives you great satisfaction? What do you want to do again? What industry or subject area do you love, care about? In what field does your expertise and talent lie?
- 2) **Role you will play.** What position will you have in the organization or company? Will you work for someone? For yourself? With others? Be a leader or a follower? Do you like working alone or in a team?
- 3) **Impact of your efforts.** What kind of impact do you want your work to have? Does it need to matter to anyone other than yourself? What kind of company or organization do you want to work for? Is there any purpose/cause that will make it worth doing drudge work?
- 4) **Physical environment.** What kind of physical environment do you need to be at your best and do your best work? Also consider desirable locations, commuting time, and hours.
- 5) **Colleagues, culture, emotional environment.** What kind of atmosphere helps you do your best? E.g. start-up or established company? Competitive or supportive culture, or a little of both? Structured or flexible? What kind of emotional environment do you want? What kind of people? Do your values need to mesh with the values of your workplace and colleagues?
- 6) **Compensation.** How much compensation do you need to reflect your value to your employer, or to quit a temporary or maintenance job to work full-time for yourself? What's your "I can live with it" figure? Your "want to have" figure? Are there other ways you can be compensated, such as time off, benefits, recognition, or travel?

Now that you have answers to these questions, you can start searching for companies in your target fields. Your Must Have List is a checklist against which to evaluate companies. And when you network your way into those 10-20 target companies, you also have a great set of criteria for deciding if a job is a good match. The Must Have List is your "job description" and the basis for you interviewing the employer. It's your way to see if this is the "right fit" work for you.

Create Your On-Line Presence for Social & Professional Networking

Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn - these are the newest mechanisms for job seekers and employers alike. All of these sites have one thing in common: ***the more people you connect with, the more expansive your job possibilities and opportunities.*** Clearly, this business model works for the sites, also, for the more eyeballs on a site, the more appealing it is to advertisers. In this case, it appears to be a win/win/win situation for the sites, job seekers and employers.

[Twitter](#) has #jobangels, where folks who have and need jobs can post and meet up.

[Facebook](#) also has JobAngels, and a growing number of baby boomer and Gen X users. People are now reconnecting with a ton of high school classmates as well as college pals. Many will know of jobs, and would be delighted to refer people to those in their network.

There is at least one FB application that allows employees to find people in their network who would be appropriate for jobs at their company. Companies like it because they get a referral from a current employee – a more likely fit – and employees like it because they can get a referral bonus. Facebook says the employer will not have access to your site – unless you allow them access. So go into your permissions and decide on the level of privacy you want.

Using Facebook for your professional job search may mean you need to clean your FB account of anything you would NOT want a potential employer to know about. That may include editing your friends who send you things not meant for public consumption. Think carefully about Facebook in your job search, and who you allow to access your information.

[LinkedIn](#) is the most comprehensive and well-known professional networking site. It's free to use in a pretty comprehensive way, and if you want to do more and connect with more people, you can buy an upgrade. LinkedIn is pretty easy to use and there are great ways to use it to your advantage. Now you can enhance your presence on LinkedIn as it accommodates creating an on-line "portfolio" - upload writing samples via Box.net and presentations via Slideshare.com. It's a great way to showcase your work quality.

[LinkedIn](#) already has a reputation for connecting people around jobs. Now, it's expanding its capacity for employment matchmaking. **First**, it's more pointedly marketing its membership to recruiters who are using keywords to find potentially qualified candidates. **Second**, it has enhanced its job posting feature, showing jobs are exclusive to LinkedIn as well as jobs on other job e-sites.

Two very cool benefits to LinkedIn: When you search by key word, jobs pop up first in the LinkedIn-exclusive tab, and the site identifies people in your network connected to

those jobs (1st, 2nd and 3rd degree connections). And when you click on a specific job, it suggests people in your network who might be good for that job. This feature's in beta testing now, and there definitely are glitches, but it's still worth checking out.

While some people are on [Plaxo](#), it's not as well known and seen by some as duplicative of LinkedIn. Plaxo has now linked itself to Facebook, which is good and not good. It's good because it expands your Plaxo network. It's not good because you then have to pay more attention to your Facebook account and privacy settings.

[ZoomInfo](#) is a place to treat yourself like a business and enter in basic information about yourself, your jobs and your education. You also get to upload a bio that you write yourself. It's fairly easy to use. One drawback is that to network via ZoomInfo, you must sign up for yet another site, [Xing.com](#).

There are two additional on-line resume resources: [VisualCV](#) and [iResume](#).

A [VisualCV](#) is an Internet-based resume that allows you to:

- Include work samples, charts and graphs, audio, video and images
- Share your VisualCV via e-mail, your unique URL or your social networks
- Control who sees it
- Get your own URL (www.visualcv.com/yournamehere)

It's the closest thing to an on-line portfolio I've seen. I was able to import my LinkedIn profile, so it's an easy thing to start using.

[iResume](#) is a service where you can create, manage, and submit your online resume. It provides a standardized resume format that claims to be compatible any format used in most recruitment systems. It provides submittal tracking and statistics so you can see who has looked at your resume at what point in the process.

DECIDING WHETHER TO APPLY FOR A JOB

I hear some people saying they don't want to apply for a specific job because they don't think they really want to work at the specific workplace. Maybe they've heard negative things about it from former employees, or they think it's too big or too small, or for some other reason.

Yet they identified the job as something of interest. There was an element in the title or job description or both that attracted them.

Now, if someone says they don't want to apply for a job because the pay is much too low or it turns out that they don't have at least 50% of the required qualifications, or it's in a city to which they will not move - then by all means, don't apply. That wastes your time and the employers'.

However, if there is no concrete reason not to apply, then I urge people to go ahead and apply.

Applying for a job is beginning your end of the conversation. It is not a commitment to accepting a job. It is simply the start of a possible longer communication and maybe relationship. Your application is your expression of interest in what the employer has to offer, and indicates your willingness to engage with them.

It is helpful to think about the reasons you ARE interested and focus on those. If you get an interview, you will have an opportunity to gather more information about the job and employer. Prepare for the interview by creating your own "must have list" of what you must have in order to do your best work. Most people "must have" a certain role and perform specific kinds of activities, work in a specific kind of culture and physical environment, get a definite compensation. Having your own sense of how and where you do your best work - meaning where you are happiest - allows the interview to be two-sided. You are checking out the employer just as they are checking you out.

You won't have that opportunity if you never apply. So go for it! Make your application the strongest it can be by following recommendations on preparing a fantastic marketing-style cover letter and resume. The worst that can happen is you don't get called for an interview. In that case, the job wasn't for you anyway.

