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CAREER MANAGEMENT GROUP



Realistic options for managing your career

Fig Jam!

An Essential Ingredient during **Career Transition**



Career Management Group Pty Ltd

Introduction to the Workshop

**"There are costs and risks to a program of action, but they are far less than the long range risks and costs of comfortable inaction."
- John F. Kennedy**

Fail to plan and you plan to fail.

Asciano has commissioned the Career Empowerment Program to work with your team for the following reasons:

- Because your group is preparing to undergo significant change with the outsourcing of IT infrastructure, and many people's jobs will be affected at some time in the future
- Because most, if not all of you will be required to apply for roles at that time whether they be internal, with the provider or externally
- To make effective personal Career Management an important and legitimate topic for activity and discussion as you face the changes ahead
- To support you in your career development
- To provide you with a personally focussed professional development program about career empowerment and employability.
- To provide a more structured approach to internal communication about career development
- To enable staff to take charge of their own careers, be empowered to plan and take action and to understand that real career empowerment comes from the individual not the organisation.

General Information about the Career Empowerment Program

- It is generally implemented by organisations wanting to stabilise and nurture their workforce
- Knowing how to approach job search and having your ducks in a row is seen as an important component of a staff retention strategy, particularly while a company is preparing for change, creating an otherwise unsettling environment
- While commissioned by the organisation it is most definitely a private journey

This Workbook

This workbook contains the tools, techniques, templates and information required for you to be job market ready (both internal and external job markets). The first 2 chapters have been removed as they are designed for a different purpose and what remains is a strong reference base for all aspects of Career Management.

Important Note:

Regarding the on line survey, no individual results or information from the online self assessment will be made available to your employer

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Introduction

Having worked with thousands of people dealing with career transition and assisting them to prepare for and navigate through the search for a new job after redundancy, there has been a recurring cry of their frustration:

"Why wasn't I taught this years ago?!"

Instead of waiting until career management skills are urgent, I would advise all employees to start learning how to steer your career from the beginning of your working life. That said, it is never too late to start. This book has been written with all the experience of working with thousands of job changers.

What is Fig Jam? It is an acronym for six words.

Frankly I'm Good, Just Ask Me!

I have been using this acronym for many years to describe the state my clients need to be in for the job search process, a job interview, an appointment with a recruiter or a networking meeting. Working with people whose jobs have been affected by redundancy or who are looking for a career change includes building their confidence and motivation levels. You want to be so ready that you are sitting on the edge of your seat ready to explain how good you are... **"Just ask me!"**

Lisa, a young radiographer I worked with, sent me a bunch of flowers and a thank you card that simply read **'FIG JAM' Baby!** when she was offered a new job after a successful interview.

Redundancies, whether voluntary or targeted, are now 'business as usual', resulting from organisational decisions. They do not reflect your abilities or value in the work place. To remain competitive and viable, businesses need to flex and change according to the prevailing market conditions. Job loss is not a personal reflection of your work or performance.

Changing careers, not just jobs, is now more the norm than the exception. New careers are emerging and some careers and jobs have completely disappeared in only one generation.

At one workshop I facilitated about the changing world of work, a woman explained that she had been in three jobs that have since disappeared:

1. A Compometrist 2. A Ledger machinist 3. A Fax typist

The world of work is changing. *Fast.*

It is clear that a 'career shake up' has changed the foundations of what we mean by 'career'. There is wide spread recognition that we are in the middle of a major transformation - a post-industrial, post-modern (no, not modem) information age. This is likely to continue to bring a profound revolution in the nature and structure of both our work and career.

This 'career shake up' is caused by many economic pressures, causing organisations to be much more flexible in their use of labour resources.

Outsourcing, contracting, reducing core labour, implementing variable cost labour, reducing management and flatter organisational structures cause downsizing and a changed work environment. Simultaneously, the workforce is valuing flexible working arrangements,

seeking more personal fulfilment, job growth and tele-working options (working from home).

Rigid job demarcation is disappearing, with multi-skilling, flexible work teams, project management teams are replacing the work as we knew it. Clearly differentiated and discrete roles and the predictable career paths that went with them are being replaced by this new world of work.

Given this changing work environment, individuals should be encouraged to pursue multiple career pathways and develop career leverage.

Those who have a pro-active interest in their careers and have multiple options and transferable skills will survive and prosper.

Marjolein Bervoets

CHAPTER 1 - Overview of Career Transition

There are many challenges in changing jobs, whether the choice was made for you through redundancy or you have consciously made the decision to change.

This manual has been written to provide information, samples, exercises and suggestions based on the experience of thousands of others who have been through a successful job transition.

Your career transition will be made easier if you know what to expect and can visualise the steps ahead. You are more likely to plan and make the necessary time to commit to the job search program and achieve a successful transition if you understand what is ahead.

Looking for a new job can be compared with launching a product marketing campaign. It is important that you know the product well..... in this case the product is YOU!

Most people find it difficult to explain what they have to offer the job market. Most people are reluctant to sell themselves, or are not as articulate as they could be when describing themselves. One of the first stages of the career management process is to 'know yourself', the product, and to become comfortable talking about 'Me Incorporated'. It is for this reason the career management program begins with the self-assessment process. Career Management is NOT simply having a resume!

The self assessment process comprises summarising your skills, qualifications, experience, achievements, satisfiers, dissatisfiers, ideal job preference, history, values, personality type, background and motivators.

The discovery process can be an enjoyable experience resulting in 'FIG JAM'. It is not unusual for participants in a career management program to discover completely different jobs they are skilled to do, resulting in radically new career directions. This comes from the self assessment process. Experience shows that career management programs often uncover hidden ideas and talents, which lead to entirely new vocations.

Rita and Nikki had worked together in a manufacturing plant for over ten years. When their positions were made redundant, they used their career transition program to consider completely different options for the future. The 'Values and Motivators' exercise identified that they both wanted to work closer to home, that money wasn't the main issue (a significant redundancy payout had been received) and that they both liked helping people. Rita and Nikki have now retrained in an eight week course and are now both employed by the local council in aged care roles.

Happy, Happy transition.

Mark G was a Senior Procurement Manager with a global organisation. Having considered his skills, personality, background, achievements and motivators, Mark decided to start his own consulting business, in his area of expertise. After a slow start, Mark's networking won him several interesting and lucrative contracts and his business has been growing slowly, but surely.

The Career Transition Process can be summarised in six steps:

Step One

Cleaning up and getting ready – getting ready for the job search process by creating order in your life. This may include understanding your finances, clearing tax returns, having a break first, fixing your home, going to the dentist etc.

Step Two

Self-Assessment - to identify your skills, qualifications, experience, achievements, satisfiers, dissatisfiers, ideal job preference, history, values, personality type, background, motivators AND what you can offer the job market and future employers – the whole 'Me Incorporated'.

Step Three

Developing a '**Personal Presentation Portfolio (PPP)**' of documents to support your job search including a master resume, master job application letter, key selection criteria response and other relevant documents which become the brochures and marketing materials for 'Me Incorporated'.

Step Four

Developing **job search skills** including - Company and market research, compiling job applications, confidence with interview skills, networking skills and contacting people.

Step Five

Develop, plan and execute a '**Job search marketing strategy**' – making an action plan that you can commit to and setting goals which are positive and achievable.

Step Six

Concluding the satisfactory career change, including evaluating and negotiating job offers.

This process is successful because the preparation in understanding yourself (skills, interests, values, talents, etc) and then 'pitching yourself to the market' in a targeted way will enable you to maximise your chances of success.

Commencing a job search campaign can be compared to commencing a product marketing campaign. Before a product or service can be launched successfully, its characteristics and assets must be identified and analysed, target markets defined and then studied.

The process for you will therefore involve taking an inventory of your values, accomplishments, career history, transferable skills, ideal work preference, target organisations etc, in order to develop a complete understanding of what qualities you have to 'trade in the market'. Consider yourself as a product to be marketed. You will be encouraged to look back on your experiences and review what you have learned about yourself. This data will be useful for the future.

The whole career transition process is a learning event and will teach you life skills, which can be translated to benefit other areas of your life. Past participants in the process invariably say that they take charge of their life in a different way, through greater awareness of who they are and what they want.

Most people find it a challenge to market themselves. In fact, they prefer to market a product or service rather than themselves. By working on your 'Me Incorporated' product knowledge and practising it and role-playing, you will become more accustomed to this selling approach.

Periods of transition are a valuable time for reassessing your direction, clarifying your priorities and setting new goals.

By committing to this program, you will focus on action, work your plan diligently, maintain your integrity, keep clear intentions, show the world the real you and know your own worth – harbouring no doubts.

Make Your Commitment

Commitment means doing the thing that you said you would do, long after the mood in which you said it has left you. It means doing whatever it takes.

Commitment begins with a thought or a word. If left, there it dies. Commitment happens with action and action increases commitment. The outcome is a qualified and quantified result.

Commitment is not 'try' or 'maybe'. Commitment is 'I will!'.

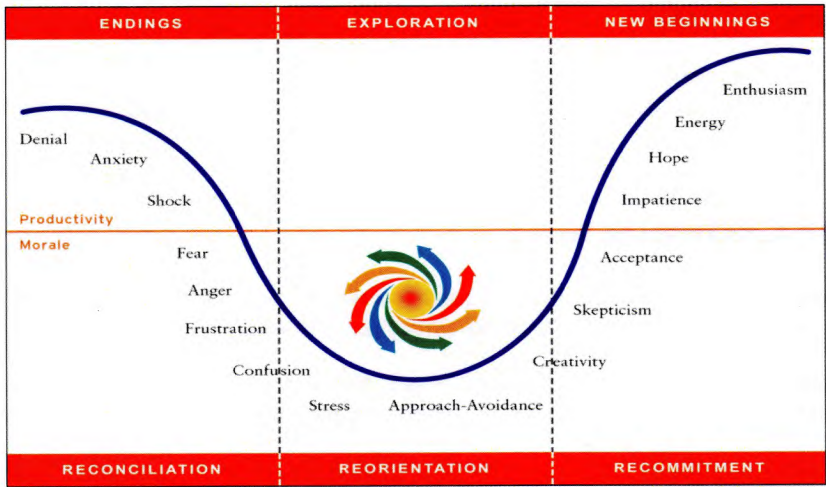
To ensure the success of your commitment, it is important to be aware of and to acquire the necessary skills, knowledge, training or coaching that are needed to allow you to take the right action.

Commitment is one hundred percent. If you are only ninety percent committed, you are allowing an area for excuses, procrastination and festering doubt. That small percentage of 'get out' will grow with alarming rapidity and will soon overcome your better intentions.

To have clarity about your commitment means you will 'do' rather than 'just talk'. You will be proactive and you will create a new image that produces results.

The Transition Cycle

The following diagram was developed by William Bridges, Author of '*Managing Transitions*', to describe the various stages that can be encountered when experiencing significant change in your life:



Initially, you may find yourself in turmoil, encountering a myriad of emotions both positive and negative. As time passes and you work through your self-analysis and goal setting; hope, energy and enthusiasm become the predominant themes.

Finishing a job can mean different things to different people. Find a friend, partner, coach or counsellor who is available to listen and understand your particular situation and acknowledge the importance and impact this event has for you. I recommend that you do not approach your career transition alone.

Whatever your personal reaction, leaving a job involves an ending and a sense of loss and you may find yourself revisiting other losses in your life and experiencing some unsettling emotions. Feel free to talk those through as well with a counsellor or career strategy consultant.

Even if your departure isn't your idea, you can still seize the initiative by turning it into an occasion for career growth.

Today, individuals at all levels must pursue multiple career pathways. Those who have portable careers and are comfortable with all that this means, will survive and thrive in the new environment. We call this '*Career Leverage*', meaning the extent to which you are portable within the work environment in order to thrive and survive.

This career management process will provide a wake up call for you, to understand that having choices will provide freedom and those choices are still available, even in this uncertain world.

You will need to examine:

- Your preference for certain options.
- Your career development needs.
- Your preference in light of your specific situation and particular circumstances.
- Your choices in terms of future plans and goals.

Career leverage means multiplying power or influence. As your options increase, you will have greater leverage in making the career decision that's right for you.

Looking after yourself and family

If you live with a spouse, partner or family, your career transition and resulting change in daily activities and emotions may have an impact on them too.

When you commence your job search and networking, you will be meeting with many people in many situations. During these meetings you may find yourself alternatively encouraged and discouraged. This is natural. It is important that your partner (if you have one) understands the process you are about to undertake. Involvement of your partner in the job search process has proven to be extremely helpful.

Graham O did not involve his wife in the process because he believed she needed to feel protected and secure; that he was 'in charge' of the situation. When he commenced the networking process, involving many meetings with people over coffee and lunch (usually at his expense), his wife lost her temper accusing him of not taking his job search seriously and having lunch and coffee with friends all day instead.

Eric H was an Auditor whose role was axed in a banking redundancy process. His wife had never really understood what his job was. After a night of explanation, his wife asked him to drive her to a Tupperware party (they had lost the company car through redundancy) the following week. On arrival, his wife suggested that he meet the husband of the party host – because they had been talking..... about his previous role. As a result of a beer with the husband, Eric was introduced to someone who was looking for an Auditor. Another successful networking story!

As a result of experience, I encourage you to include your partner in the self-assessment process. It is fun and informative and will give you much to talk about and share. This is generating healthy support for you during the job search process.

If you live alone

You may feel isolated at times during the job search process. Find yourself a 'listening ear' and motivator. Create a group of people who you respect and ask them to assist you by being your 'career advisory board'.

In addition, you should consider joining a professional association or social or community group to ensure regular contact with others.

Phil X, Engineer, lived alone and had few friends. His social life had been generated from his work colleagues after thirty years in the same organisation located in his local precinct. After redundancy, Phil joined a local walking club, established a 'regular haunt coffee shop' and joined an internet dating site.

He developed some new friends through the process, one of those friends supported him through weekly, formal meetings during which they discussed his progress, his achievements and skills. As a result, that friend learned of Phil's capabilities and recommended him to another acquaintance and a job offer was received and accepted. Another successful networking story!

How much time to devote to the job search process

There is a current rule of thumb about the time it takes to search for a new job and it has proven to be reasonably accurate. For every \$10,000 you wish to earn per annum, it will take you a week in full time job search. That means that if you want to earn \$50,000, you would need to commit five weeks full time to the job search process. If you earn \$200,000, you would typically need twenty weeks full time in job search process and so on.

Clearly this supposition cannot be true for all circumstances. The time to search for a job also depends on economic factors, your profession’s current trends, the job market and your commitment and confidence.

If you can afford the time, job search should become your full time job. The structure of a job search program will guide you. Regular meetings with an experienced career strategy consultant or coach are recommended to keep the momentum, ideas and motivation going. Our experience shows that job search participants who make the commitment to carry out the program invariably achieve quicker results.

As a guide, the following tables provide the average time taken by clients to complete preparation for mounting a job search campaign.

After the preparation and implementation stages, it is a full time job to network your way into your next role.

Estimation of hours for preparation

No of hours	Activity
7	Reading this Career Transition Manual and other materials.
6	Completing self assessment exercises.
4	Listing your major skills and understanding the value you offer to the job market.
40	Writing up your achievements in detail and distilling ‘dot point statements’
6	Writing up your resume.
3	Defining Ideal job preference.
2	Writing up your values and motivators to understand your personal drivers.
6	Completing some personality assessments online.
74 hours	

The guide for hours of preparation above totals 74 hours.