Leave No Stone Unturned

Today's economy is relatively uncharted territory for most job-seekers, so abandon the idea that your road map is sufficient. It is NOT. So get off the beaten path, venture into the unknown, try

something a little beyond your comfort zone. My philosophy is that if something comes up in your path - whether someone suggests doing something or a wacky idea floats through your brain - it is there for a reason. So take a couple of steps to follow up on it. You'll know soon enough if it's right or not for you - either because you get a big fat "no" or because the path turns too rocky and difficult (a sure sign it's not a road to keep following), or because you gather enough information to see that your minimum "must haves" won't be met.

Engage in what I call the "leave no stone unturned school of job search." Do EVERYTHING that occurs to you and is suggested by others. This is not the time to say "oh, I don't think that will work" or "I don't think I'll like that job." How do you know, until you get the interview? And you don't know where an opportunity or idea will lead you.

Should I Apply? Values, Purpose, Mission Fit

From a recent ad for Oceana, a non-profit, here's evidence that it really matters whether you emphasize your desire to work at a place:

The Office Coordinator will support the Vice President of Global Development and will assist in fundraising efforts of Oceana. Oceana will only consider an individual who has a clear passion and interest in the oceans and marine conservation.

I sometimes see this stated, and believe it is implicit in every single job posting: employers want to hire the person who really wants to work specifically for them.

This goes for both non-profit and for-profit organizations. Just because they may not have a "feel good" mission like a non-profit, don't think for a minute that for-profit companies are exempt from wanting to hire "true believers." Just like non-profits, for-profits want to hire someone who cares enough to learn about their company, industry, and business model.

When you demonstrate your knowledge and enthusiasm for a company or organization, you demonstrate how you will be on the job - eager to learn and enthusiastic about your work. As the saying goes "how you do anything is how you do everything." This applies especially in job seeking.

If you don't care about a purpose now, is there a chance you would care later? It's OK not to know if you care about an organization, mission, industry, or business purpose - as long as you put in the effort to find out if you do. So go ahead and find out quickly. Do a little research:

1. Read the company website to get a better idea of its mission, values, activities and impact. There's no better way of finding out whether the organization will be the right fit for you and whether you'll be a good to great fit for it.
 2. Go to Wikipedia to find out more about the topic
 3. Do a search on the organization to see what press they get and what others say about them
 4. Ask your friends what they know and think
 5. Do a "gut check" to see if you have even the flickering of concern, enthusiasm or passion
- If you find there is great synergy between your values and those of the organization, by all means apply. You may find that you really DO care about the cause in which case use that enthusiasm in your cover letter. You can even be more enthusiastic in your letter than you actually feel, as long as you authentically care to some extent. Passion for a cause often grows over time.
 - If you don't admire the organization or think you wouldn't be a good fit, then it's probably better not to apply. If your values and views contradict the employer's, then it's unlikely you'll be happy there. Move on to apply for other jobs with which you have more congruence. Don't waste your own or the employer's time.
 - If there's a question in your mind, I recommend taking the next step of applying to find more information. If your values and views complement the employer's, then move forward in hopes of gathering more information about the employer. Send in your resume with a cover letter that emphasizes your positive feelings about the company. Hopefully, you'll be selected for an interview. If not, then it wasn't meant to be.
 - Learning about the organization sets you up to write an effective cover letter.

JOB RESPONSIBILITIES & EXPERIENCE CONGRUENCE

Use the job description for the position to figure out whether you have what it takes to get an interview.

...job descriptions are high-level overviews of basic skills a person needs to perform the role's functions. The document typically lists various tasks to be done and the prior experience that the company believes is necessary for successful execution. It also includes information such as the title and reporting structure.

Job descriptions are most commonly used for hiring and salary benchmarking. The tasks and experience data outlined in a job description is comprehensive enough to give a candidate an idea about whether they are qualified.

Source: Ellen Raim, [Coraggio Group](#), November 28, 2008

The implication for a job seeker is to pay attention to the job description. Are you in fact qualified? If you don't know, look at my post about comparing your skills and experience to the posted responsibilities and requirements. Employers use key words now, so you won't make it past "go" if you don't have key qualifications included somewhere in your resume or cover letter (preferably resume or both).

A simple grid is a very easy, relatively low-tech way to figure out if you have the qualifications for a specific job. Compare your experience and skills with the responsibilities and requirements laid out in a job description.

Here's how to form the job grid itself:

In Word, go to the tab "Table" on the top.

Left click on it. A new little window will come up saying "insert" and "delete."

Click on "insert." Another little window comes up that says "Table" (and some other inaccessible things - ignore).

Click on "Table." A new screen comes up that allows you to specify how many columns (vertical) and rows (horizontal) you want.

Click on the bottom arrow of "columns" until you get to "2" and click on the top arrow of "rows" until you get to "6" or whatever number you think you'll need.

Then I cut and paste the distinct pieces of the responsibilities and requirements (put both sections in, as both contain vital information), one per left box.

If you run out of boxes, you can make more in two ways.

1) go to the bottom right box and hit "tab" and another row will appear.

2) right click on "table" and then click on "insert." You'll be prompted to add either rows above or below, or columns to the right or left. You want "rows below."

Once you have all the responsibilities and requirements in their grid boxes, start writing in the right column how you match those with your credentials and experience. BE SPECIFIC! Give numbers, measurable impact, kinds of people you worked with, type of projects. Include EVERYTHING you can think of.

Think outside the box, too, for experiences and accomplishments that you can translate into the employer's language. Sometimes we may need to convince ourselves that we are qualified before we can convince an employer.

This grid will help you decide whether it's worth it for you to apply. If you do, the grid then serves as a basis for creating a very targeted cover letter that markets you effectively as having what it takes to meet the employer's needs.

The language contained in the grid is often perfect for a cover letter that matches your experience and skills with the employer's stated and implied needs, problems and challenges. You can construct paragraphs that summarize the employer's needs and how you'll contribute to solving those challenges.

AM I QUALIFIED? JOB GRID

Job Requirements

My Qualifications

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SAMPLE Job Grid

VP for **Strategic Marketing and Development** Institutional Advancement
 John Jay College of Criminal Justice/CUNY