Estimation of Hours for Implementation

No of hours	Activity
4	Managing your Referees.
6	Reading the Career Transition manual and other materials.
40	Conducting the 'Recruiter Campaign'.
6	Developing your initial target list of potential employers.
4	Developing your initial list of contacts to commence networking.
10	General research hours allocation.
4	Registering on job search internet sites with key word searches.
8	Preparing for networking.
8	Preparing for interviews.
90 hours	

The guide for hours of implementation totals 90 hours

No introduction to Career Transition would be complete without a discussion about dealing with stress. As indicated earlier through the William Bridges transition cycle, you will experience a range of emotions as you travel through the path of job search. There will be moments of frustration, loneliness (you might miss the camaraderie of colleagues), rejection from recruiters or potential employers and anger about the job loss if you have experienced redundancy.

About Stress

It is difficult to define stress exactly. A dictionary definition might be that it is the adaptation of our bodies and minds to change. The word 'stress' is derived from the Latin word 'stringer' meaning to draw tight and was originally used in its modern context in the seventeenth century to describe misfortunes, or difficulties in life.

We experience stress when we have doubts about coping with new circumstances and are at our most stressed when the struggle to adapt to such changes becomes too much

Stress is a term that covers a number of emotional and physical conditions, ranging from anxiety, panic, unhappiness, sleeplessness, fatigue, tension and strain, to excitement, stimulation and a feeling of challenge. Personal responses to particular situations vary enormously, so what may be stressful to one person, may not be to another. Stress is part of our life and each of us may benefit from a certain type of stress if it can stimulate us to improve our performance in a given field. There are times when a degree of extra pressure helps us get things done.

Our bodies are naturally conditioned to respond to primitive stresses and it is only when these responses become inappropriate to modern day life that our minds and bodies become concerned or at risk.

The exercise at the end of this chapter was developed by psychologists to test susceptibility to stress. When you have completed the exercise, talk to your partner, coach, career consultant, doctor or close friends if you are feeling stressed.

Exercise 1 – Vulnerability to Stress Questionnaire

STRESS QUIZ - How STRESSED are you?

Rate yourself as to how you typically react in each of the situations listed below. There are no right or wrong answers.

- 4 = Always
- 3 = Frequently
- 2 = Sometimes
- 1 = Never

Score your response to each question listed below. When you have completed the questionnaire, add up you total number of points and type it in the box. An answer key is provided below.

- ☐ 1.
- Do you try to do as much as possible in the least amount of time?
- ☐ 2.
- Do you become impatient with delays or interruptions?
- ☐ 3.
- Do you always have to win at games to enjoy yourself?
- ☐ 4.
- Do you find yourself speeding up the car to beat the red light?
- ☐ 5.
- Are you unlikely to ask for or indicate you need help with a problem?
- ☐ 6.
- Do you constantly seek the respect and admiration of others?
- ☐ 7.
- Are you overly critical of the way others do their work?
- ☐ 8.
- Do you have the habit of looking at your watch or clock often?
- ☐ 9.
- Do you constantly strive to better your position and achievements?
- ☐ 10.
- Do you spread yourself 'too thin' in terms of your time?
- ☐ 11.
- Do you have the habit of doing more than one thing at a time?
- ☐ 12.
- Do you frequently get angry or irritable?
- ☐ 13.
- Do you have little time for hobbies or time by yourself?
- ☐ 14.
- Do you have a tendency to talk quickly or hasten conversations?
- ☐ 15.
- Do you consider yourself hard-driving?
- ☐ 16.
- Do your friends or relatives consider you hard-driving?
- ☐ 17.
- Do you have a tendency to get involved in multiple projects?
- ☐ 18.
- Do you have a lot of deadlines in your work?
- ☐ 19.
- Do you feel vaguely guilty if you relax and do nothing during leisure?
- ☐ 20.
- Do you take on too many responsibilities?
- ☐ 21.
- Do you have trouble sleeping?

Add up the scores of your answers on the previous page: Score

Answers Key

If your score is between 20 and 30, chances are you are non-productive or your life lacks stimulation.

A score between 31 and 50 designates a good balance in your ability to handle and control stress.

If you tallied up a score ranging between 51 and 60, your stress level is marginal and you are bordering on being excessively tense.

If your total number of points exceeds 60, you may be a candidate for heart disease.

Help! I'm stressed! What do I do now? Please read the following pages.

Tips for Managing Stress

"God grant me:

Serenity to accept the things I cannot change
Courage to change the things I can
Wisdom to know the difference"

Anon.

Above the line – you can do something about it

Below the line – you CAN'T do something about it

- **Decide** whether things you are worrying about are:
 - (1) Above the line or
 - (2) Below the line
- Accept only your **own** responsibility in situations.
- Ask your friends and family for positive feedback.
- Change your habits, do old things in new ways.
- Decrease television time and increase walking or exercise.
- Determine your own definition of success, instead of other people's definition.
- Develop a hobby and spend time on it regularly.
- Do paperwork immediately. Don't procrastinate.
- Don't bring work home with you.
- Focus on successes rather than on failures.
- Focus on the process rather than the results.
- Keep physically fit — good diet and adequate exercise.
- Learn and practice sound money management.
- Learn to be more detached from problems.
- Leave the office/campus for lunch and errands, if possible.
- Limit your intake of alcohol and drugs.
- Make your work/study area more stimulating: redecorate, add music and change colours.
- Pace yourself instead of being unrealistic about time expectations and perspectives.
- Plan for fun time and activities that involve physical exertion.
- Read inspiring books such as:
 - *'Feel the Fear and Do it Anyway'* by Susan Jeffries
 - *'The Road less Travelled'* by Scott Peck
 - *'Peaks and Valleys'* by Spencer Johnson,
- Recognise that others find it easier to criticize than to praise.
- Remember, life does have troublesome problems. This is normal.
- Set realistic expectations for yourself.

How do you eat an elephant? **Piece by Piece.**

De-Bunking some beliefs about employment

Before we move into the first step of the Career Transition Process, I invite you to take the following employment quiz. We use this quiz as a conversation starter in our career transition programs. This exercise is also used to de-bunk many career related myths that continue to perpetuate, despite the changing world of work.

Exercise 2 - Employment Quiz

True or False? Please circle your responses to the next 20 questions.

True False	1.	It is much easier to secure your next job when you are still working.
True False	2.	When companies are hiring, they are only looking for the person with the most perfect skills match.
True False	3.	You are required to respond to all interview questions including those about age, race marital status, number of children and religion.
True False	4.	There is no way of finding out whether or not a prospective employer fits your personal criteria regarding workplace culture and values.
True False	5.	If you are young, you stand a better chance of securing a job.
True False	6.	So that time is not wasted during the recruitment process, salary should be discussed as early as possible to avoid misunderstandings.
True False	7.	It is perfectly reasonable to expect a higher salary in your next job because you now have more experience.
True False	8.	Because jobs are becoming more specialised these days, it is more difficult to transfer from one job to another or from industry sector to another.
True False	9.	When asked to describe yourself or your background, you should provide a detailed and comprehensive answer that includes your career, your aspirations etc.
True False	10.	The more prepared you are as a candidate, the better you will present to prospective employers at interviews and networking for information meetings.
True False	11.	You should always have some intelligent questions to ask at an interview.
True False	12.	A resume should be a comprehensive, detailed description of every job, position and achievement that you can remember.
True False	13.	To save time in the job search, you should schedule your first interviews with your target companies.
True False	14.	Most jobs are found in the newspapers, websites and with recruitment companies.
True False	15.	Once you have written to a company, you should wait for them to contact you; otherwise you will be regarded as 'pushy'.
True False	16.	Contacting the people you know is the best way to commence your job search.
True False	17.	Developing your preference for an ideal job will help you focus your job search process.
True False	18.	Telephoning everyone you know soon after learning of a redundancy is the best way of starting your network.
True False	19.	In today's age of changing business needs, job security has been replaced with the need to maintain 'career leverage'.
True False	20.	In part, an interview is about two parties exchanging information so that each can arrive at an employment decision.

Answers to Exercise Two - Employment Quiz

True or False?

- 1 False A properly planned and conducted job search campaign requires hours of preparation and follow up. It is very difficult to do this when you are working full time. Most employees feel somewhat guilty using their paid employment time to look for another job. The Hidden Job Market comprises more than 70% of all available jobs. These jobs are only found through networking. It is usually difficult to network and work full time.
- 2 True but... Rarely does a prospective employee have a 100% match with the ideal. If you have a 70% match or better, don't be discouraged from applying. While skills are a vital component of the selection process, companies are also assessing candidates for levels of motivation, personality traits and culture fit with the organisation. Refer to the WILLING/ABLE/MATCHED model.
- 3 False Government law requires employers to avoid workplace discrimination. Accordingly, employers are not allowed to ask questions regarding race, religion, marital status, etc. However, given that they cannot ask these questions, candidates can pro-actively respond to any issues by raising it themselves!
- 4 False During your research you can investigate the workplace environment. In finding the answers to the 'employer of choice checklist', you could make a list of people who are either directly or indirectly connected with the company in question. When making enquiries, remember to be discreet and not jeopardise any confidentiality associated with the appointment and selection process.
- 5 False This may be applicable in some instances, however experience and maturity are valuable assets in the workplace. Mature candidates are more likely to find a job through the networking process. A strong resume and interview are based on your achievements so it is worth taking the time to write them up and become articulate. Workers with experience are more quickly productive, therefore a more attractive proposition for most employers.
- 6 False Leave discussions of salary until there is an offer on the table. You will have done your research and know what level of salary the job is likely to attract. The initial stages of the interview process are for you to sell yourself, not for making snap decisions based on salary. Recruiters may push you to talk about your salary expectations. Try to avoid specifics..... "My market research indicates that this type of role would attract a salary range of \$XXX to \$XXX, but salary is not my only driver".
- 7 Depends It is statistically true that most job changes result in (on average) a 6% increase in salary. However, if you are making a change in a role, or industry, you may need to consider a decrease to make the initial move. You may be making a sideways move into another industry. Sometimes this means a decrease in pay for a period of learning.
- 8 False These days there is a much greater turnover in staffing across the board. People are moving in and out of jobs several times during their working life gaining Career Leverage with each transition. The skills developed in one job are generally highly transferable to other jobs and you as the marketing manager of 'Me Incorporated', need to develop a dialogue, which articulates your ability to transfer existing skills and develop new ones within each position.

- 9 False Preparation of a crisp 'Self introduction' during which you briefly describe yourself and your employment background is essential to avoid a tendency to ramble on without knowing when to stop. This script needs to be finely honed to present you in the best possible light in relation to the position available within a short period of time. Your introduction needs to sound 'off the cuff' and engage the listener to want to know a lot more about you. Try to include a little humour for chemistry, remember to make it relevant for the listener/interviewer and provide some insights about yourself as a person, not just a worker.
- 10 True You need to be prepared on a number of levels including: your personal assessment of your values, characteristics, communication style, personality traits, your career goals and your career history etc. and how it has lead you to the goals you now have. Your preparation must also involve research into the organisation or role under scrutiny including current and potential issues.
- 11 True It is better to prepare some questions that lead to a dialogue that further demonstrates your worthiness for the role. For example: "How will you measure the success of my appointment to this role in, say, three months?"
- 12 False Your resume needs to intrigue a prospective employer to the point where he or she invites you to an interview. In other words, your resume needs to be a brochure that gets you into the 'yes' pile. In order to achieve this, your resume is ideally short and to the point (maximum of four pages)- an easy to read document that presents your capabilities and achievements in a tightly written, perfectly clear, portrait of you and your related career details.
- 13 False It is recommended that you fully prepare yourself before entering the employment areas of choice. Part of your preparation is interview practice. Therefore, after completing your resume (usually in a number of different formats), 'Self Introduction', marketing and job application letters, practice your interview skills by applying for positions in which you are not especially interested. This will give you the opportunity to assess your performance and hone your skills. When unsuccessful in gaining an offer, I encourage you to seek feedback regarding your interview performance.
- 14 False At least 70% of available jobs are in the 'Hidden Job Market'. They are accessed through a strategy called 'networking'. Whilst in job search mode, always be aware that you could at any time be interacting with the person who will provide the link to your next job.
- 15 False Ideally, you will have phoned the contact person provided prior to submitting your resume, so that they will be anticipating the arrival of your resume. If you have not heard from a prospective employer within a reasonable time frame, it is appropriate to telephone for information as to the progress of their interview process.
- 16 False Getting in touch with people and building your network is a very important part of the job search process, however you need to have done a lot of preparation beforehand. To begin your job search process, you need to have a clear understanding of what it is that you actually want and a strategy for achieving this. You also need to have prepared at least one resume, a brief dialogue about your background and have developed sound interview techniques.
- 17 True Through thorough self evaluation you can identify your ideal work preference. This will encapsulate your values, skill set, personality style, dreams and aspirations. From this point you can easily evaluate potential jobs against a set of your own criteria.

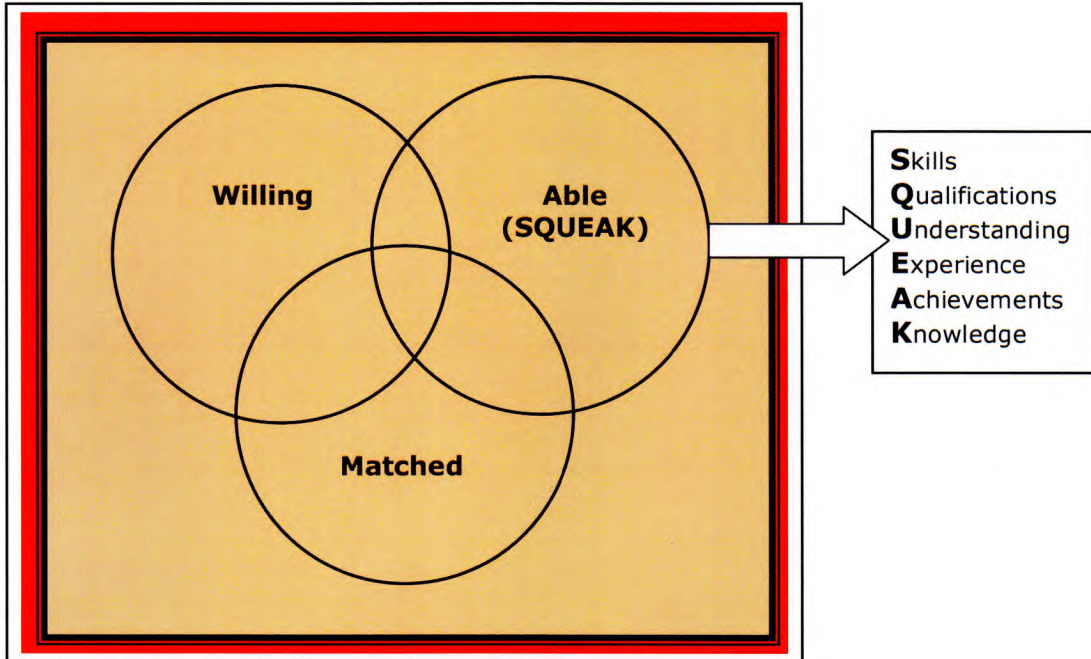
- 18 False Preparation is the key to successful job search. Knowing how you want to pitch to the employment market is your first step, not phoning everyone you know and asking for a job. You need to project a positive and balanced image at all times. If you have issues relating to your former employer, it is important to work through those with a trusted friend, relative or consultant before you begin attending interviews or expanding your career network. For these reasons it is best to refrain from contacting your wider network for the first couple of days or until such time as you are over the initial shock and stress of losing your job and have begun to feel more positive about your future.
- 19 True The days of ten years with one company are all but over. You are responsible for your own career more now than ever before. This is why it is so important to keep your resume and achievements up to date and to continually update your skills, invest time in developing career leverage and continue to develop and maintain your professional network. Your own career is separate from the organisation which currently employs you.
- 20 True Utilise the interview process effectively. Remember that an interview is a two way process and prepare thoughtful questions that expand on your research to date and fill in any gaps. Remember also, that the person interviewing you is also an employee, someone who must function in the organisation on a day-to-day basis. This is your chance to gain their insight into the workplace culture.