Job Requirements

My Qualifications

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>Primarily responsible for the overall development and implementation of all marketing initiatives that can lead to new levels of distinction and service for the College. Position reports directly to the President.</p> <p>Will create partnerships with public service, educational business and judicial organizations as well as foundations in order to support, implement and publicize college programs and initiatives.</p> <p>Responsible to build team of professionals and an infrastructure to support the goals of this office.</p> | |
| <p>BA – 8yrs related experience</p> <p>At least 5 years at executive level</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must possess a proven ability to catalyze major gift giving • Improve alumni engagement • Strengthen media, community, government relations • Ideal candidate will have a strong understanding of and commitment to success in college marketing and development, as strong record of achievement as a fundraiser and following senior-level qualifications. | <p>BA degree</p> <p>MBA in management and marketing</p> <p>More than 5 years of executive experience</p> <p>Embedded in my leadership roles and responsibilities, I successfully created and developed programs and built relations among, faculty, students, staff, alumni, board members and university leadership to accomplish goals and initiate new programs.</p> <p>Worked along with University Press and media, presentations to board members, university leadership and government, state and city organizations.</p> <p>See building project as example</p> |
| <p>leadership role in managing fundraising including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major gift solicitation • Planned giving events planning • Targeted drives for corporate and foundation donations | <p>Did not have leadership role in fundraising activities, although I believe that fundraising is advocacy: creating, selling and promoting a product or viewpoint one believes in.</p> <p>I did establish and participate in fundraising activities in the building project, promoting and building a major gift to the University, selling the law school’s project to the community and government organizations, created and developed program with other colleges to launch new program in London.</p> |

| | |
|--|--|
| | <p>Made case, identified and advocated to a constituency, built support.</p> <p>I have experience promoting and engendering significant financial and community support for major institutional projects, two of which are the law school academic building and the new London study-abroad site.</p> <p>No major gift solicitation or planned giving events, but believe I have the skills.</p> |
| <p>Acumen for building a strong and highly functioning network of supporters community opinion and business leaders, governmental and non-governmental officials, trendsetters in academia</p> | <p>Strong analytical skills, keen ability to see the big picture. Practical thinker, good listener, able to make decisions, success in bringing disparate groups of people together,</p> <p>Ability to successfully operate in academic setting, understanding and comfortable with the decision making process, successful partnerships with academics and community leadership.</p> |
| <p>Ability to communicate and harness energies from a wide base of disparate groups of people among board members faculty, staff public official volunteers representing varied ethnic, cultural, social and economic backgrounds.</p> | <p>excellent team –building skills, smart, good listener, clear, good sense of humor, see big picture and getting results.,</p> |
| <p>Possession of a professional portfolio that documents career Successes in building and leading results-orientated operations and programs.</p> <p>Advanced degree and experience in the NYC market, strongly preferred.</p> <p>Strong financial analysis, management and communications skills essential.</p> | <p>{ Professional Portfolio} ??? CV points to successes and accomplishments. Have worked in the NYC market contacts and experiences primarily in NY.</p> |

RESULT: This grid shows that Judith was not a great fit for the job because she lacked sufficient fundraising experience. She applied anyway because she knew someone there who would put in a good word for her. Because she completed the comparative grid, however, she was not disappointed when she didn't get an interview.

IS THIS JOB FOR YOU?

Find out by using this key to color code a job description, as in the sample below. Lots of yellow or green? Go for it, and see if your application lands an interview and begins a longer conversation. Lots of blue? Think hard, and try to put together your most compelling marketing-style cover letter. The goal is to get an interview so you can learn more! Lots of purple? Move on to the next position.

Excited about
Can do

Question?
Don't like

Summary

This position is accountable for ensuring the successful execution of Horizon's Health and Wellness program -Journey To Health Program including **launching of developed programs, designing and implementing new programs** to ensure all employees have similar opportunities to participate. This position is accountable for program execution, identifying, managing and integrating **internal recourses and external vendors** and the timely execution and completion of projects. This position is also responsible for planning and conducting large **group presentations**.

Job Qualifications

Education/Experience:

1. **Requires a Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university, preferably in Human Resources or related discipline**
2. **Requires a minimum of ten years program management experience**
3. **Experience in launching start-up initiatives required**
4. **Experience with wellness programs required**
5. **Requires understanding of HIPAA regulations as they affect incentive programs.**

Knowledge:

1. **Requires strong organizational skills**
2. Requires knowledge of **strategic planning concepts**.

Skills and Abilities:

1. Requires the ability to **interact with all levels of the company.**
2. Requires **strong leadership skills** and the **ability to make decisions.**
3. **Requires strong analytical skills and the ability to present findings in a clear, concise manner.**
4. **Requires strong organizational skills and the ability to manage multiple priorities and deadlines.**
5. **Requires excellent PC application skills and ability to effectively utilize project management software.**
6. **Requires strong verbal and written communication skills.**
7. **Requires strong conflict resolution and negotiation skills.**
8. **Requires the ability to effectively interact with all levels of management.**

Responsibilities

1. **Manage day-to-day Health & Wellness Program activities.**
2. **Create a wellness coordinator group, by division to help facilitate program understanding, participation and support.**

3. Work with Communications liaison to ensure timely and sufficient communications are being delivered.
4. Facilitate quarterly meetings with vendors to foster program integration, discuss new initiatives, and make changes as necessary.
5. Ensure the Program meets its stated objectives
6. Manage program budgets and time frames
7. Communicate program-related information including new programs, cost, resources, and legal issues, etc. to Manager
8. Assist in the implementation of additional projects within Human Resources.

Compliance Statement:

Demonstrates knowledge and understanding of the laws, regulations and policies that pertain to the organizational unit's business and conforms to these laws, regulations and policies in carrying out the accountabilities of the job.

Core Competencies:

The target competency level for the **PROFESSIONAL** role is "Applying" for the following core competencies.

- Analytical Thinking
- Business Savvy
- Managing Change
- Multidirectional Communication
- Service Quality
- Shared Leadership
- Speed and Agility
- Team Work
- Technology Proficiency

RESULT: MaryAnn applied for the job because there was quite a bit she liked and could do. However, she didn't feel it was the greatest fit. After an interview, it was clear that the responsibilities were not really what she wanted, and she decided to keep looking while making the best of her current position.

YOUR COVER LETTER MARKETS YOU

A Cover Letter is A Must

A cover letter is your chance to present yourself as a terrific match with the employer's needs as laid out in the job posting and description of responsibilities and qualifications. You need to convince them that you have the goods to be able to do this job superlatively. The cover letter makes the case for why you are the right person for the job – or at least gives the reader compelling reasons to interview you and learn more.

- It is your opportunity to anticipate any objections and respond to them.
- It is your chance to demonstrate your writing and communication skills, as well as any persuasive and strategic positioning abilities you have gained through the years.

As with every piece of good writing, it will require several drafts and revisions for you to come up with a cover letter that captures your essence, marries your abilities to the needs of the job, and yet does not go on and on. A page or at most a page and a half are sufficient to make your case. We want the employer to be interested enough to read your resume and call you for an interview.

There are some key factors to keep in mind that make it imperative for your cover letter to be compelling to the employer and to increase your chances of getting an interview.

Your resume is focused on your past while the job posting is focused on the future.

Prospective employers are focused on their own needs, and how you are able to meet those needs - they don't need or want to know a whole lot about where you are now. The job of the cover letter is demonstrating that you understand and can meet the employer's needs.

I recommend using past experience and accomplishments to illustrate how you have and therefore can do the job THEY have.

- Why do you want to do this job or work?
- How does it flow out of your past experiences?
- How does what you have done in the past prepare you to meet their needs?