What employers are really looking for

The ideal employee has the following three qualities:

1. They are **WILLING** and motivated
2. They are **ABLE** to do the tasks involved in the job
3. They are a good **MATCH** for the organisation, the team and customers etc.

We illustrate those qualities in the following simple diagram to aid your memory:



Where:

Willing means:

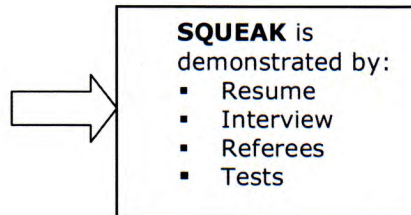
- ✓ Motivated and eager
- ✓ Values are being met
- ✓ Ideal work preference is being met

Able means:

- ✓ **S**kills
- ✓ **Q**ualifications
- ✓ **U**nderstanding
- ✓ **E**xperience
- ✓ **A**chievements
- ✓ **K**nowledge

Matched means:

- ✓ Personal rapport
- ✓ Chemistry
- ✓ Cultural fit
- ✓ Team fit



You probably think that if you don't have all the skills that an employer is looking for, you shouldn't waste your time or their time applying for a job. **WRONG.** Job advertisements, just like your dream job preference, are a guide. The employer hopes against all odds that the perfect person is out there. Just as you hope that your dream job is out there. Sometimes the employer and you will find the exact match.

However, in most instances, employers eventually choose someone with the right attitude, willing to learn and apply themselves and who is good match in terms of team and organisational culture. Skills can be learned on the job but attitude and beliefs are hard to change. How many of us were born or graduated from school or university with the skills we now have to offer the job market? None of us! Instead, we acquire knowledge and skills in our life's journey. Good employers know that and look for the 'Willing and Matched' qualities.

Chapter 1 Summary

- ✓ This suggested Career Transition process is a customised, modular approach to make sure that you receive the information to prepare and implement a successful job transition.
- ✓ The Career Transition process prepares you to market yourself – to define your 'Product benefit', choose your most favourable market, devise a marketing strategy and sharpen your marketing tools and communication skills.
- ✓ Before you commence your program, you need to understand where you are in the 'transition curve'. It is normal to experience the highs and lows of the transition curve outlined in the chapter.
- ✓ Understand your level of stress. Take time out to deal with this transition period. Talk to your partner, friend, coach, doctor or career consultant about how you are feeling.
- ✓ When you are ready to commit to the job search process, understand that there is an intensive period of homework for you in the self-assessment stage, preparing your personalised presentation portfolio.
- ✓ Hopefully, Exercise Two has de-bunked some of the myths that many candidates believe in when they commence their program.

CHAPTER 2 – Cleaning up and getting ready

Introduction

You have more natural energy when you are balanced in your environment, well being, money and relationships.

The Career Management Group experience shows that candidates who have dealt with all outstanding matters (such as tax returns, financial planning, health issues, passport renewal, car maintenance, home renovation, clearing out office clutter, etc) have better focus on the job search process.

If you are interested, go to <http://coachingjourneys.com/pdf/cleansweep.pdf> and complete the 'Clean Sweep Program: developed by *Thomas J. Leonard*, Founder of 'CoachU':

The Clean Sweep Program



*Developed by
Thomas J. Leonard
Founder, Coach U*

This is a 100 point checklist that life coaches at 'Coach U' have developed after years of experience. Many Career Management Group clients have used the checklist to assess their priorities and balance in life and found it to be very useful.

Consider whether you are ready to commence the job search process right away. At the end of this chapter, we have included our 'Motivation Balance Sheet' which will assist you to determine your state of readiness and motivation (refer to Exercise Three).

Termination Payment

In the event that your job search process has commenced because your employment was terminated and attracted a redundancy payout, it is important that you understand all elements of your termination payment. Our experience is that often the termination payment can be negotiated in part and that benefits can be extended (such as medical insurance or income protection insurance) for a period beyond your termination date.

If you are receiving an eligible termination payment (ETP), you need to understand the options of rolling this payment into a superannuation fund versus taking the payment in cash. There are significant tax benefits to various options. Now is the time for you to educate yourself in the areas of relevant finance and investments.

If you are lucky, you may have received a redundancy payment from your previous employer. See this payment as compensation for time to search for a new job, or compensation for the difference in your eventual new salary compared with your previous salary. Either way, don't see your redundancy payment as a windfall.....until you have secured a new job.

Andrew W received six months redundancy payout and immediately paid out his home mortgage. Aiming for a \$100,000 salary Andrew's job search process took eleven weeks full time, during which he and his family continually panicked about lack of cash flow. As a result, he accepted a lesser paid role instead of pursuing the roles he was suited for at the target remuneration level. If he had approached his campaign calmly and methodically, he would have matched his previous salary.

Budgeting

My finance background compels me to tell you about this.

From my own experience, it can be an important consideration before you start your job search in earnest. Depending on your available cash flow, your job search process may comprise some interim stages including just getting any job to keep the cash flow coming in while you continue with your career transition process.

This is a great time to draw up a basic budget to match your income with your expenses. Dealing immediately with this issue enables you to move on and conduct an appropriate and successful job search. This is a high priority.

The next exercise encourages you to develop a detailed cash flow budget. It is also strongly recommended that you consult a financial planner. The job search may take longer than you originally anticipate and knowing what your actual financial position is will bring a certain peace of mind. The results of your budget will tell you how long you can afford to be spending your full time effort on finding a new job. The budget may influence your career goals and preferences. Make the time to meet with a qualified financial planner to discuss a preliminary budget.

The best way to get started is to put together a very basic list of your monthly income and expenses. Just give it your best guess. Stick to listing things you can easily identify: rent, car payment, insurance, utilities (you get the picture). As time goes by you can add more detail.

The worksheet on the following pages is designed to assist you prepare a budget. Use a spreadsheet instead, if you know how.

Estimated monthly expenditure

Mortgage interest or rent
Rates
Electricity
Gas
Insurances
Maintenance and repairs

- Food
- Health Insurance Premiums
- Medical and Dental expenses
- Recreation and Entertainment
- Petrol
- Car insurances and Registration
- Mobile Telephone
- Home telephone
- Personal Care
- Public Transport
- Spending money

- Mortgage repayments
- Entertainment
- Holidays
- School fees
- Gifts/donations
- Personal Loan repayments
- Hire purchase repayments
- Credit card repayments (avoid duplication here)
- Lease repayments

ESTIMATED MONTHLY EXPENSES:

Estimated monthly income

Unemployment benefits
Interest on investments
Rental income
Share Dividends
Other

Total Income

B

Summary of Monthly Income and Expenditure:

Income (B above)
Expenditure (A above)

Total monthly requirement

C

Amount available for Job Search period:

Savings available
Other sources (redundancy?)
Other sources

Total available

--

Divided by monthly requirement (C)

No. of months

This summary is by no means a comprehensive budgeting tool. Your financial advisor should be able to provide you with a more detailed budget sheet. Your financial advisor should also be able to offer ideas to reduce outgoings where possible (such as renegotiating your mortgage to interest only repayments until you are earning a salary again).

Financial Planning

Most people have little understanding of their superannuation and other investments.

We commonly see individuals who have no idea where their superannuation funds are, what amounts they might be and what they are invested in. For individuals who have changed jobs frequently since compulsory superannuation was implemented in Australia, their retirement funds may be scattered in several different places.

Properly managed, those investments can build your wealth. We highly recommend that you take the time to meet with two or three financial planners to discuss your affairs in detail.

To prepare for a meeting with a financial planner, this manual provides a list of questions to ask and sample list of information that you could gather before any appointments are made.

Try to find financial planners who are well suited to understanding the needs of individuals who are experiencing job transition.

List of information for appointment with financial planners

Better results from your visit to financial planner will be obtained if you have some basic documentation with you.

Here is a list of recommended information you could bring to a session with a financial planner:

1. Your tax file number.
2. Your current bank account balance/s.
3. Names of all institutions with whom you have superannuation funds invested.
4. Copies of the statements from all those superannuation funds.
5. Listing of any assets you own and an approximation of their value.
6. Up to date listing of all your debts including credit cards, personal loans, other loans, HECS etc.
7. Current mortgage balance outstanding.
8. Last year's tax return.
9. Summary monthly budget (refer to worksheet in this chapter).
10. Name of any accountants or financial planners you have used previously; who may have relevant information on your file.

Questions to ask your Financial Advisor

Some Advisors earn their money by charging commission on the investment products they recommend. Others charge a fee calculated on the hours spent producing a written financial plan. Some will offer a combination of the two. Advisors are required by law to disclose all their commissions although this is not true for Life Insurance Agents. Some people believe there are dangers in the commission system. It means some Advisors could recommend a product because it offers them higher commissions, not because it offers you higher returns. This can even lead to the practice of 'churning', where an Advisor asks you to move from one managed product to another, just so they can grab an extra slice of commission when the money is reinvested.

When you consult a Financial Advisor, you are asking them to take responsibility for your financial affairs. Here are some questions you should ask to make sure your Advisor is giving you qualified, impartial and useful advice.

What you need in an adviser	Relevant questions to ask	What to listen for
Personal experience in successfully advising people like you	How long have you been giving financial advice?	The more experience, the better. If less than 2 years' experience, ask: 'Will anyone else in the business take a look at the advice you give me?'
	What kind of clients do you mostly see? What are your clients mostly trying to achieve?	People with concerns like yours, for example, taxation, super, retirement planning or social security
	Do you take a special interest in any particular types of financial products?	Experience in the products you're interested in, for example, insurance, super, retirement income products, shares, managed investments
	Are there any financial products you don't advise on?	If yes, do these restrictions affect you?
Someone who puts their client's needs first	How do you go about understanding a new client?	Aims to get a full picture of your circumstances and needs. Will ask you a lot of questions. Will probably need a separate appointment to do this
	How do you deal with a client who may have conflicting financial objectives?	Will explain and discuss choices with you. Then does research and prepares advice for you to take away and consider

Qualifications relevant to advising	What qualifications do you have?	Qualifications in finance, economics, accounting, or financial planning, for example, 'Certified Financial Planner'
Reasonable fees	How much is this advice likely to cost?	Clear explanation of fees and commissions the adviser receives, plus general explanation about any likely product fees
High professional standards	How do you keep up to date with everything that's happening?	Attends courses and training run by universities, Finsia, FPA. (Not just in-house marketing seminars.) Member of FPA, stockbrokers' professional body, Finsia, etc

*Derived from the Australian Securities and Investment commission website:
<http://www.fido.gov.au/fido>*

Zapping your Tolerations

It is difficult to work from home, start a new stage, learn new skills and stay motivated if you have unfinished chores and issues in progress. A 'toleration' is something which you know and/or wish you had time to solve, but never do. Every time you think of your tolerations you generate negative energy.

Job search and preparing for marketing yourself to recruiters and potential employers takes time and commitment. I recommend that you 'ZAP' those things which may ambush your concentration on the Job Search process.

Exercise 4 - List your tolerations

Samples	Your personal list
My passport has expired	
My car is damaged and it annoys me every time I look at it	
The tiles in the bathroom are falling off	
My study is disorganised and messy	
My internet speed is insufficient and I need to upgrade	
The garage needs shelving and rubbish removed	
I want my 28yo son to move out of home	

When I discovered this technique, my passport was expired, my car had a dent that I had caused backing out of a parking spot at the office late one night and the tiles in the bathroom were indeed falling off the wall. Every time someone talked about their holiday, every time I watched a travel TV show, every time I walked past a travel agent..... You get the picture..... I was annoyed about my expired passport. Likewise, every time I got into my car the dent on the driver side door bothered me. Every morning I looked with hatred at those tiles on the bathroom wall.

Listing those three items and acknowledging that they were a constant source of annoyance on a daily basis was the catalyst for a burst of energy. The next day I went to the local pharmacist and had a passport photo taken, went to the post office and obtained the passport application form, asked a colleague to witness my photo, completed the form and posted it. Done and dusted in two hours. I telephoned a friend who is a panel beater; he arrived with a loan car on the same day. Three days later, no dent! I looked up a tiler, booked for a meeting the next morning.

Within ONE DAY, I had zapped my tolerations.

When you are in a job search mode, there will be times when you will want to create a diversion for yourself. I remember one client telling me about her sudden burst of cleaning out all the drawers in her house and finding dust covered butter menthols and assorted buttons in preference to concentrating on writing her achievements. This is normal avoidance behaviour and we sometimes do need a break. However, tolerations are energy sapping negatives that you best deal with before you start your program.

Getting Motivated

This exercise is designed to assist you decide where to put your energy *right now*. Explore whether you are ready to commence the job search process or whether you need to take time out. Alternatively, you may wish to 'clean up' unfinished business as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Sample:

Goal: To first take a break and complete unfinished chores such as: Going to the dentist, renewing my passport, finishing the bathroom renovations, losing weight and getting fit, finalising my tax returns for the past three years...

Reasons FOR making the desired change	RATE 0 -10	Reasons for NOT making the desired change	RATE 0 -10
<i>What is the impact on you if you do achieve this goal?</i>		1. I am worried that job search will take a long time, the sooner I start, the better chance I have.	8
<i>What is the impact if you don't achieve this goal?</i>		2. My partner is freaked out about my losing the job.	5
<i>What is the impact on those close to you if you do achieve this goal?</i>		3. Not feeling motivated to do chores, just feel like sitting around and doing nothing.	3
<i>What is the impact on those close to you if you don't achieve this goal?</i>		4. I might have to pay tax.	5
1. I haven't had a holiday for 12 months and need a break before I start the job search process.	9		
2. The job search process is full time; I need to finish those chores so that I am not waylaid in the process.	9		
3. I feel a bit depressed, so some time out is not a bad idea.	7		
4. My partner is sick and tired of the bathroom as it is. (Nag Nag!)	10		
5. I never have time for myself when working and my health could come first for a while.	9		
6. We might need to fly overseas in a hurry to meet our daughter and my passport has expired.	10		
7. My teeth hurt; I have not seen a dentist in over 18 months!	10		
8. My clothes don't fit and I can't afford to buy new ones.	9		
9. I have received a redundancy and can afford to take at least one month off having been paid my outstanding annual leave.	5		
10. Summer is coming, the weather is good.	2		

Exercise 5 – Motivation Balance Sheet

Goal: *Insert your own goal.*

Reasons FOR making the desired change	RATE 0 -10	Reasons for NOT making the desired change	RATE 0 -10

A final word about the Motivation Balance sheet

I have spent many interesting hours with clients using the 'Motivation Balance Sheet'. One pattern that has emerged over the years is that the 'reasons FOR making the change' include exploration, wild ideas, sensible and pragmatic thoughts and epiphanies. On the other side of the MBS, reasons usually represent two thoughts/feelings:

- (1) Fear – in many guises and**
- (2) Lack of motivation and/or time.**

A favourite case study using the Motivation Balance sheet (MBS) involves Peter T who shared a bottle of red wine with me as we worked through this exercise one night. Peter had been looking for a job after redundancy (for months) and was suddenly offered the chance to work overseas. Peter had never been in a plane or travelled out of the country! Working through the many pages that comprised his MBS, Peter slowly uncovered many, many reasons to take up (at least) the offer to fly to UAE for a reconnoitre trip and interview. Those reasons included: "Having an adventure, flying for the first time, broadening my horizons, expanding my children's world, doing something crazy, getting the chance to do a very different job, get out of unemployment, prove that I can land a great job etc, etc. On the other side of the balance sheet were the usual reasons (fear and lack of motivation) such as:

Fear of flying, won't be here to compete in my sailing event, will miss my family, not sure I want to work there anyway.

The scoring of each entry was the turning point. Peter scored the reasons for with 10, 9 or 8. The reasons against going scored 2, 3 and 4. Done Deal. Peter has been living and working overseas for five years now and has become a truly international citizen. We breakfast whenever he is in Melbourne!

And.....Peter assisted another client, Greg, to move overseas into a fantastic role about three years ago. Another networking story.

Chapter 2 Summary

- ✓ Experience over many years has shown that job search candidates operate more effectively when 'unfinished chores' are either out of the way or seen as a low priority. Otherwise, they tend to spend unplanned and inefficient time on various activities that take their concentration away from the process.
- ✓ Experience also shows us that many candidates do not have financial management skills or an understanding of their own affairs. For example, it is common for candidates not to know where their superannuation funds are invested, how much is invested or how the funds are performing.
- ✓ Depending on your immediate financial needs, this is a good time in your life where learning budgeting and managing your financial affairs is vitally important.
- ✓ Prepare a budget for yourself and know how much cash flow you need to survive. Depending on the role, you will eventually decide what is your target. The time taken to search for the right job is preferably not marred by concerns about finance.
- ✓ If you need to work immediately for financial reasons, it is better to understand that now and obtain a 'fill in job' or start contracting, so that you can comfortably learn the career management process and develop career leverage for longer term benefits.
- ✓ Spending time on the Motivation Balance Sheet will highlight the strength of your motivation.
- ✓ You need to **COMMIT** yourself fully to the Career Transition process. Plan your commitment and remove diversions.
- ✓ A positive mental attitude supported by positive self talk is a mental aptitude that you can choose to create for yourself.

CHAPTER 3 – What drives you?

Introduction

Regardless of your present job or career, your future decisions will be easier and more valid if you have a clear understanding of your own orientation towards work, your motives and your values.

Values have a common thread with satisfaction and ideal job preference

By examining your career values, you will probably notice congruence; a matching with those times that you experienced great satisfaction in your past. It was most likely that your motives and values were intertwined. In fact, when you continue in your exercises, you will probably also notice that your skills and talents are also congruent with those values.

People learn to be better at those things they value and are motivated to do and learn to value and be motivated by those things they happen to do well. They also gradually learn to avoid those things that they do not do well. Without clear feedback they may cling to illusions about themselves that set them up for repeated failures. Talents without motivation gradually fade away. Conversely, new challenges can reveal latent or hidden talents that simply have not had an opportunity to appear earlier.

People differ as to whether talents, motives or values initially dominate their 'self' concepts and provide central themes to their careers. As time goes on, however, a need for congruence causes people to seek consistency and integration among the different elements of the 'self' concept.

Complete one or both of the values based exercises at the end of this chapter to identify whether there is congruence between your career anchors and your values.

The Work Values exercises below are used to help identify, clarify and prioritise what is most important to you in terms of your career.

Work Values change significantly over the years and it is important to be clear about them and to better assess how they can be met. Decisions we make often reflect what is important in our lives and if there is a conflict between a life decision and one's values, very often this conflict can contribute to both personal and career dissatisfaction and unhappiness.

Therefore it is important to assess our most significant values and realise that one's job/career cannot meet all of one's values, and a balance needs to be found between one's job and personal life.

The following exercise is designed to help you decide on career values such as:

- Where do I want to live and work?
- What kind of job appeals to me?
- What kind of co-workers will be kindred spirits?
- What kind of working conditions will be rewarding?
- What level of responsibility do I feel comfortable with?
- What salary level is important to me?

Career Values exercise

This exercise is designed to help you clarify the values important to your work. Concentrate on the words in bold; the descriptions under each section are only a guide. The words in bold may mean something else to you personally, so go with your instinct.

Steps for Completing the Career Values.

1. On the following pages are approximately forty different values for you to consider.
2. Mark each value with a cross in ONE column; concentrate on the words in bold. The additional words are provided as a guide only. You may re-invent any other information that the word in bold might mean to you.
3. Now consider whether there are things that you highly value which are not mentioned on the following listing.

Examples may include:

Family Have a role that allows for a regular family life.

Sport Have a job that allows me to continue in my sporting achievements.

Study Have a job that allows me to study part time for the next three years without too much stress.

4. Add additional values at the end of the list and mark them with a cross in one of the five columns.
5. Now look carefully over the 'Always Valued' list and identify your 'Top Seven' values.
6. In your own words, write up your 'Top Seven' values and discuss with your lead consultant or friend. Consider also what they DON'T mean, so that there is no confusion when you are articulating your values and what drives you.

Exercise 6 – Values Identification					
	Always valued	Often valued	Sometimes valued	Seldom valued	Never valued
ADVANCEMENT Be able to get ahead rapidly; gaining opportunities for growth and seniority from work well done.					
ADVENTURE Have work duties which involve frequent risk taking.					
AESTHETICS Be involved in studying or appreciating the beauty of things, ideas etc.					
AFFILIATION Be recognised as a member of a particular organisation.					
ARTISTIC CREATIVITY Engage in creative work in any of several art forms.					
CHALLENGING PROBLEMS Engage continually with complex questions and demanding tasks, trouble shooting and problem solving as a core part of job.					
CHANGE AND VARIETY Have work responsibilities frequently changed in content and setting.					
COMMUNITY Live in a town or city where I can meet my neighbours and become active in local politics or service projects.					
COMPETITION Engage in activities which pit my abilities against others.					
CREATIVE EXPRESSION Be able to express in writing and in person my ideas concerning job and how I might improve it; have opportunities for experimentation and innovation.					
CREATIVITY (General) Create new ideas, programs, organised structures or anything else not following format developed by others.					
EXCITEMENT Experience a high degree of stimulation or frequent novelty and drama on the job.					
EXERCISE COMPETENCE Demonstrate a high degree of proficiency in job skills and knowledge; show above average effectiveness.					
FAST PACE Work in circumstances where there is high pace activity and work is done rapidly.					
FRIENDSHIPS Develop close personal relationships with people as a result of work activity.					
HELP OTHERS Be involved in helping people directly, either individually or in small groups.					
HELP SOCIETY Do something to contribute to the betterment of the world.					
HIGH EARNINGS ANTICIPATED Be able to purchase essentials and the luxuries of life I wish.					
INDEPENDENCE Be able to determine nature of work without significant direction from others; not have to follow instructions or conform to regulations.					
INFLUENCE PEOPLE Be in a position to change attitudes or opinions of other people.					
INTELLECTUAL STATUS Be regarded as very well informed and a strong theorist as one acknowledged 'expert' in a given field.					

	Always Valued	Often Valued	Sometimes Valued	Seldom Valued	Never Valued
JOB TRANQUILLITY Avoid pressures and the 'rat race' in job role and work setting.					
KNOWLEDGE Engage myself in pursuit of knowledge, truth and understanding.					
LOCATION Find place to live (town, geographic area) conducive to my lifestyle, a desirable home base for my leisure, learning and work life.					
MAKE DECISIONS Have the power to decide courses of action, policies, etc. – a judgement job.					
MORAL FULFILMENT Feel that my work is contributing to ideas I feel are very important.					
PHYSICAL CHALLENGE Have a job that requires bodily strength, speed, dexterity or agility.					
POWER AND AUTHORITY Control the work activities or (partially) destinies of others.					
PRECISION WORK Deal with tasks that have exact specifications, that require careful, accurate attention to detail.					
PROFIT, GAIN Have a strong likelihood of accumulating large amounts of money or other material gain through ownership, profit-sharing, commissions, merit, pay increases or the like.					
PUBLIC CONTACT Have lots of day-to-day contact with people.					
RECOGNITION Get positive feedback and public credit for work well done.					
SECURITY Be assured of keeping my job and a reasonable financial reward.					
STABILITY Have a work routine and job duties that are largely predictable and not likely to change of long periods of time.					
STATUS Impress or gain the respect of friends, family and community by the nature and/or level of responsibility of my work.					
SUPERVISION Have a job in which I am directly responsible for work done by others.					
TIME FREEDOM Have responsibilities I can work at according to my time schedule; no specific working hours required.					
WORK ALONE Do projects by myself, with any amount of contact with others.					
WORK ON FRONTIERS OF KNOWLEDGE Work in research and development, generating information and new ideas in the academic, scientific or business communities.					
WORK UNDER PRESSURE Work in time pressured circumstances, where there is little or no margin for error, or with demanding personal relationships.					
WORK WITH OTHERS Have a close working relationship with a group; work as a team to common goals.					

From your table above, choose your **'Top Seven' Values** and write their headings on the list below.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

Your top seven values identified

Now write them up in your own words, describe exactly what you mean by your motivators. Also try to explain what they don't mean.

Example 1 **Location:** I want to work close to home, so that the long hours I expect to work are not increased by commuter time. I would be prepared to travel further if a parking spot is provided and I can drive my car. I would prefer to have a job within five kilometres of home because I have commitments to study two nights per week and the need to be home in time for the teleconference meetings at 6:00pm. I never want to travel 65km each way to work again as I did when I lived in a regional area. I don't want to spend more than twenty minutes each way on the road.

Example 2 **Work with Others:** I want to work in an environment of a close-knit group, where support is provided, mentoring is available and fun can be had through affiliation with peers. I am an extrovert who is motivated by others. I draw energy from being with like-minded people.
This means that I don't want to work in a small office where everyone is 'out and about', or in an isolated area, with a group of introverts or people who are not my peers in either intellectual ability or role similarity.

Example 3 **High Earnings Anticipated:** At this stage of my life, I am motivated by my desire to create financial security for myself. I would not consider a position earning less than \$XXXXXX because my financial plan depends on this income for the next five years. After that, I would consider a lower salary if the job provided a higher degree of job satisfaction. There is a lot I would sacrifice for high earnings in the meantime. Any position that pays less than \$XXXXXX is a 'NO GO' zone.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Exercise 7 – (Alternative exercise) Work Values

WORK VALUES

This exercise is designed to help clarify your work values. Work values are the factors in your work environment of greatest significance to you. The match of work values between an individual and an organisation is an important part of a good 'job fit'. For example, if you prefer a great deal of freedom to work in your own way, you would probably not enjoy, nor work well in, a highly structured work environment.

GUIDELINES

Using the scale on the right of the page, mark each statement according to its importance to you (6 = extremely important; 0 = not important to you).

When you have finished, go back over the exercise. Total your score for each section as follows:

For each category add up the number of marks to arrive at a subtotal. The maximum for each category is 30.

	Importance Rating	Section Score
	High 6 4 2 Low 0	
1. ACHIEVEMENT Gaining satisfaction from doing things well.		
Being able to see concrete results from my efforts.		
Feeling good about having done good work.		
Knowing that my contribution is important to the overall job.		
Achieving excellence in my work.		
2. AFFILIATION Working as a member of a team.		
Developing friendly relationships with my colleagues.		
Doing work that brings me into contact with other people a large proportion of the time.		
Having a strong social atmosphere at work (social club etc).		
Feeling like I belong with a group.		
3. CHALLENGE Having time pressure on the job with little margin for error.		
Having the opportunity to solve challenging problems.		
Having responsibilities which involve frequent risk taking.		
Seeing opportunities to stretch towards my full potential or capabilities.		
Competing against other people or organisations.		

	Importance Rating				Section Score
	High			Low	
	6	4	2	0	
4. CREATIVITY					
Looking at new ways of solving problems.					
Improving on old techniques, systems or products.					
Having the opportunity to express myself through creative media, writing, art, performing or problem solving.					
Developing a product, process, service or application that is truly unique.					
Working with imaginative, innovative people.					
5. ENTREPRENEURISM					
Being able to make fast decisions without extensive consultation with others.					
Being able to identify and pursue new directions that look profitable.					
Being ready to take risks especially when individual skills can affect the probability of success.					
Being stimulated by challenge and working long and hard to meet it.					
Wanting the satisfaction of 'doing' instead of proposing and justifying.					
6. FINANCIAL SUCCESS					
Making more money than my friends and colleagues.					
Feeling that I'm well paid for the work that I do.					
Earning enough money to enjoy the finer things in life.					
Being able to retire without having to worry about money.					
Having enough money to be viewed as well-off.					
7. HELPING OTHERS					
Being generous towards others.					
Feeling that I'm making a contribution to the wellbeing of society.					
Being of genuine assistance to other people when they are having problems or difficulties.					
Having a job where I can teach, train, mentor or be of service to other people.					
Donating time to community programs.					
8. INDEPENDENCE					
Being able to establish my own priorities.					
Having the freedom to pick and choose my assignments and to work according to my own schedule.					
Being my own boss.					
Being able to bend organisational rules and norms.					
Being able to make important decisions that affect my work and my career.					

	Importance Rating	Section Score
	High 6 4 2 Low 0	
9. INITIATIVE Identifying a potential problem and taking action to avoid it.		
Looking around to see what has to be done and then doing it.		
Seeing a colleague overloaded with work and helping out.		
Recognising a specific need and bringing it to the attention of the decision makers.		
Asking for additional areas of responsibility.		
10. INTEGRITY Acting according to my convictions.		
Standing up for my beliefs.		
Not having to do things that are contrary to my ethics.		
Working with people whose ethics are similar to mine.		
Working for a socially responsible organisation.		
11. LEADERSHIP Setting policies and guidelines for others to follow.		
Making decisions as to how things should be done.		
Being in the position to direct the activities of others.		
Being responsible for the operations of a department/division.		
Being a leader in groups and being regarded by others as an obvious choice as leader.		
12. ORGANISATION Making detailed plans before starting on a complex task.		
Keeping needed resources easily accessible.		
Having things organised so that they run smoothly.		
Using facts as a basis for organising.		
Bringing order to a great amount of detail.		