Infuse into your letter your enthusiasm for this position as a logical next step in your career, as well as the perfect fusion of their needs and your abilities.

63-70% of jobs are filled by networking and referrals of business colleagues.

Most jobs go to people who are somehow familiar to the person doing the hiring. A personal referral makes the employer more comfortable meeting someone; it's less of a risk when you get a referral from someone you trust. Even with an introduction, it behooves you to stand out as someone relatively familiar with and to the person doing the hiring. Become a familiar face!

Go through the employer's website and become more familiar with what they do. Pick out a couple of their services and see if you want to target them in your cover letter, using key phrases or words. Here's one example from a consulting firm that specializes in real estate-related services.

They say in Facilities Management: "how to operate facilities with maximum efficiency, safety and employee comfort—and dramatically reduce costs in the process." Use phrases like "maximum efficiency" and "employee comfort" as well as "dramatically reduce costs" somewhere in your cover letter - perhaps referring to your previous accomplishments or responsibilities.

In Project and Development Services, they say: "Their collaborative approach is managed by a dedicated project manager who serves as your single point of contact and accountability. Of course, being the best means more than driving projects to on-time, on-budget completion. Our real estate project managers can quickly scale up or down to address your company's changing needs and the asset types in your portfolio. Whatever the scope, we'll work with you to set measurable goals and then achieve them—together." Lift some language from this, such as "collaborative approach" and "driving projects" or "on-time, on-budget completion."

Using language directly from the employer's website subliminally conveys that you already understand the place and will fit in. You literally "speak their language."

Employers want to be wanted, very wanted

Employers today can afford to be picky and the more I read, the more I see postings imply or say directly that they want "true believers" in their business goals and mission. They will be looking for evidence of this, and many people will state their belief explicitly. To not address probably will put you out of the running. Even if you are not completely passionate about the mission, act as if you are. We are never 100% anything, so unless you have a visceral disgust for the business purpose or mission, you are allowed to apply if you generally support the cause.

If you have the background to demonstrate your synchronicity with their work, do so. Make an effort to point out your thematic resonance with their mission, pointing out how everything

you've done in the past has led you to this position. That is compelling reasoning, shows you put real some thought into the cover letter, demonstrates that you want the job enough to work for it, and may in fact have the passion they want.

Take Your Time

It pays off to take your time and make sure you are submitting the most accurate, legible, and proofread application materials. You remove the inconsequential reasons for a hiring agent to disqualify you from consideration and give yourself a better chance to make it to the "yes" pile for an interview.

In a time when there average 4 or 5 job seekers for every open position - and hundreds of applicants for many positions - employers look for any way to narrow the field. **Don't give them a reason to exclude you.** Give yourself every advantage!

- Ask someone to review your cover letter for accuracy before you send it.
- Make sure your resume is error-free, and that its format will translate into any computer system.
- Better yet, convert your resume into a PDF so it appears exactly as you want it to look. Download Cutepdf.com, a free program that will allow you to create PDF documents in less than 5 minutes. It's very easy!

Cover Letters: attachment or in e-mail body?

It's far better to "attach" your cover letter to a transmittal e-mail as you control the look of your letter. Folks are more likely to just skim an e-mail instead of really reading it, and highly unlikely to print it out. It's more likely that they'll save it as an attachment just as they would save the resume.

However, sometimes you have no choice but to paste your cover letter text into the body of an e-mail. Make sure you pay attention to margins and font, and that it looks OK in an e-mail - and when it's printed out.

I also recommend sending a PDF or Word file that has the cover letter as page 1 or at most pages 1-2, and the resume as pages 2-3 or 3-4. This way, the person is saving only one document. To look at the resume, they have to see the cover letter as well.

IMPORTANT: Make sure you label the file with your name followed by the words "resume and cover letter."

Including your name ensures that your materials are associated with you alone, and can be

easily sent and found using your name. It also is that attention to detail that makes potential employers associate you with providing solutions instead of causing problems - e.g. they have to label your resume with your name in order to maintain a record of your application.

In this environment, small things like an unlabeled resume loom large. Chances are that the employer won't bother adding a label, instead simply tossing your application in the virtual trash can.

KEY ELEMENTS FOR A SUCCESSFUL COVER LETTER

1) **Write it well.**

This means good grammar and sentence structure, logical flow and relevant content, as well as perfect spelling. If you are not a great writer, find a friend who can edit your letter. A well-crafted cover letter conveys that the writer is a clear thinker and smart person. Mistakes (like typos or mixed up verb tenses) give the reviewer a great reason to toss your resume into the recycling bin or shredder. Don't do their work for them!

2) **Use the cover letter to make the case for why you are the right person for the job.**

In marketing terms, your resume is your "value proposition" while the job posting and description put forth the need that must be met. Your cover letter articulates how your value proposition - skills, experience, expertise - matches the stated need. To make that case, you will refer to the job description, often using language taken straight from the ad or posting. This demonstrates that you are paying attention to this employer's specific needs, and that you understand that work is a two-way street. You want a job, they want an employee. You need a paycheck, they need results. Show that you understand that the employer has needs, too, and you will start to stand out from the competition.

3. **Give enough specificity to invite more questions at an interview and absolutely no more.**

Cover letters allow you to go into a bit more detail than your resume about specific accomplishments - looking from about 8,000 feet instead of 10,000 - and definitely no lower. No one wants to read every last detail. It's boring and off-putting. One person wrote a letter that gave lots of detail about one accomplishment - it was hovering at about 1,000 feet.

As a fundraiser, I have developed successful proposals to a number of foundations and government agencies over the past 12 years. One example of my success in this area is my spearheading the effort that resulted in a \$22,000 planning grant from the such-and-such Foundation to look at increasing the number of older adults in our volunteer base. My analysis of the ensuing focus groups led to our being invited to apply for full funding. We were awarded a \$150,000, three-year grant as a result. I continue to monitor the programming and reporting on that grant. In addition, at both MNO and BCD, I successfully increased foundation fundraising and income from billable contracts during my tenures.

The content definitely was relevant; it was just too much of a good thing. Here's a small edit to

show how to highlight the essential point, give an example and curtail extraneous detail.

As a fundraiser, I have led or been an integral part of efforts that yielded many millions of funding from foundations and government agencies during my career. For example, I spearheaded XYZ's effort that raised first a planning grant and then a \$150,000 multi-year grant from a major foundation. In addition, at both MNO and BCD, I successfully increased foundation fundraising and income from billable contracts.

You might get an interview because the reviewer wants to know HOW you accomplished these things. Then you can go into more detail.

4) Talk about why you want to work for the organization or company.

Convey your excitement about the job and organization! Employers want to be wanted by potential employees.