	Importance Rating	Section Score
	High 6 4 2 Low 0	
13. PERSONAL/PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT Having the opportunity to learn, change and develop.		
Taking practical, work related courses to improve my skills.		
Mixing with people who encourage and inspire me to stretch towards my full potential or capabilities.		
Being able to take part in activities that allow me to increase my general knowledge.		
Taking academic course to increase qualifications.		
14. RECOGNITION/PRESTIGE Knowing that my colleagues recognise my contribution and respect my work.		
Having the ability and opportunity to become a known and respected authority in my field.		
Having members of the community look up to me		
Having a title associated with my position.		
Attending functions with important people.		
15. SECURITY Knowing that even in difficult times, the chances are that I will not be let go.		
Having fringe benefits like health and/or life insurance paid by my employer.		
Having automatic raises built into my salary schedule.		
Having regular pay cheques.		
Knowing where I fit in the organisation's future.		
16. STRUCTURE Having a thorough understanding of my organization's goals.		
Having a regular work schedule.		
Being in an organisation, where there are clearly defined guidelines, standards and procedures.		
Having a well-defined chain of command.		
Having a predictable work environment.		

	Importance Rating				Section Score
	High 6	4	2	Low 0	
17. VARIETY					
Having flexibility in work activities.					
Having several different projects or areas of responsibility.					
Coming into contact with various types of people.					
Working in different locations.					
Being required to solve a variety of problems.					

Score your results, then write them on the next page in order from highest score to lowest score.

WORK VALUES SUMMARY

List your Work Values in descending order from your highest total to your lowest

Work Values	Total
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	
16.	

Ideal Work Preference

Having discovered your personal values and motivators and written them out in detail on the previous pages to explore what they really mean to you, it is now possible to develop an ideal work preference.

Your ideal work/job preference will become essential in your plan towards new work. If you work at your 'ideal work', you will most likely be highly motivated and experience shows that motivation and 'success' go hand in hand. Better still if you can follow your passion, then you will never have to 'work' again.

The following checklist contains the major issues that our clients have considered for their development of an ideal work preference. The decisions you make here will shape your personal Work Target statement and will be important material for preparing resumes and letters.

If you don't know where you are going, how will you know when you get there?

Be specific about what you are looking for.

Examples derived from our clients included the following topics:

1. Age group of colleagues.
2. Annual leave options (i.e. some organisations insist on leave at Christmas, some organisations offer the option to purchase additional leave (48/52 scheme).
3. Bonus arrangements.
4. Childcare close by or available with employer.
5. Company 'perks'.
6. Family friendly.
7. Good heating and air-conditioning.
8. Ideal size of organisation.
9. Involves travel / doesn't involve travel.
10. Base level of remuneration.
11. Major brand or reputation vs. smaller company with wider responsibility (small fish in big pond vs. big fish in small pond?)
12. Modern offices.
13. Moral fulfilment – what the company does or must not do.
(E.g. Not working for tobacco company, casino.)
14. Must like/believe in the product or service.
15. Option to work from home.
16. Parking available.
17. Proximity to shops and other amenities.
18. Split of remuneration, E.g. Base salary, superannuation, health insurance, bonus arrangement.
19. Time and distance to commute to work.
20. Travel by public transport / travel by car.
21. What style of management suits you best?
22. Work- Life balance considerations.
23. Working accommodation: own office, own workstation, open working area.

Exercise 9 – Ideal Work Preference Reality Check

Chapter 3 Summary

- ✓ Before you commence planning your career transition, it is so very important to know what drives you, what motivates you, what elements need to be present for you to be satisfied in your career choice.
- ✓ By completing the values exercises contained in this chapter and writing them up in your own words, you are better able to understand what motivates and drives you.
- ✓ Writing up your Ideal Work Preference will focus your job search and provide you with a benchmark against which to measure various organisations, job offers or ideas for networking.
- ✓ Starting to consider the questions to ask....
- ✓ "Never before have I had such a wonderful opportunity to find out what I really value... this has given me a truly different focus to my job search and future career plan."
- ✓ Why not spend some time determining what is right for you and then go after that?
- ✓ The information about yourself will assist you in answering interview questions such as:
 - What do you look for in a job?
 - How long would you stay with us?
 - How do you feel about leaving all your benefits?
 - Describe what you feel to be an ideal working environment.
 - If you had your choice of jobs and companies, where would you go?
 - Why do you want to work for us?
 - What are your goals?
 - What are your strong points?
 - What position do you expect to have in two years?
 - What are your objectives?
 - In your current or last position, what features did you like the most? Least?
- ✓ Developing an ideal work preference is an important part of a career decision or career transition program.
- ✓ At the end of this chapter, you will have developed words around an ideal job and developed a method of 'reality checking' where that job might be obtained.
- ✓ Having developed your ideal work preference, you are now able to target your informational interviewing activities. Your IWP gives you a work profile with specific elements against which to measure any opportunities.
- ✓ Your ideal work preference is a dynamic concept which may be redefined at least in part, as you gather more knowledge through your research and experiences.
- ✓ Your work preference may be a three or five year plan. Consider roles which will assist you to bridge your experience and knowledge gaps and develop new contacts in preparation for your ideal future position.
- ✓ Once the ideal work preference has been defined, candidates might seek out an appropriate mentor to assist them both prior to and during the new job.
- ✓ Always be well prepared for your informational interviewing with appropriate, targeted questions as well as backup questions in case the discussion goes off course.

CHAPTER 4 – Why bother with Self Assessment?

Why is 'knowing yourself' important?

Change and growth take place when a person has risked himself and dares to become involved with experimenting with his own life.

Herbert Otto

If you don't know yourself, your skills, your abilities, your achievements and the value you can add to the job market, how will you sell yourself?

You are now entering into the phase of understanding **'Me Incorporated'** and in order to develop your marketing strategy, you need to know the product - you. Right? We surely can't imagine a sales person starting their campaign without any knowledge of their product or services. Same applies to you.

Thousands of our clients commence their career transition program without any understanding of their skills and abilities.

Let's pause for a moment to conduct a reality check. Can you immediately and confidently discuss:

- ✓ Your motivators?
- ✓ Your ideal work preference?
- ✓ Your preferred employers?
- ✓ "Tell me about yourself"

These were covered in the previous chapters.

- Your 'Top Seven' skills?
- The achievements you are most proud of?
- Your personality style?
- Your management style?
- Your teamwork approach?
- Your career history.
- Your significant learnings and lessons.
- Your referees.
- "What do you do?"

Past participants have often considered the self-assessment process as the most enjoyable part of the career management program.

"Spending the time to reflect on my past achievements has given me a great boost to the ego."

"Definitely the best part of the program, apart from finding my ideal job, was the self-assessment process."

"I even followed the advice of my consultant and bought a beautiful large chest – 'my career box' and will continue to write up my achievements as they occur and will continue to evaluate my values and update my skills."

"Finding out my true personality type and finding work that matched to my temperament and style has been truly worth the effort of networking..."

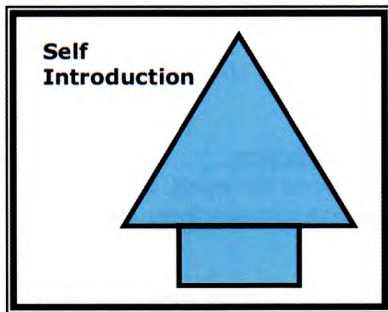
*"Thank you for helping me make a HUGE step in my life and career, to follow my passion and find a job in that area. **Awesome!!**"*

And Lisa's card with flowers..... THANK YOU for your generosity in giving me the benefit of your time and expertise. They were instrumental in getting me the job. You really are very good at what you do, but of course it's your job to already know that! FIG JAM' baby!

The self-assessment process is like creating a 'toolbox' of information about yourself, so that the details can be readily filed and retrieved when you need them.

- ✓ Self-assessment will help you talk about yourself, be more articulate about who you are and what you want.
- ✓ Self-assessment will assist you to develop a high quality resume – your personalised marketing document.
- ✓ Self-assessment will identify career options for you by uncovering your values, transferable skills, talents and achievements.
- ✓ Self-assessment will assist you to perform well in interviews and networking meetings.
- ✓ Self assessment will provide a boost in confidence and/or motivation to keep developing your marketable value.

Being Comfortable Introducing Yourself.



First Impressions Count.

Most interviews and networking meetings commence with a predictable question..... "So tell us about yourself". This question is used by the interviewer or interview panel to 'settle the applicant' and assess level of articulation. Most importantly, the first five minutes of an interview, including the hand shake and eye contact can determine whether this process of selection is going to last or finish as soon as possible.

Most of us, in our mind's eye, feel reasonably confident about answering this question; however the reality when spoken out loud is very different. Before this coaching session on developing a 'self introduction' many of our clients stumble, ramble, lose volume, forget the question, fail to make an interesting or good impression and realise that developing a self introduction might be a good idea after all.

I recommend that your self introduction is worth the time to script and rehearse.

The perfect self introduction:

- Lasts only two minutes.
- Starts with something interesting.
- Contains some humour or a point of laughter with you.
- Provides the questioner with further questions to ask.
- Is appropriate for the occasion.
- Is dynamic and makes a good impression.
- Briefly covers your background.
- Makes you feel confident, safe and able to concentrate on eye contact and calm body language.
- DOES NOT steal the interviewer's thunder or answer all the potential interview questions within the first few minutes, leaving nothing to be asked.

Joe W was a mining engineer with a monotone voice and was the master of the understatement: "I have done a bit of travel over the years". When encouraged to include the phrase "I am on to my third passport as a result of so many stamps" whilst making a stamping action with one hand onto the other palm, Joe was not convinced. "I am not as flamboyant as you Marjolein, that is way over the top". The next week he arrived with his practised self introduction and calmly included this wonderful, interesting way of saying he had travelled a lot.... Much better.

I remember being invited to an important luncheon of ten amazing business women. We were asked to briefly introduce ourselves. Only three of the ten had something interesting to say and each was more memorable as a result. Of the others, two thought they were so well known that they hardly deigned to introduce themselves, making it awkward for those who followed. They stared at their lap and mumbled something unintelligible – not a great first impression.

To create career leverage and increase the number of people who know who you are, what you do and where to find you is a powerful tool. An appropriate self introduction can serve this purpose.

Everyone has their own way of creating and scripting and remembering their self introduction.

Joanne C arrived at her appointment with a scripted self introduction. She handed over her page to me and proceeded to deliver, word for word, her response to my question: "Tell me about yourself". Joanne could have been an Actor, so accurate was her delivery.

Brad C was a champion Rower. Brad used the picture of a rowing boat with four oars to remember his major points.

A friend of mine, Bruce M, enrolled in a short course for wanna-be comedians. During the course he learned how to construct comedy and script the comedy. Course participants were taught to practice, practice, practice their seven minute routine, including pauses, body language and eye contact. Course participants were encouraged to practice their routine in front of a mirror and to tape it and play it back. The care that is taken in this scripting and rehearsal results in a relaxed and seemingly spontaneous interchange with the audience. Bruce went on to win a 'Best New Comedian of the Year' prize.

I liken the self introduction to scripting a comedy routine. Seemingly spontaneous but actually planned, relaxed, confident and interesting. Only shorter and not as funny.

Try to develop what I call the 'Media Grab Line'. A strong media grab line will make the listener lean forward with interest. You have really seized their attention. Often the interviewer will scribble it on their interview sheet.

When I was in finance, I used two 'media grab lines':

1. "I make numbers tell stories"
2. "I demystify finance and make it accessible for all managers"

Some hints:

- ❑ Make it interesting ... e.g. instead of saying "I have travelled extensively", you could say "I am now onto my fifth passport, full of stamps and visas from all over the world."
- ❑ Find a Media Grab Line of your own.
- ❑ The phrase "The theme in my career has been...." may be useful.
- ❑ Review your body language as you are delivering it. Be able to modify anything according to the needs of the situation.
- ❑ Practise, Practise, Practise makes perfect. Be able to deliver it as though you have only just thought about it. In front of the mirror, or tape yourself. Then practise is on everyone around you.
- ❑ PRACTISE OUT LOUD! Get feedback from those around you.

Exercise 10 – Script your own self introduction

Hints: Humour, Theme in your career, interesting 'media grab lines' make it a relevant, quick background of your career with some insights and don't steal their thunder.

[illegible]

Practise out loud. Time it. No more than two minutes.

Chapter 4 Summary

- ✓ This chapter introduces the self-assessment process in relation to 'selling yourself'; the **'Me Incorporated'**.
- ✓ Be familiar with the WILLING, ABLE and MATCHED diagram.
- ✓ Develop your own 'media grab lines'
- ✓ Script your personal self-introduction and be ready to articulate it when you ask your friends and family to prompt you for "Tell me about yourself."

Always be well prepared for your informational interviewing with appropriate, targeted questions as well as backup questions in case the discussion goes off course.

CHAPTER 5 – What Are You Good At?

Introduction

There are millions of skills in the working world. What are your particular skills? What have you got to sell into the job market in order to earn an income?

How can you demonstrate that you have certain skills? What skills do you have that are transferable? What can those skills achieve? What is your track record?

These questions can be answered by carrying out an analysis of your skills.

Defining your skills will assist in recalling your past achievements.

Finding what your specialist skills are (or what you want them to be in the future) is a powerful exercise in the Career Transition program. If your descriptions could be used by, e.g. a mechanic or librarian as well, you haven't been specific enough.

The phrase 'Project Management' has become ineffectual through overuse. Instead, be more specific about the type of project management you are referring to. If you can be succinct and to the point, include scale or scope:-

- 75 wpm typing speed,
- Managed 150 call centre staff.

What Are 'Skills' For The Purpose Of Career Transition?

I believe that each one of us needs to be able to describe exactly what we are good at – preferably in a list of your 'Top Seven Skills'.

Despite full time workers spending an average of 76,912 hours at work during our career, (38 hours x 46 weeks x 44 years) it is amazing how this question stumps our clients: "What are your major skills?"

Compare the following responses (before this session and after this session).

Before this Session	After this Session
<p>"Project management, Customer service, Managing people, Ummmm..... Financial services? Ahhhhhh..... "</p> <p>(Phil A)</p>	<div><div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Project Management of major IT systems implementation.2. Managing large teams of customer service and call centre staff (up to 150 FTE).3. Fifteen years of experience in Insurance and Financial Services, but skills also transferable into other sectors.4. Managing the 'Y' generation, which takes special knowledge and skills.5. Process and workflow re-engineering.6. Vendor/Supplier relationships.7. Contact Centre Leadership.
<p>"Ummmmmm... Microsoft Word? Office stuff, Typing, Reception, Filing, Answering the telephone Excel?"</p> <p>(Felicity S)</p>	<div><div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Typing speed of 65 wpm with 98% accuracy.2. Handling a busy telephone system (20 incoming lines x 100 extensions).3. Excellent skills in MS Word.4. Intermediate skills in MS Excel spread sheeting.5. Records management including general filing of all corporate, client and candidate files.6. Being the 'Director of first impressions' at reception, greeting customers with Five Star service.7. Accounts payable, Accounts receivable data input – very fast on the numeric keypad!
<p>"Managing a womens' fashion store, "Managing the staff"</p> <p>(Vicki C)</p>	<div><div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Managing a women's retail fashion store with a \$5M annual turnover.2. Organising ten staff through fourteen rosters per week (Seven day trading).3. Merchandising the store to increase walk in customer traffic.4. Organising sales campaigns to move slow moving stock.5. Increasing customers through mail marketing campaigns and providing specialist styling services.6. Decreasing theft and pilfering through improved stock control and Security systems.7. Training, developing and managing a team of ten staff including full time and casual.
<p>"HR Management - broad experience in every aspect of the employment life cycle – just about everything relating to HR practices"</p>	<div><div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. HR Policies and Procedures development, implementation and training including occupational health and safety, EEO.2. Recruitment, induction, training and development for an organisation of over 400 employees.3. Workforce planning and capacity planning.4. Organisational development including: succession planning, leadership development and employee retention.5. HR systems including Payroll, employee data base, training records.6. Remuneration and Benefits – strategy, management, policies.7. Employee engagement and Leadership Development programs.
<p>"I am an expert in Warehouse management and logistics"</p>	<div><div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div><div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div></div> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fifteen years experience and in-depth knowledge of warehousing and distribution.2. Functional Management of all PPI's transport, logistics and warehouse.3. Negotiating freight rates, 3PL contract management.4. S & OP strategy, implementation and management.5. Optimising warehousing and logistics costs and performance.6. Tertiary qualified supply chain professional.7. Ten years experience with importing and exporting manufactured goods and five years experience with FMCG.

Before you try to list your 'Top Seven' skills, I have some suggestions to assist you uncover them and perhaps use current job market language in the process. They are summarised as follows:

1. The 'Newspaper Scan'
2. The 'Internet Career Site dump'
3. Review your position description or one for a job you might be interested in.
4. Ask your former/current manager, colleagues or referees to describe what you are good at.

Exercise 11 – 'The Newspaper Scan'

Take Saturday's newspaper and a highlighting pen. Don't confine yourself to jobs you might apply for. Spend a good four hours reading right through to job market as advertised. Mark with your highlighter all the descriptions of skills which you feel apply to you. In the process, you might see a new career, identify skills you had forgotten to identify and descriptions of jobs you had not yet previously considered.

John Br was a foreman at a plastics manufacturer when the site was closed down to move to a new location. John chose a redundancy rather than travel one and a half hours each way to the new factory. The newspaper scan proved to be an illuminating exercise, resulting in a completely new career. John saw an advertisement with a local real estate agent advertising for a Property Manager. The skills required were listed as follows:

1. Knowledge of residential repairs and maintenance,
2. Strong Customer service skills,
3. Ability to coordinate tradespeople,
4. Recording and filing,
5. Ability to work autonomously and on Saturdays
6. Current driver's license and reliable car and
7. An interest in real estate.

After a short three week course, John was employed as a Property Manager and has been there ever since.

During the process of the 'Newspaper Scan' you may find a more elegant description of your skills. The writers who develop job advertisements are skilled wordsmiths. Why reinvent the wheel?

Looking through the newspaper will also assist in further chapters of this manual:

- Descriptions of personalities being sought
- Clarity of writing of achievements
- Descriptions of work environments you have never imagined

Job advertisement review

Not all job advertisements are well written, descriptive or informative. If you are considering a new career, search online or in newspapers for descriptive information that provides an insight.

In the following advertisement, look for:

- the ideal work preference,
- description of skills,
- attributes and phrases, and
- language used in this industry/career.

Property Manager - Inner City Location

Well maintained portfolio
Established organisation
Fantastic Career Progression

An exciting opportunity exists for an experienced Assistant Property Manager to make the next step in their career. This position will offer experienced applicants the opportunity to put their knowledge and skills into practice and to manage and maintain their own portfolio of properties.

Reporting to the Senior Property Manager, your duties and responsibilities include:

- * Managing 200 properties
- * Maintenance requests
- * Renewals
- * New leasing
- * Tenancy Applications
- * OFI's and Routine inspections

The ideal candidate will have at least two years experience as an Assistant Property Manager, have excellent communication skills, professional presentation and strong attention to detail. It is essential to this position to have a valid Agents Representative Certificate and knowledge of a rental database will be extremely advantageous.

Ideal work preferences:

- √ Fantastic Career Progression
- √ Autonomy
- √ Inner City location

Description of skills and attributes:

- √ Experienced property manager
- √ Communication skills, professional presentation, attention to detail
- √ Appropriate qualifications

Phrases and language used in the field of your interest or expertise:

- √ Property Management
- √ Maintenance requests
- √ Renewals
- √ New leasing
- √ Tenancy applications
- √ OFI's and routine inspections
- √ Agents representative certificate
- √ Knowledge of rental data base

Your 'TOP SEVEN' skills identified

Chapter 5 Summary

- ✓ Your talents and skills have been developed through experience, education, trial and error and exposure to different circumstances and organisations. If you can't describe them, no one else can!
- ✓ This chapter assisted you to identify your talents and skills and talk about them with a higher degree of confidence. Providing examples is a very effective way to demonstrate your competence.
- ✓ Discussing these with friends or your career counsellor will open you to a whole new world of learning.
- ✓ Having identified your top seven skills will then assist you in answering the following questions:
 1. *What would you do for us? What can you do for us that someone else can't?*
 2. *What would you define as your most obvious talents?*
 3. *Why should we hire you?*
 4. *Are you or could you become a good supervisor? Give an example. Why do you feel you have management potential?*
 5. *Have you helped increase sales? Profits? How?*
 6. *Have your helped reduce costs? How?*
 7. *How much money did you ever account for?*
 8. *Did you supervise people on your last job?*

CHAPTER 6 – PROVE IT! ‘FIG JAM’ baby!!!!

Introduction

It is a rare occasion to stop and reflect on your achievements.
Even rarer to write them down and record them for future reference.

Our experience shows that candidates who take the time to write up achievements perform better at interviews. In addition, their resumes are more focussed, they appear more skilled and they are more confident and able to answer behavioural interviews with ease.

Each of us, in all the jobs we have had during our careers, has accomplished many things that were important to the companies we worked for. Most of these accomplishments are noted only briefly as our careers progress. On several occasions their value or benefit to the company is not recognised and we fail to note how well an accomplishment illustrates our skills and our future potential for solving problems.

When all work is distilled, employers hire staff to carry out one of four things:

1. Increase sales.
2. Decrease costs.
3. Solve problems.
4. Develop new lines of business.

Looking back over the history of your career and spending the time to follow our suggested process is a vital step in this program of preparing yourself for the job market. The more often you talk about these achievements out loud, the more polished your delivery of them will be.

Writing your achievements will:

- Jog your memory about the value you added
- Make you quantify your achievements
- Assist you to answer behavioural questions at interview such as:
 - “Tell us about a time when.....”
 - “Describe an occasion when you used [a particular skill]...”

Writing up your achievements (BOAST Stories)

The time you spend on this exercise will pay huge dividends! Remember that this work will clearly demonstrate the 'ABLE' of the WILLING / ABLE / MATCHED Model.

Start with a few obvious achievements, those that first come to mind when asked, "What was your major achievement in that job?"

Using the format of the Achievement worksheet at the end of this chapter, write your achievements using five (5) headings:

1. **B**ackground
2. **O**utcomes or Company Benefit
3. **A**ctions Taken
4. **S**kills Used
5. **T**akeout or reflections

The more detail you recall and record, the greater the value of writing up your achievement statements. At this point, the scripting of the words is not important. This work is for your use only. At the end of this process, careful scripting of the achievement statement into a brief, punchy statement will take place. Later sections of this chapter will deal with the short, dynamic statement. At this point, the detail of remembering is important.

The kind of general results most frequently expressed in achievements are listed below.

- ☐ Improved quality
- ☐ Improved productivity and teamwork
- ☐ Increased sales
- ☐ Reduced time of operation
- ☐ Reduced costs
- ☐ Achieved a technological breakthrough
- ☐ Increased profits
- ☐ Established an administrative process
- ☐ Improved employee relations
- ☐ Planned a program from inception
- ☐ Solved problems
- ☐ Surpassed established standards

Example Achievements Written in detail:

(This example could take up to six pages to write out properly)

EXAMPLE 1: Heading – City of Gothic cost reductions

Background

After amalgamation of local government in 1995, the State Government required Councils to reduce their rate income by an overall 20%. In the case of the City of Gothic, this was a shaving of income of approx. \$7M per annum. Given that the amalgamation of three cities saved only approx. \$1.4M in costs, the challenge was to find a reduction in expenditure of approx. \$5.6M per annum (or corresponding increase of income).

Outcomes or Benefits

Savings identified by line management and Management Team were summarised and reported to Council, who in turn made educated decisions as to where to cut services and increase other income.

Actions taken

- ✓ Identified the problem, wrote a council report on the overall issue. Achieved Councillor understanding and ownership of the problem.
- ✓ Developed a full program budget identifying where all the Council's expenditure and income was allocated.
- ✓ Identified, with facilitation of all line supervisors, areas of income, which could be increased or developed.
- ✓ Taught all the line manager's financial responsibility and educated them in budgeting techniques.
- ✓ Gained Management Team approval to develop future budget based on overall reduction assumptions etc. etc.

Skills used

Financial analysis, negotiation, writing, teaching, public presentation, dealing with difficult people, etc.

Takeout or Reflections

Substantially improved my coaching technique through teaching line managers to take responsibility for budgets.

Dot Point Achievement Statements

- **This will be covered later in the chapter**

EXAMPLE 2: Retail Store Change Of Target Market

Background

Retail clothing company changed its direction away from its traditional stock of natural fabrics, conservative, classic styles that appealed to business women and older women to a younger look. This alienated the original customer base, but did not immediately attract the new market being sought.

Outcomes or Company Benefit

Maintained sales targets of \$1M each month through this difficult transition.

Actions taken

- ✓ Developed new store merchandising ideas to appeal to the younger target market.
- ✓ Changed the store window display to appeal to the younger market.
- ✓ Advertised in magazines which sold to the new demographic market.
- ✓ Networked widely in areas of our new target market, talking about the new styles.
- ✓ Built stronger relationships with the lucrative, long term clients and spent extra time with them in their choice of clothing from the store, ensuring an ongoing customer service ethic.

Skills used

- Merchandising,
- Networking,
- Customer service,
- Flair for dress sense,
- Window dressing,
- Dealing with people,
- Managing upwards to owner of organisation:
- Specifically gaining owner support and funding for changes.

Takeout or Reflections

Gained understanding of the value in investing time in existing customers and gaining support from them for changes.

Dot Point Achievement Statements

- **This will be covered later in the chapter**

Exercise 13 – Summary of Achievements

Firstly, to assist you in beginning this task, write up a few obvious achievements on the following lines. Think of at least seven achievements. They don't have to be earth shattering, just demonstrations of your skills if you can't think of anything else for now.

Achievements to Highlight My Career Skills

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.

For each of the above, describe the:

- (B) Background/situation,
- (O) Outcome or company benefit,
- (A) Actions you took,
- (S) Skills you used and
- (T) The Take-away Reflections.

The fifth element to reviewing your BOAST statements is that of reflection. Ask yourself questions such as: 'What did I learn from this experience?' or 'How would I have done something differently to have avoided.....?' What was really strong about my performance here? Etc. These questions can uncover powerful insights which increase your repertoire when speaking of yourself and will assist you to respond to otherwise difficult interview questions such as: "Tell me about a time when you made a bad decision."

The next few pages are for you to practise writing up your achievements.

We recommend that you continue on blank writing paper after the first few efforts; some of our clients take six pages for one achievement, once their memory is triggered!

Exercise 14 – BOAST Stories – Achievements In Detail

Heading

Background

Outcomes or Company Benefit

Actions Taken

Skills used

Take-out or Reflections

Dot Point Achievement Statement/s

- X
- X

Heading

Background

Outcome or Company Benefit

Actions Taken

Skills used

Take-out or Reflections

Dot Point Achievement Statement/s

- X
- X

Writer's Block?

Hopefully, you have inserted lots of BOAST Stories in the binder before this page.

If you have experienced 'writers block' or trouble identifying achievements to write about, there are many sources you can turn to in order to remember your achievements.

They include:

- ☐ Your diary
- ☐ Your performance reviews
- ☐ Business Plans
- ☐ Job advertisements that trigger your memory
- ☐ Networking with former supervisors and peers
- ☐ Looking over your skills summary and remembering examples when you used those skills.
- ☐ Networking with others in similar professions or roles and asking them what their achievements are.

Now that you have practised writing up your BOAST stories in detail, we will look at writing up the short, punchy 'dot point' achievement statements, which will be used on your resume.

Developing Short, Effective Achievement Statements.

Regardless of the approach you use to write achievement statements, effective ones have five things in common:




1. They commence with an action verb, in the past tense
2. They describe what you achieved
3. They include dollars, percentages or numbers
4. They provide the reader with scale or scope
5. They are usually limited to one sentence
6. They answer the "SO WHAT??" question.

Writing up your achievements long after the fact means you may not have access to the actual numbers, percentages, dollars, etc. You may need to approximate a numerical result or make estimation. You want to illustrate the point that you made a difference; if necessary, use a truthful ballpark estimate.

Examples:

- Achieved monthly sales targets of \$18,000 per week during transitional period of major change in product offerings to new retail target market.

Example:

Starting point	Improved	Ready for resume
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented a performance management system for the manufacturing plant. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented three key KPI measures for the manufacture of packing boxes which reduced wastage by 4% in less than twelve months. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reduced material wastage by 4% (translating to an annual saving of \$150,000) by implementing 3 KPI measures in the packing box manufacturing process (600 tonnes pa).
Comments So WHAT? Small plant, big plant, how many employees – what is scale and scope of this achievement?	Comments The reduced wastage is the result, so start the statement with a stronger beginning – can the dollars be calculated using the percentage?	Comments Hooray, that is a good one. ☺ Lock it in 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed customer service staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Managed 100 customer service staff who provided incoming call advice and outbound calls for marketing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Generated over \$3m sales through managing an outbound call centre of 100 staff. ✓ Fielded 150,000 customer services calls per annum on any enquiries relating to insurance policies by managing a customer service centre of 100 'Y' Generation employees.
Comments So What? How Many staff did you have? What did they do – I don't understand.....?	Comments Still haven't answered the "so what" question..... but scale and scope is starting to appear	Comments Lock them in your resume 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ummm, did general filing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Filed outstanding candidate files that had not been filed for 5 months, cleaning up the office 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Brought order to the records management system by working through a backlog of 5 months of general office filing, creating organisation, neat and tidy office and easily retrievable files ✓ Re-ordered the entire office filing system and labelled appropriately, to the relief of consultants and MD.
Comments Of what, so what, did it assist anyone by doing the filing, how many files? So what?	Comments Getting better, at least I know there must have been a backlog	Comments Lock them in your resume 

The following table provides some 'Action verbs' to assist you write your short, punchy achievement statements. Another source of inspiration is the newspaper – look at Job advertisements where copywriters are talented with the written word.