The cover letter is your chance to show them how you are the perfect fit, not simply in terms of your abilities and qualifications but in terms of their mission and programmatic needs. You certainly are technically qualified. Why should they choose you? What's your motivation for seeking this position? A little flattery goes a long way, as does a thoughtful rationale for why your experience will translate into the new company's focus.

When applying to a non-profit organization, make sure you weave any experience - professional, volunteer or personal, that ties you to the organization's specific mission and issues.

5) Get the reader to go to your resume.

The cover letter is supposed to give employers a slightly different perspective on you. It's the place to amplify the key messages contained in your resume and to make the case for you being the right person for the job. It should not take the place of the resume. It's good to give the reader instructions: So don't repeat everything that's in your resume. Get them to go to your resume.

SAMPLE Cover Letter

Dear Ms. Mason,

I am writing in response to the posting on the Roots of Change Fund's website for the position of Executive Director, and have attached my resume for your consideration.

Several people suggested that I apply, based on my background and skill set. I'm delighted to have learned of this really exciting systemic change venture, and believe strongly that I am the right person to lead ROC as it works to implement The New Mainstream sustainable food agenda.

You will see in my resume that my 25-year career has been entirely in the non-profit and public service fields, with a steadily expanding scope of responsibility. Most notably, I spent eleven years as Executive Director of City Harvest, an internationally-known anti-hunger food rescue organization. Under my leadership, City Harvest became virtually a household word in New York City for fighting hunger.

I am proudest of shifting the organization's focus to providing low-income people with greater access to healthy food and a myriad of food resources (food stamps, nutrition information, recipes). In 1994, City Harvest delivered 4.5 million pounds of food, two-thirds of which was bread. By January 2005, it was delivering 25 million pounds of food, two-thirds of it fresh produce - much of it from New York State farmers. My team and I zeroed in on a core paradigm: hunger is as much a public health issue and a food system issue as it is a function of poverty and economic inequity. Out of this paradigm shift grew the strategy of "complementary partnerships," wherein City Harvest focused on its core competency - food rescue and distribution - and built collaborations with organizations that could provide food stamp enrollment, policy advocacy, links with farmers, and health services. As a result, I became familiar with and passionate about sustainable agriculture, building effective links between urban and rural food systems, and devising pragmatic food processing and distribution mechanisms.

The open space preservation and community gardening work at NYRP enabled me to become more familiar with the environmental issues inherent in any sustainable food production and distribution system. Now, as a consultant and a volunteer, I am continuing my work in this arena. I firmly believe that it is possible to develop and implement the sustainable and more equitable system envisioned in The New Mainstream. Movements toward this are happening in New York State, but as yet they are disconnected and limited in scope.

California is clearly in the lead in this movement, and I am fortunate to have been exposed to much of what has been and is being done there. While at City Harvest, I served on two national Boards of Directors which exposed me to food, hunger and agriculture issues throughout the United States. I know or know of many of the players in California, from food bank leaders to California Foodlink and food industry players.

Obviously, it would be fantastic for me to be able to lead ROC at this point in my career, for the organization embodies all my interests and passions. More importantly, though, I would bring all my experience, expertise, skills, talents, persuasive powers, and passion to ROC. I have what it will take to make this agenda a reality.

Throughout my career, I have built and shaped new and fledgling entities capable of fulfilling their missions and achieving significant results. My forte is forging effective staff and board teams, and fostering the development of innovative and effective strategies and programs, as well as the infrastructure to support them. That involved everything from recruiting and organizing staff to managing internal and external relationships, leading strategic planning efforts and structuring organizations, raising funds and increasing visibility, and identifying and taking advantage of emerging opportunities.

Your "Right Fit" Job

<http://julieannerickson.blogspot.com>

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Believe it or not, there is much more that I can say about my interest in becoming the Executive Director of the Roots of Change Fund. I hope very much that you will favorably consider my application, and look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

RESULT: Because of this cover letter, I was the only applicant outside of California to be contacted for a telephone interview. The cover letter did its job: getting me an interview. Then it was up to me to persuade them to keep talking to me so I could get a better sense of whether this was indeed the right job for me. After that interview, the organization flew me to California for two interviews, including one with the entire Board of Directors. It turned out the job was not a right fit for me because the pay was too low. After hearing my concerns about the money, they decided to hire someone from California who would not have to relocate.

SAMPLE Cover Letter

Dear Ms. [REDACTED],

I am pleased and excited to submit my resume for the position of Executive Cafe Chef at the New York Botanical Garden. I am confident I will add great value to the Abigail Kirsch organization because my experience and skills are extremely well-matched to the requirements of this job. My passion for food makes me very excited by the opportunity to work for Abigail Kirsch because of your fantastic reputation for culinary and event excellence.

As you will see from my resume, I am the Executive Chef at the [REDACTED]. Over the years, I have gained the experience and knowledge necessary to successfully train, develop, guide and lead highly effective culinary teams from novice cooks to seasoned chefs. One of the things I am proudest of is creating a menu at Russo's (prior to its recent refocus) on which every item sold well. This resulted from my use of prior sales history, and input from front and back of house teams, colleagues at sister hotels, and the Food & Beverage Manager. This is the kind of thing I love to do and do well.

As Executive Chef, I am a strong manager who always leads by example and always behaves with integrity and devotion. Experience has taught me to cultivate associates' talents and skills in order to develop relationships that build morale, optimize productivity and benefit and satisfy both the customer and the company. My culinary arts degree gave me with the discipline, skills and necessary resources to set priorities, get organized, and act pro-actively to achieve and deliver accurate results in a timely manner.

I started as an eager and excited culinary apprentice hungry for knowledge and experience and have retained my appetite for new and innovative ideas in food preparation, production and presentation. It would be especially wonderful to work at the New York Botanical Gardens, getting inspiration from that beautiful environment

It would be a privilege for me to be part of the Abigail Kirsch team because you value commitment to excellence for customers and associates, and have such high standards of food preparation and service. I am confident that with my fair and caring disposition, I can contribute to your continued success and growth.

I welcome the opportunity to discuss my enthusiasm and qualifications for the Executive Café Chef position with Abigail Kirsch. You can reach me at 212 [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

RESULT: This letter used language actually in the job description and on the firm website. It secured Miriam a telephone interview almost immediately. She felt after the conversation that the job was not appropriate for someone with her experience; the person who called agreed and is keeping her in mind for more senior positions. We now know, however, that the letter did an effective job of presenting Miriam as an attractive candidate.

STAYING IN THE JOB SEARCH GAME

Tweeters, bloggers and columnists are united in emphasizing how important it is for people to develop and maintain a positive attitude during a job search. In fact, the consensus is that you'll be more successful in your job search if you can stay positive.

The big question is "how do I stay positive?" It is so common to get scared, depressed, frustrated and hopeless. All job seekers feel at one point or another that this process of finding a new job is seemingly endless and definitely pointless. It's really hard to have hope, and to just keep going.

Based on my experience and that of many others, here are some really practical suggestions for staying positive – or at very least, turning your mood from completely hopeless to accepting that this is a difficult road and you are doing the best you can.

- **Accept that it helps to be positive and to have hope.** It's like that experiment where you frown and see how you feel, then smile and see how you feel. It's impossible to really smile and NOT feel happier. So choosing to look at the positive is a huge step.
- **Vent your frustration and anger and fear and all your emotions.** It's normal to feel all those things. By expressing those feelings, you expel them from your body and take away their power. Your feelings no longer are pushing you around without your consent. And you've rid your body and soul of those toxic sentiments that will grow stronger and become corrosive to your spirit if they are shoved down and left to fester. When your feelings are expressed and outside of you, you can either cast them away as no longer relevant or you can work with them. By working with them, I mean seeing if the feelings indicate that perhaps you need to take a new or different action.
- **Take a variety of actions.** For me and for many job seekers, having many irons in the fire is a fantastic stress reliever and anxiety reducer. Work on putting together a great resume at the same time you're checking the job boards for openings. Create a list of people with whom you can network and prioritize them, while you're drafting cover letters that market you. Set up and go on networking meetings while you are applying for jobs. Create a great LinkedIn profile. Edit your resume based on new information. Look into consulting work while you are waiting to find the right jobs for you. Go to networking events. Take a walk. Grab your laptop and go to a local cafe that has WiFi so you can check e-mail or go on Twitter.
- **Get out of your home!** Isolation is the danger of being out of work. It is very seductive to turn on the television or sit at your computer all day. That usually leads to depression. I know folks go to Starbucks and local coffee places at regular times, simply to have a routine. Often they then meet people in similar situations, and networking happens naturally. I met a writer who inspired me to blog when he overheard me helping others with

their job searches. Because of him, I'm following my passion. The point is to stay part of the world. Seeing other people during the day helps one keep a positive attitude, which helps one persevere - and a job search is all about perseverance.

- **Allow yourself to do things you really love to do.** While it's "a full-time job to look for work," it's also a rare opportunity to spend time pursuing a dream or exploring things that you thought might interest you but never had time to do. Allowing yourself to do some fun things does two things: 1) you have fun, which is always a good thing for staying positive; and 2) you may actually find that you could turn your hobby or passion into paid employment. One woman I know is now running writing workshops, after being laid off from a senior management consulting firm. She loves writing and decided to help others write, while making a little money. It's a start of something that could grow bigger - or not. The point is she's using her skills and following her passion while she searches for a job.
- **Find a confidant and job search "buddy."** This is someone who can help you reframe things, keep things in perspective, and think through your process and any hard decisions. For many people, this is a career coach. For others, it's a friend. Chances are it WON'T be a family member; they are usually too invested in you being OK and finding a job quickly that they can't tolerate anything that sounds like depression, defeatism or negativity. Find someone willing to listen to your process and venting, able to ask questions to help you establish your own priorities, and trusted enough to challenge your negativity.
- **Be kind to yourself.** Some days are just hard. That's OK. Tomorrow you'll feel different. Most of us are able to pick ourselves up, dust ourselves off, and start all over again (yes, you can break into song now). Sometimes, all we need is a little break from the grind of looking for a job. That's good, normal, healthy to give ourselves. It's nothing to be afraid of. The danger comes if you find yourself unable to get out of bed or make those phone calls or send those e-mails, no matter how hard you try. Those are signs of depression, and there are great treatments for depression. Doctors and psychiatrists are the people who can help you with those.
- **Read about other people's experiences as well as positive blogs, columns and tweets about job search.** Reading can give you great ideas about what you can do, provide some perspective about what job search is like and what to expect, and get you outside your own head. It is a way to reduce isolation as well as to gain inspiration for taking that next step that WILL lead you to your next job.
- **Trust that you will find a job.** Because you will. The guy who wrote that great book *What Color Is Your Parachute?* (buy it!) says job search is like this: "NO NO... (on and on for a whole page of NO)...YES." Eventually, you will find the right job for you. And it probably won't be what you expected. You might have to make some major shifts along the way in terms of what you'll accept, how you live, what you want. No matter what, though, you will get a job as long as you keep going, taking the next step.

A NOTE ON VENTING FEELINGS

I am a big proponent of venting during your job search process. Venting is when you talk with someone trusted about all the obstacles, problems, fears, anxieties, anger, and frustration you feel and encounter every day and week. Venting is vital when you are under pressure - and a job search is definitely pressure-filled. Pressures are varied:

- Maybe you are worried about being able to pay your bills, keep your home, care for your children, replace worn shoes.
- Or maybe you're tired of the cycle of networking - seeing so many people yet no one has a job for you.
- And maybe you simply are out of hope for the moment.

I believe venting is very different than complaining. To me, complaining is blaming someone or something else for my situation. Venting is simply acknowledging that a job search is difficult work, stuff happens, I don't always like it, and I need to get it out of my head and body in order to move on.

Think about a pressure cooker: when a pressure cooker vents, it doesn't explode. Similarly, people in stressful situations need to vent in order to stay healthy.

There are many ways to vent the unpleasantness: talking, crying, whacking your pillows with a plastic bat, or writing. Seek out and use whatever mechanism is most helpful and least harmful to you.

I observe that it is most helpful to people to vent to a sympathetic person who listens and doesn't try to fix it. When I listen, I do a lot of validation: "that does sound awful!" and "I am so sorry you are going through this." My approach stems from having gone through many down and depressed times in job searches; it never helped to have someone try to "fix me." What helped most was someone being kind when I was crying from frustration or hurt. Recent studies actually do show that crying with a sympathetic person is the most healing of all tears.

Usually the person talks him or herself out of the down state of mind; I rarely need to encourage them to focus on the positive. I can always tell that someone has vented sufficiently when they start looking at the bright side of things and begin to notice positive things.

@valueintowords, a job search coach on Twitter, put it this way: "*venting' helps you to emerge from a cloud of negativity and regain optimism; this is important for job-search success.*"

INTERVIEW PREPARATION

You got the interview. Now you are at the in-person stage of the job search conversation. There are some simple ways to get ready for an interview, ways to remain calm and focused on how you are the right person to solve the company's challenges.

Prepare Your Own Questions

The best preparation for an interview is reading through the company's website and taking notes on things you might be curious about, re-reading the job description to make sure you have a good grasp on the most important items (usually top 4 to 5 duties and requirements) and how you match them, and putting together a list of your own questions.

In the right setting, I suggest bringing a pad of paper on which you list your questions, and putting on the table in front of you. The best interview is one that evolves into a conversation, so hopefully your questions will be answered during the interview. Usually, the interviewer will give you a chance to ask questions near the end of the interview. You can go through the list, saying "you've answered most of them already, I just have this one (or two)." If you haven't gotten most of your questions answered during the interview, ask just the one or two MOST important ones, and leave the rest for a second interview. You might also wonder if you want to work at a place that remains so opaque after an interview...