157 Action Verbs for Achievement statements

Accelerated	Doubled	Moulded	Staffed
Accomplished	Earned	Negotiated	Started
Accumulated	Edited	Operated	Streamlined
Achieved	Eliminated	Organised	Strengthened
Acted	Established	Originated	Stressed
Adjusted	Evaluated	Participated	Stretched
Administered	Examined	Performed	Structured
Advised	Executed	Planned	Succeeded
Allocated	Expanded	Presented	Supervised
Analysed	Explained	Processed	Synthesised
Approved	Facilitated	Produced	Systemised
Authorised	Fashioned	Programmed	Taught
Averted	Forecast	Promoted	Tendered
Awarded	Formulated	Proposed	Terminated
Blitzed	Founded	Provided	Traced
Budgeted	Generated	Purchased	Tracked
Built	Headed	Received	Traded
Calculated	Hosted	Recommended	Trained
Completed	Impacted	Recruited	Transferred
Conceived	Implemented	Redesigned	Transformed
Conducted	Improved	Reduced	Translated
Consolidated	Improvised	Reinvigorated	Trimmed
Controlled	Increased	Re-organised	Tripled
Converted	Inducted	Reported	Uncovered
Coordinated	Innovated	Researched	Unearthed
Corrected	Installed	Resolved	Unified
Created	Instigated	Restructured	Unravelled
Cut	Instituted	Reviewed	Updated
Decided	Interpreted	Revised	Utilised
Defined	Introduced	Saved	Vacated
Delegated	Invented	Scheduled	Verified
Delivered	Investigated	Selected	Verified
Demonstrated	Launched	Serviced	Visualised
De-mystified	Lectured	Set up	Widened
Deputised	Led	Simplified	Withdrew
Designed	Maintained	Slashed	Won
Developed	Managed	Sold	Worked
Devised	Mapped	Solved	Wrote
Directed	Moderated	Sparked	
Documented	Motivated	Spearheaded	

Example Achievement Statements

Customer Service

Key words you might include: sales, customer service, quick turnaround, reduced complaints, repeat custom, positive feedback

- Increased repeat customers by 300% by building strong relationships through regular telephone contact and follow through
- Developed a customer service tracking system (2500 customers) that was successfully used by all store staff, resulting in positive feedback from regulars and increased sales
- Developed and implemented successful complaint prevention program, which saved \$950 per month on cancellations and adjustments. Program was eventually adopted by organisation nationwide
- Served approximately 300 clients with an average spend of \$20.00 per day in a busy pet store.
- Assisted customers find their purchase quickly by knowing where over 4000 stock items were located.
- Twice awarded National Customer Service Award in 2008 - 2010, competing with 600+ national employees

Finance

Key words you might include: Strategised, implemented, demystified

- Implemented a five year strategy based on assumptions which drove the organisation's cost cutting measures to save 10% of annual recurrent expenditure
- Negotiated a complex, favourable lease arrangement for a corporate facility that fixed the rent expense for 7 years at below current cost
- Renegotiated \$25M loan portfolio to reduce annual interest rate by 2% or \$500K
- Identified netting opportunity which resulted in a 35% reduction in the National Electricity Market bank guarantees to \$58m, releasing funds to be used for other acquisition /investment purposes
- Maintained ongoing FBT reconciliation of \$500K per annum, involving 600 employees, 70 motor vehicles, entertainment review and classification for central tax department
- Produced P&L, Balance Sheet, Cash flow statements, variance analysis and exception reports within 3 days of end of month for 6 divisional managers. Total turnover of \$45M per annum with a \$6M capital spend.

Manufacturing

Key words you might include: Reduced, Manufactured, Optimised, Increased, Lean manufacturing, Six Sigma

- Directed material dispositions of excess supplies, fabric etc., working with contractors and unions to achieve 7% reduction in costs
- Developed a repair method upgrading product to first quality, not losing cost on non-first quality
- Installed a quality software package, which allowed real time access to information by defect type, style and operating – facilitating quick problem rectification and resolution.
- Optimised materials used in manufacturing to reduce costs and wastage, increasing profitability on two product lines by 15% and 18.5% respectively
- Negotiated with suppliers on specifications of raw materials, saving 9% (\$360K per annum)

Banking**Key words you might include**

- Reduced bad debt write-offs from 2.4% to 0.6% by negotiating timed payments with borrowers.
- Recovered \$32,000 previously written off by initiating surveillance and following through with collection proceedings.

Retail**Key words you might include**

- Increased store traffic by 8% through creative merchandising which drew customer attention to our stock
- Co-ordinated and implemented merchandising concepts for each new season range, ensuring customer traffic in the store through creative window and store displays
- Consistently achieved 100% + sales targets for High Street by creative merchandising, repeat customer relationships and effective sales campaigns.

Sales**Key words you might include**

- Achieved first year sales in excess of \$600K
- Grew volume of operation by 20% within the first year of new product launch
- Conceptualised and launched industry's fastest growing brand, which achieved 5% of the industry market in less than three years
- Increased annual sales by 20% through active management of business development team and targeting specific clients.
- Conducted aggressive sales campaign and follow up service that resulted in the opening of 80 new accounts in 2 years.

Marketing**Key words you might include**

- Achieved 40.3% increase in contribution and 43% increase in sales (value) for Product A
- Developed launch plan for Product XYZ which saw a successful market penetration of 12% within 18 months
- Analysed correlations between advertising and new sales by publications and improved results by 15% by redistributing advertising to publications producing highest return on investment
- Developed and implemented targeted business and marketing plans to secure new business. As a result smashed first year revenue targets by over 200%
- Worked with clients and programmers to deliver tailored marketing applications which exceeded customers' expectations, resulting in a larger number of users and increased licence revenues

Legal**Key words you might include**

- Developed strategy for dealing with new privacy laws for major client at risk, billing \$300K and achieving high customer satisfaction and further work referrals
- Renegotiated patent licences that saved the client organisation \$250,000 over a three year period

Management**Key words you might include**

- Guided talented but dissatisfied direct reports to develop goals for next review period to better define promotion criteria, which led to their eventual job growth, reducing staff turnover to zero for two years. (Estimated saving of \$200K)
- Identified surplus assets and sold them, reducing liability, depreciation costs and increasing cash flow, total value \$3.4M
- Reduced overheads by 50% or A\$3.5M by restructuring the New Zealand and Australian Services teams
- Substantially contributed to \$A25M saving in domestic aircraft movements annually by creating and implementing weighted activity costed performance measures and reporting program used as a prime lever in reaching new cost reduction targets
- Delivered product and processes integration benefits from the merger whilst simultaneously reducing Services staff from 70 to 35 Cross-Tasman and improving service levels. Estimated salary saving was \$2.1M including oncosts.

Human Resources**Key words you might include**

- Reduced work cover costs by more than \$400K pa through the successful negotiation of return to work schemes.
- Coordinated employee relocations for approximately 40 staff annually within \$250K budget
- Tendered outplacement services, reducing restructure costs by \$200K
- Implemented management team development scheme which reduced turnover from 15% to 4%, saving estimated \$100K in first year
- Reduced employee turnover from 5% to 2% by implementing strategies resulting from an employee satisfaction survey.
- Managed 15 workplace injury cases to minimise insurance costs, resulting in early returns to work.

Systems**Key words you might include**

- Analysed business process and workflows and saved \$12,000 annually by eliminating duplication of work in purchasing process
- Averted major risk to business by installing effective firewalls to detect viruses.
- Saved estimated \$50,000 per annum by effectively planning routine maintenance to minimise downtime.

Public relations**Key words you might include**

- Redesigned all organisational brochures and marketing material to more effectively support the efforts of the sales team and reduced printing costs by \$16,000 pa.
- Averted negative publicity after food scare by coordinating a media campaign, saving potential loss of \$3.6M

Consulting**Key words you might include**

- Designed and installed an operating control system for a printing company which reduced wastage and idle time, saving \$250K per year
- Developed a candidate manual and workshop format, which was sold to over 50 organisations, delivered to over 500 staff.

Purchasing**Key words you might include**

- Negotiated 8% reduction on price of major component of assembly line, saving \$400K per annum
- Established competitive tendering and preferred provider arrangements, resulting in savings of \$800,000 in first year.
- Unearthed little known competitor of major supplier, supported them through set up and reduced our expenditure by \$360,000

Accounting**Key words you might include**

- Developed and enforced strong credit and collection policies that reduced overdue receivables by over \$80,000 per month
- Developed a financial statement format that was commended by the Auditor General and later used as a model for all Victorian Local Government
- Changed the financing structure of a joint venture, reducing annual interest expense by \$500,000, improving controls for Treasury and enabling local finance management to focus on business issues.
- Partnered with Tax department and local finance management to create funding mechanism for critical Puerto Rican operations during construction and start-up of plant, resulting in cost effective financing that met Tax criteria.
- Enabled funding of local affiliate up-front marketing expenses while satisfying Tax department constraints by developing formula for new product launch assistance program.

Information Technology (IT)**Key words you might include**

- Project managed and implemented hardware and software upgrades to 100 desktops on a quarterly basis, reducing upgrade costs by estimated \$2000 each quarter
- Carried out the System Administrator role during major strategic changes to the IS function, ensuring system continuation and significant cost savings
- Respected and relied on by staff (350 seats) as an efficient, friendly and effective trouble shooter
- Saved business an estimated \$250 per week in reduced need for contract Administrators by implementing practical knowledge of NT and Domino administration and performing the daily administrative duties
- Developed comprehensive back-up procedures, provided for limited and restricted access to the computer facilities and implemented a system of rotating passwords to eliminate serious lapses in computer security
- Evaluated and purchased a software package, wrote the general ledger interfaces to and then installed the system that enabled accurate and better control of the company's fixed asset register of >600 asset items with an aggregate value of >\$180M.

Exercise 14 – Abbreviated Achievements

Your turn. Insert your own abbreviated statements.

[illegible]

Chapter 6 summary

- ✓ By now, you have written up your significant achievements in detail using the BOAST Stories format.
- ✓ As a result of writing up your BOAST Stories, you can recall them and articulate them when required.
- ✓ From your detailed achievement summaries, you have developed short, punchy statements that may be selected for your resume.
- ✓ By completing all the work in previous chapters, you now have a good dose of that essential ingredient for your career transition: FIG JAM

CHAPTER 7 – The Five Arrows

Introduction

Why are you worth the money you earn/ want to earn?

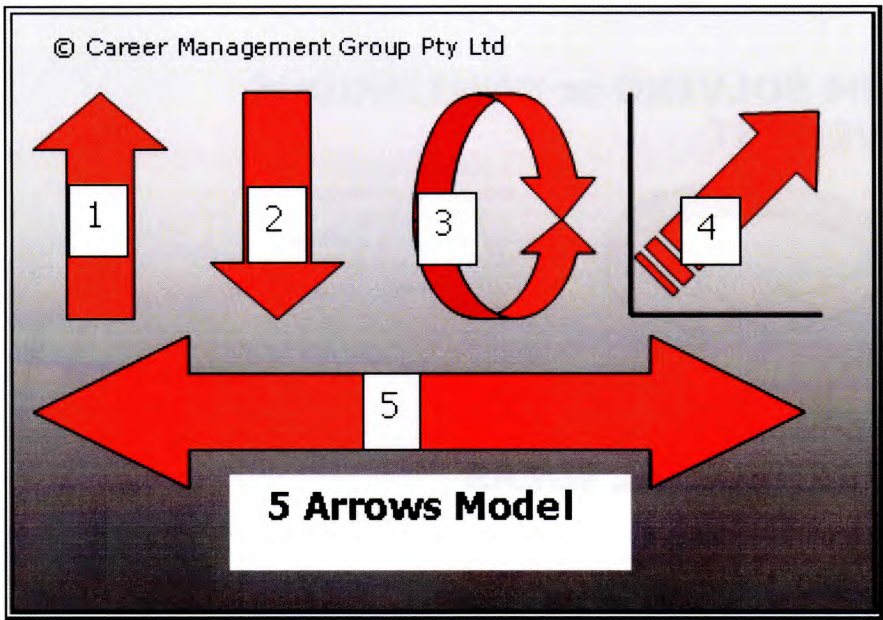
This is the most challenging question we have posed to all employees. It doesn't matter whether their annual salary was \$60,000 or \$600,000. Most people are stumped.

To generate the thinking required to answer this question, I developed this 5 arrows model. Each arrow denotes a way in which employees add value. Not every arrow may apply to you. However, thinking it through may lead you to understand and articulate why an employer pays you to work.

Your job needs to add value.

The Five Arrows Model

Diagram



Sample Interview question:

Why should we hire you?

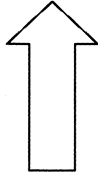
If you can prove that you add value in multiple ways and have examples, your answers will be much more powerful

This memory technique provides a structure for describing how you add value to an organisation. The arrows are drawn in a specific format for memory retention and depict:

INCREASE

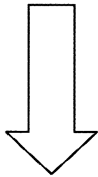
Describing what you increase by working at your job.

E.g.:



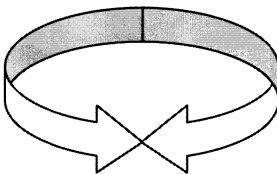
- Income
- Profit
- Cash flow
- Sales
- Staff retention
- Customers
- Staff retention
- And many more.....

DECREASE



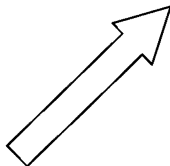
- Costs
- Losses
- Risk
- Staff turnover
- Staff dissatisfaction
- Writeoffs
- Customer loss.....

PROBLEM SOLVING or CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT



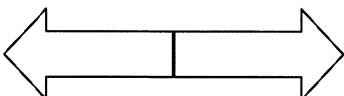
- Industrial disputes
- Mechanical problems
- Customer issues
- Manufacturing problems
- Manager/Staff disagreements
- Union issues
- Mediation

ENTREPRENEURIAL IDEAS



- New products
- New services
- New business systems
- New concepts
- Thinking outside the square

SUPPORT, ADMINISTRATION OR LEADERSHIP



- PA role which supports Manager to perform at higher level
- Providing leadership to Sales team who sell \$50M pa
- Filing everything so that consultants can work billable hours
- Leading an organisation of 600 FTE to a 10% increase in profitability

Map your capabilities and achievements against some or all of the arrows. Follow this up by writing about specific achievements to match these arrows. Be prepared to use this model in a meeting or interview to explain how you add value to a business.

Examples:

HR Manager:

Increases	Staff satisfaction, staff retention, payroll accuracy
Decreases	Staff turnover, workplace injuries, time taken to return injured workers to meaningful work, resignations
Problem solves	Union disputes
Thinks outside the square	New remuneration systems, Y generation recruitment ideas, graduate program
Administration and /or Leadership	Knows how to operate the employee database (admin) and provides leadership and training for managers on HR related issues

Marketing Professional:

Increases	The number of customers who phone the business (through advertisements), increase brand awareness, increase brand loyalty
Decreases	Customer loss, failure of new products (by doing market research before development)
Problem solves	Working with operations, packaging – solve logistical problems for new products
Thinks outside the square	Come up with completely new ideas for promotion of product or service, usually very creative
Administration and /or Leadership	Maintain the customer database, manage contracts for external providers, manage newspaper advertising campaigns (admin) Lead an executive team through the principles of marketing

Milk bar employee:

Increases	Return customers, profitability through increased sales, up-selling,
Decreases	Pilfering and theft, mess in the store
Problem solves	The store room mess, stock taking issues
Thinks outside the square	Suggests new products to sell, new ideas to increase number of customers,
Administration and /or Leadership	Balances the till everyday, does the banking, conducts a weekly stocktake, re-orders diminishing stocks for replacement

CHAPTER 8 – Self Assessment Summary

Introduction

What you have learned about yourself will stay with you. Keep the habit of writing up your achievements as they are attained.

In your own brief statements, try to do so without referring to the manual you have completed so far, complete the following summary of what you have covered.

Write a summary of what you have uncovered so far. Try not to refer back to your previous notes.

Exercise 20 – Just to recap

Please complete this exercise out loud and perhaps tape yourself using your mobile telephone (if you have that facility).