Anticipate Difficult Interview Questions

The most difficult interview questions are the ones you aren't prepared to answer. Often, these questions fall into these categories.

1) **Questions you wish won't be asked** because you haven't come to terms with or become comfortable with the answers. These include "why did you leave your last job?" when you were laid off or fired, "why are you interested in this field?" when you really want to change fields because you hated your last one, "what did you like least about your old job?" when you hated your old boss and are tempted to bash him or her. If you don't exactly match the job description requirements, it can be tricky to explain why you are still the best candidate.

The best preparation for handling these questions is rehearsing the answers with someone else, until you are comfortable - honest and not defensive or attacking. An interview is not the place to criticize a former employer, ever. Figure out how to phrase things in a positive way, as in "this situation was challenging and I realized that I would be able to contribute much more in a role similar to this one."

If you can, return the focus to the job for which you're interviewing. I was fired and had to develop an answer that indicated that I was not to blame, that it was run-of-the-mill organizational politics, and besides, I'd accomplished all I intended there, so it was actually a good time to leave and find something that offered me new challenges, such as this job.

2) **Salary questions** also can be difficult. A good thing to say is "I'm hoping to make between \$X and \$Y, and of course am flexible because I really would like to work at this organization." \$X is your "live with" number and \$Y is your "want to have" number.

3) **"What's your biggest weakness?"** is always tricky to answer, as is "what's the most difficult work challenge you've faced and overcome?" It's best to thread in a little self-deprecating humor there - if you say you have no weaknesses, the interview will think you're arrogant or blind to yourself. I like to say "weaknesses depend on the job, of course - I'd like to think I have none but of course I have some! I find myself apt to give people more time to prove themselves on the job when it might be better to let them go." To me, that is a real weakness cloaked in kindness. Then I add "so I've learned to establish very clear monthly benchmarks at the beginning of their employment. That way, I can tell very quickly if someone is or is not going to work out." That's the trick - to follow up any discussion of a weakness with a description of how you have learned to compensate for it.

4) **"Tell me three words that describe you"** is another fun one to prepare for, as is "what would one of your employees tell me about your management style?" That last one was one of my favorites, because it asked people to step outside of their own perspective and look a bit more objectively at themselves.

5) **Questions clearly related to the specific employer.** Perhaps they ask you to respond to an imaginary scenario and tell them what you would do in that situation. The response clearly should involve some knowledge of the company, but you might not have gone through the website in enough depth.

Maintain Your Composure

When an interviewer asks you a question you didn't expect, there's no need to panic - **you know the answer**. All you need to do is give yourself some time to remember the answer and formulate the beginning of your answer. Here are some tactics that buy you time, giving your brain a chance to quickly come up with an answer. (Plus each of these tactics has some added benefit.)

* Pause before answering if you are unsure of the answer

* Say "that's a great question" (Saying "great question" flatters them and people like that subliminally even if they think they are cynical about it.)

* Repeat the question back to them "so you're wondering if I _____" and wait for them to nod or say yes (Repeating the question mirrors them back to themselves, makes them feel smart, AND makes them feel like you were really listening to them.)

* Use the question as the beginning of your answer. For example, if the person asks "tell me about a time you had to organize a project in a short time frame," you say "An example of when I organized a project that had a short time frame is..." (Repeating the question or using it in your answer focuses YOU and your brain on the question and helps you come up with an appropriate answer.)

Take a pause after you have answered the question - in two to five sentences max - to see if the interviewer has a followup question. I call it "the pause that refreshes."

If you're not sure you've adequately answered the question, **STOP TALKING.** Say "I hope I've answered your question" or "Have I answered your question?" The interviewer will either say yes or no. If s/he says "no," they will then clarify what they wanted you to tell them.

Finally: **Remember to breathe.**

DIFFICULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Everyone has a "difficult interview question" they need to answer. One of my Twitter pals suggested this:

I always say - don't be afraid to breathe in an interview. Take a moment to reflect difficult questions before you interview!

I love that and call it the "pause that refreshes," to swipe an old ad tagline.

Here's how I answered this question from someone today:

"I've sent some resumes out and it just occurred to me... what do I tell an interviewer when they ask me why I left my last job? I don't want to trash the org, but not sure if telling them I was fired is good either."

My Response

I also was fired and for a while found it difficult to talk about why. So I really have gone through this and come to a great place of peace with what to say. Here's what I say about why I left my longest job:

I was there a long time and accomplished so much. The time had come for me to go. The organization decided that it wanted to go in a different direction, as well, so it worked out for all of us.

You also can say *"there was a change in leadership, a new COO [or other leader] came in, and I felt it was a good time to leave."*

We want to state things as neutrally as possible. No potential employer wants to hear you say bad things about a past one, and you don't really want to get into what happened.

Other options: *you were hoping to set up in your own business, realized you don't really enjoy working on your own, like to work on a team, that's why you're applying for this job. This seems like the kind of place you could make a real contribution.*

That way, you are refocusing the conversation on the job at hand, leading them away from the difficult question.

Also, remember the (fake) 12 step program "Extra Sentences Anonymous" for people who say too much. You may feel uncomfortable about what you intend to say to the employer, so just practice, practice, practice keeping it short and sweet without an edge or nerves or a sense that there might be more to say.

REHEARSE your answer until you are comfortable with it! Find someone you can rehearse with – preferably **not** a family member – so the answer just flows from you during any interview. The more comfortable you are with what you say, the more comfortable they will be with the answer and the less likely they are to suspect that there's more to it.

So tell the truth, in a way that you feel confident and good, that puts everyone in a good light, and that is complete yet short enough to make them feel you've disclosed and come to terms with what happened - and then move back to the job in question.

THANK YOU NOTES MATTER!

To distinguish yourself from other candidates, always send a thank you note to the person or people who interviewed you.

Establish a personal connection through your note.

You are writing to a person who works in a specific place doing real things. So show that you know what they do. Refer to something raised during the interview itself. That will remind the reader about the interview. A shared experience is the beginning of a history together - whether you get the job or not. You never know when you'll run into the person again, or if they will have another job someday for which you'd be right.

Play as if you're on the new team NOW.

While writing the TY note, imagine you're in the job already. The reader wants to know that you a) want the job and b) will fit into the company. So think about what you'd be excited about doing there and then refer to it directly in the letter. Offer an idea or two about how you'd tackle an issue the company faces. You might even consider sending an attachment with some ideas, and in the cover letter, tell the person what and why you are sending it. Your enthusiasm will convey itself to the reader.

Use details to stand out.

* If your handwriting is legible, send a **handwritten note** on a professional-looking notecard (no kitty cats, please!). Handwritten notes that come in an envelope almost ALWAYS get routed to and then read by the addressee. If your handwriting is illegible, print. Last resort is typing. If you do type the cover letter, make sure you sign your name in blue ink (proof that YOU signed it), and jot a short note at the top or bottom saying "I look forward to hearing from you!" or "I have so many ideas to share with you!" or "I'm excited about the prospect of helping you reach your goals!" or something positive, personal and forward-looking.

* If you must send an e-mail, spend time on it and **make your e-mail smart**. While e-mail thank you notes are more and more acceptable, they can easily be dismissed unread. Make sure you put "Thank you and some ideas" or something like that in the subject line, to entice the receiver to actually read the e-mail. Do make sure you put at least "Thank you" or "Thank you for seeing me" in the subject line.

* Send it **quickly!** Have it postmarked the same day as the interview, or at most, the day after.

* **Say "Thank you"** instead of Thanks (and definitely not Thx!). While the culture may be informal and your interview collegial, you still do not work there and need to show some respect for that distance.

* Send a **personalized note to every person** with whom you had contact. "Personalized" means different words on each note. People do share notes with each other, and they will notice if you used the same language on each one. That will count far more AGAINST you than if you didn't even send a note. Including everyone means that you may secure advocates for you in HR or among other staff.

NEGOTIATING A JOB OFFER

After successfully getting through the interview process, you get a job offer. Congratulations!

Usually, it takes the form of someone in Human Resources or your new boss calling to say they have good news and want to offer you the position for which you applied and interviewed. The correct response to that is "Thank you! I'm so excited!"

At this point, the person should tell you what the salary is. If s/he does not, you may ask "what is the salary?" Usually, the salary will fall within the range you discussed during the interview process.

If it is lower than your "live with" number, you are free to say "I was hoping for \$x. Is there any possibility of that now or in the near future?" Be prepared for a "no." In that instance, you also can say "May I think about it overnight? I'd like to discuss it with my family." Usually, the person is OK with that. Again, though, in this economy, employers are pretty confident that you need the job more than they need you and so they may demand an immediate answer.

If you really want the job and can make it financially on the lower number, I suggest accepting the job and doing such great work that you get a raise when the economy improves. If you can't make it financially, you have a choice:

- turn the job down, trusting that you will find one that does meet your needs; or
- take the job and keep looking for a more highly-paid position or a part-time work to supplement your income.

JULIA ERICKSON

Biography

Julia Erickson is writer and coach who delights in helping people transform their careers and do the work they love. She has loved just about all of her 30+ years of work, especially being Executive Director of City Harvest and of Bette Midler's New York Restoration Project. From less pleasant parts of her work life, Julia gained hard-won valuable wisdom.

Under Julia's leadership, City Harvest grew to help feed 265,000 people a week and became one of New York City's best-loved charities. She raised tens of millions of dollars in private donations, and organized the rescue and distribution of more than 110 million pounds of food to hungry women, children and men.

Julia honed her skills in workforce development, employment, and careers when she led Public/Private Initiatives at NYC's Department of Employment during the Dinkins administration. For the six years prior to that, she managed a department at the Community Service Society of New York, handling all human resources issues. At the beginning of her career, Julia raised funds and developed nutrition education and community revitalization programs in the South Bronx in the early 1980's.

Julia graduated from Smith College and has an MBA from New York Institute of Technology. She has received numerous awards, including the James Beard Foundation's 2003 Humanitarian of the Year and Woman's Day Magazine's 2002 "Women Who Inspire Us."

Additional Resume Profiles

PROFILE: Resourceful, seasoned relationship-builder with deep knowledge of finance and operations of non-profit industry. Extensive, highly varied experience in leading teams and producing projects aligned with business goals. Creative, analytical and skilled communicator.

PROFILE: Accomplished, entrepreneurial leader. Articulate, effective change agent. Gifted fundraiser and dynamic, engaging spokesperson. Practical, discerning visionary with track record of managing increased scope and complexity in diverse non-profit organizations.

PROFILE: Experienced, entrepreneurial leader with track record of successful program start-ups and expansion. Exceptional manager and relationship builder. Skilled planner and effective change agent. Committed to finding win-win solutions, exceeding organizational goals, and enabling growth.

PROFILE: Engaging, results-focused human resources professional adept at developing and implementing efficient and effective organizational development and change management systems. Successful leader of collaborative teams that solve problems in diverse business and organizational conditions.

PROFILE: Collaborative, outcome-driven strategic thinker and social entrepreneur. Capable team leader who develops talent to “do more with less” and deliver results. Clear communicator who leads with respect, passion, and integrity.

PROFILE: Versatile, skilled team leader who develops creative solutions aligned with organizational priorities. Adept at planning and collaborating with external and internal constituents from all walks of life. Resourceful in managing complex projects under tight deadlines.

PROFILE: Results-oriented, creative manager with broad business acumen and talent for interfacing with senior leadership. Consistently strategic and energetic professional able to collaborate across divisions to assess processes, find solutions and achieve extraordinary results efficiently and effectively.

PROFILE: Motivated effective leader with strong track record in resolving legal and operational challenges. Hands-on practitioner of organization and management development methods. Proven track record in achieving operational transformations. Significant non-profit fundraising experience.

PROFILE: Strategic, deliberate leader able to create sustainable systems and generate results.

Your “Right Fit” Job

<http://julieannerickson.blogspot.com>

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Intuitive, candid manager with extraordinary capacity to leverage individual skills and resources for team results. Talent for building and maintaining relationships and community.

PROFILE: Dynamic communicator and outstanding relationship manager, skilled at working with diverse clients and staff in legal and financial realms. Motivated, resourceful and committed leader of complex projects with tight deadlines. Collaborative team member able to do whatever it takes to succeed.

PROFILE: Self-motivated, results-oriented fundraiser who exceeds challenging goals and increases revenue. Adept at identifying and appropriately cultivating new prospects. Multi-skilled, flexible manager able to work effectively with all from front-line staff to C-level.

PROFILE: Experienced, energetic leader with track record of significantly improving management and fiscal operations. Dynamic, engaging spokesperson, presenter, workshop leader, and facilitator. Skilled broker of consensus. Results driven capacity builder.

PROFILE: Exceptionally effective, entrepreneurial leader with extensive capacity to attract and develop human and financial capital, build strategic relationships, manage transitions, and produce optimal results. Highly collaborative with broad corporate, non-profit, government and philanthropic network. Particularly skilled in turnarounds and strategic restructuring, cross-cultural environments, constituency-building, strategic direction and organizational alignment.

PROFILE: Dynamic, versatile marketing and communications professional with vision, leadership and tenacity to create and implement successful ongoing marketing and communication programs. Track record of establishing and promoting an effective brand and crafting programs that capture market share and achieve revenue goals. Strong ability to build and sustain new business relationships, adapt to diverse environments, and motivate employee loyalty.