1. So, tell me a bit about yourself (use your self introduction)
2. What motivates you and makes you arrive at work interested and engaged? (use your Top 7 Values)
3. What do you recall as your most significant career achievements? (Use your BOAST stories)
4. Can you please name your top seven skills? (Top 7 skills)
 - a. Tell me about a time when you really needed to use (Skill 1)
BOAST Stories
 - b. What have you learned in the process of using (Skill 2)
BOAST Stories
 - c. Why did you become interested in (Skill 3)
BOAST Stories
 - d. What was your favourite time using (Skill 4)
BOAST Stories
5. Why do you think you are worth the remuneration we are offering for this role? (WILLING, ABLE, MATCHED)
6. Why should we hire you of all the other candidates? (5 Arrows)

In the WILLING-ABLE-MATCHED model,

ABLE refers to SQUEAK which is an acronym for: (Complete the words)

S															
Q					F										
U										I		G			
E								C							
A															
K															

'WILLING' refers to

M				V											
---	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

And

W		Y		Y				W					I	T
---	--	---	--	---	--	--	--	---	--	--	--	--	---	---

'MATCHED' refers to 3 things that are largely unspoken:

C	H			I				Y							
P		R					L		R						
C			T							T					

In the WILLING-ABLE-MATCHED model,

ABLE refers to SQUEAK which is an acronym for: (Complete the words)

S	K	I	L	L	S								
Q	U	A	L	I	F	I	C	A	T	I	O	N	S
U	N	D	E	R	S	T	A	N	D	I	N	G	
E	X	P	E	R	I	E	N	C	E				
A	C	H	I	E	V	E	M	E	N	T	S		
K	N	O	W	L	E	D	G	E					

‘WILLING’ refers to

M	O	T	I	V	A	T	I	O	N								
And																	
W	H	Y			Y	O	U			W	A	N	T			I	T

‘MATCHED’ refers to 3 things that are largely unspoken:

C	H	E	M	I	S	T	R	Y							
P	E	R	S	O	N	A	L		R	A	P	P	O	R	T
C	U	L	T	U	R	A	L		F	I	T				

Chapter 8 Summary

- ✓ This chapter summarises the self-assessment process you have been through.
- ✓ By being comfortable with all the self-assessment tools you been taught in preceding chapters, you will be articulate and knowledgeable during your job search activities which may include interviews, networking for information visits, general conversations with your friends, family and strangers.
- ✓ You will be able to answer interview questions such as:
 1. Tell me about yourself.
 2. What drives you?
 3. What are the things that you value in the workplace?
 4. Why did you leave your last job?
 5. What sort of employee are you? How do you like to be managed?
 6. Describe your management style.
 7. What sort of work environment would suit you most?

CHAPTER 9 – Finally.... Your Resume

Introduction

Like marketing any product or service, you may need to develop a series of documents, which can be used in the job search process.

Your resume is, of course, a major influencing document to be used, and much of this chapter is devoted to its development.

Before you begin making over your resume or creating one for the first time, consider what your previous job hire experience has been.

Your resume needs to be a well structured; an easy to read presentation of your own capabilities and accomplishments, short and to the point. Its purpose is likewise clear-cut: to intrigue a prospective employer to the point where he or she invites you for an interview. That's it! No mystery! Strange then that so many mistakes have been made, so many career moves aborted because people don't know how to put together this simple but crucial document.

With so much riding on it, you'd better know how the game is played. Resume formats, what to include, what to leave out, where to put a key paragraph and how the document looks all count. The result should be one tightly written, perfectly clear portrait of you and your related work accomplishments, education and skills - no more and certainly no less.

Your Resume – WHAT IT IS and WHAT IT IS NOT!

WHAT IT IS

- ☐ A brochure to land you in the 'Yes!' pile
- ☐ Relevant employment summary and work history
- ☐ Ideally 3 - 5 pages long
- ☐ A very personal document – not copied from someone else
- ☐ A document which emphasises experience and achievements
- ☐ A document to use selectively, preferably after a personal meeting
- ☐ A document that indicates that you can communicate clearly
- ☐ A marketing brochure/ selling document
- ☐ An agenda for further discussion
- ☐ The first work product you show a prospective employer
- ☐ A resume helps you focus on a position, not just a job.
- ☐ Written in the third person tense

WHAT IT IS NOT

- ☐ A lengthy autobiographical written statement
- ☐ 8 - 20 pages of detail
- ☐ A document prepared by a third party to make you look good
- ☐ A job description or duty statement listing duties
- ☐ A document you mail to all and sundry to let them know you are out of work
- ☐ A document you attach to a one line covering letter when responding to job advertisements

Your resume is not an effective "first strike" marketing tool.

A prematurely submitted resume may eliminate you from the interviewing process if it provides information that conflicts with the hiring organisation's selection criteria. Age, qualifications, education, unrelated industry or function experiences and other specific information included in a resume can be potential "turn offs" in the screening process.

As a result, the resume information could be used against your application and service to screen you out of consideration. You may decide, therefore, not to distribute your resume prior to an interview, this can be done without harming your application.

Similarly, in responding to an advertisement, a resume alone may not be the most effective document to represent you in your initial contact with the organisation. A letter, matching the selection criteria noted in the advertisement and accompanied by a tailored resume, normally generates a better response.

Exercise 21 – Resume Preparation Worksheet

Name

Address

Contact Telephone Numbers

Email address

Banner Headline

Paragraph about yourself

List of your main skills – no more than 14 in list

Qualifications

Resume Worksheet Continued

Title of position held Most recent employer and dates of employment
Title of position held Next employer and dates of employment
Title of position held Next employer and dates of employment
Title of position held Next employer and dates of employment
Title of position held Next employer and dates of employment
Title of position held Next employer and dates of employment
Courses completed, include name of course, where completed and date

Sample Resumes

Refer to the follow pages for samples of various resumes including:

- Chronological Resumes
- Functional Resumes

At the Career Management Group, we have hundreds of resume samples. There are also millions of resume examples on the internet. We recommend that you make your resume personalised, without being too fancy or complicated.

Sample Resumes

Sample Chronological resume

Chris Candidate

25-27 Ballantyne Street, South Melbourne Vic 3205

Tel: 9999 9999 Fax 9999 9999

Email: ccandidate@ozemail.com.au

FINANCIAL CONTROLLER, CFO

A financial executive with proven ability to formulate creative business solutions that achieve corporate targets. Able to quickly assess situations and create effective strategies to facilitate business growth and profitability. Success factors include effective leadership, situational analysis, optimisation of resources, innovation, and financial focus. Motivated by active learning and a team approach to goal attainment.

Experienced in dealing with investors, analysts, bankers, strategic alliances and industry groups.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Mergers, Acquisitions and Due Diligence | <input type="checkbox"/> Asset Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Finance Strategy | <input type="checkbox"/> IT Management |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strategic alliance development | <input type="checkbox"/> Forecasting, Budgeting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Budgeting, forecasting, cash flow management, strategic planning | <input type="checkbox"/> Financial, Management and Statutory reporting |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Balance Score Card Implementation | <input type="checkbox"/> Group consolidations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Comprehensive financial analysis, forecasting and modelling | <input type="checkbox"/> High level advice to Board and CEO |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Foreign Exchange and Interest Rate Hedging | <input type="checkbox"/> Management and leadership |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Internal audit and external audit management | <input type="checkbox"/> Project management – new IT systems and business process improvements |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Funds Management |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Systems, process and procedure development and implementation |

EDUCATION

MMA, A.B.C Graduate School of Business

Executive MBA Program – Melbourne University, Melbourne, 1988

BS, Business Administration/Major in Corporate Finance, RMIT, Melbourne, 1982

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

FIRST COMPANY PTY LTD Date YYYY – Date YYYY

A \$420 million water supply company serving 210,000 customers in NSW.

Finance Director

Full financial accountability to both internal and external audiences. Responsibilities include accurate and timely reporting of financial information, creation and maintenance of strong internal controls, billing team leader, Y2K system changes and e-commerce (on-line bill presentment and payment systems).

Selected Achievements

- Introduced strategic planning resulting in the creation of a clear vision and mission to guide the organisation in becoming the leading regional water supply company in NSW, whereby bottom-line performance improved by an average of 53% annually after implementation.
- Leader in acquisition and divestiture analysis. Created due diligence process and introduced and utilised an economic analysis model for business opportunities – resulting in three new acquisitions to the value of \$80M, profit 25%
- Developed and introduced a long term repayment system in response to consumer needs for financing (including government rebates) on purchases of private water storage units, increasing cashflow by 15%
- Facilitated successful organisational change by identifying the need for information systems evaluation in advance of replacement.
- Restructured a hierarchical 30-person department into a knowledgeable, flexible and supportive team by providing training, education and motivation
- Created an innovative profit-planning model that incorporated operational "drivers" in addition to financial measurements.

NEXT COMPANY PTY LTD Date YYYY – Date YYYY*Turnover - \$700M***Commercial Manager**

Reported to the General Manager, Australia. Responsible for financial controls, management and settlements for both operations and Sales Division. Managed Divisional operating cost budget of \$19.5M with a permanent finance staff of 10 and IT project team of 8 during implementation of new IT systems.

Selected Achievements

- Managed the creation of the first fully integrated long-range financial plan for the merchant energy business with full sensitivity analysis, to highlight key business drivers and introduce scenario planning.
- Developed strong professional finance team of 25 FTE through combination of selection, recruitment, coaching and mentoring.
- Achieved ranking equivalent to highest performing global team in independent and confidential employee opinion survey
- Represented Second Company in London and Paris to facilitate creation and implementation of Global Mark to Market Accounting Policy, including standardisation and streamlining of external statutory reporting requirements
- Improved understanding of trading activities throughout the business, by de-mystifying the financial results which established more focussed analysis and respect for quality and results of trading
- Lead IT Project team, which delivered low cost solution (\$1m) to implement new trading systems to operate in full competition.
- Managed all management and statutory reporting for \$700 turnover, 35 business units and 60 profit centres, including monthly variance analysis, budget process and P&L reports.

NEXT COMPANY PTY LTD Date YYYY – Date YYYY*Turnover - \$50m***Division Controller**

Responsible for all accounting and financial reporting at division level and financial analysis and business planning activities including valuations, restructuring, analysis, forecasts, annual profit plans and strategic long-range plans.

- Key team member responsible for the successful start-up of an iron castings foundry within two months of asset purchase. Within 5 years, market share was over 50% and sales topped \$28MM.
- Lead the company effort to improve manufacturing and administrative efficiency. Initiatives included: development of efficiency/productivity/utilisation measurements, implementation of automated scheduling, development of a capacity/capability analysis and improving process flow within the plant.
- Developed and administered incentive compensation and 401K benefit plans.
- Implemented a cost accounting system in a manufacturing industry where the use of product costs was unprecedented.
- Instrumental in the selection and successful implementation of BBN, an integrated computer system supporting the efficient operation of the facility.

NEXT COMPANY PTY LTD Date YYYY – Date YYYY*Turnover - \$100m*

A tier one automotive supplier and a subsidiary of a Fortune 500 corporation.

Senior Financial Analyst**Selected Achievements**

- Instrumental in the analysis of major acquisition, expansion, and restructuring projects.
- Key member of strategic planning team responsible for maintaining and expanding the company's position in the \$40 million interior trim product line.
- Created, unproved and maintained multiple financial systems to support group consolidations, capital appropriations, sales analysis, and capacity analysis.
- Utilised ABC and standard cost techniques in machine rate development, new product analysis and transfer for pricing. Plant Controller at 2 plant locations with sales of approximately \$16 million annually.

Sample Functional Resume**Chris Candidate**

Address Line 1
9000 0000 AH, 0400 000000 Mob
ccandidate@bigpond.com.au

Business Systems Management and Implementation

24 years of experience implementing Business Management Systems for organisations such as ABC Organisation, City of Gothic, XYZ Corporation and EFG Pty Ltd.

Areas of Expertise**Project Management**

- Coordinate hardware and software deployment projects from planning through implementation.
- Plan and coordinate the implementation of a disaster readiness site.
- Facilitate regular meetings with staff and managers to ensure that schedules are maintained and new issues promptly mitigated.
- Provide interface with various departments to develop information/dissemination policy and procedures.

Operations/Systems Management

- Manage infrastructures such as PC/LANs, FDE telephone systems, WANs, system programming support, application improvement.
- Implement remote systems monitoring solutions, call tracking, outsourcing solutions, PC/Desktop hardware and software inventory tracking systems.
- Create start-up operations, building IT support and
- Budgeting for both recurrent and capital expenditure and income.

Client Computing

- Introduce client education to ensure maximum employee operating productivity.
- Establish Help Desk response teams.
- Provide departmental reviews for determining new technology requirements.
- Understand business drivers and direct process improvement and re-engineering initiatives to deliver office automation technology.
- Participate in company acquisitions or divestiture and lead efforts to integrate roles and responsibilities into organisation.

Technology Planning

- Evaluation, select and implement applications, office systems and infrastructure solutions on midrange and personal computer systems with LAN/WANs.
- Recommend data/telecommunications network technologies to support corporate office and remote clients' application requirements.
- Evaluate and introduce Internet technical support solutions to maximise efficiency.

New Business Development

- Sell remote systems management solutions and consulting engagements generating revenues of more than \$1M as manager with full operational and P&L responsibilities.
- Provide pre-sales support, customer consultations and post implementation account management.
- Negotiate customer sales and vendor contracts.
- Established the department and created organisational goals and objectives.
- Created service offerings that generated revenues in excess of \$1M in the first year.
- Provided pre-sales support, customer consultation and post implementation account management functions to further Marketing and Sales objectives.
- Developed a variety of PC/Desktop services including Help Desk that enabled a four minute response time to problems experienced on the floor of the Melbourne Stock Exchange.

Career History

Director IT, AABCC Company

YYYY - YYYY

IT Sales Consultant, BBCCDDDD Company

YYYY - YYYY

Systems Engineer, CCDDEEEEE Organisation

YYYY - YYYY

Education

Master of Information Systems – Melbourne University 1997

Bachelor of Business (IT) – RMIT 1988

End of sample functional resume

Chapter 9 Summary

- ✓ You have learned what the basic purpose of a resume is – and what it is not.
- ✓ All your self assessment and FIG JAM culminates in a strong resume; a brochure that markets you into your target vocation or job.
- ✓ Having completed this chapter, you will be able to draft your first resume.
- ✓ Your draft resume is now ready to take out for 'informational networking'.
- ✓ Your draft resume is also ready for discussions with your referees

CHAPTER 10 – Develop your Key Selection Criteria in advance

Introduction

Every job has a 'key selection criteria' that the recruiter or selector has in mind when they assess your resume and interview performance.

You need to develop an understanding of the likely key selection criteria that you may need to address. Increasingly, recruiters and selectors request a written response to each key selection criterion prior to a second interview.

Career Management Group has seen that a prepared response to an imaginary 'Key Selection Criterion' assists you to clarify your experience and achievements.

Refer to job advertisements ('Newspaper Scan' mentioned in earlier chapter) to compile your list of the likely key selection criteria.

Key Selection Criteria examples

- Minimum of xx years in the banking or finance industry
- Qualifications in xxxxxxxxxx
- Managing field staff
- Experience in the automotive industry
- Experience in manufacturing
- Team work
- Leadership capabilities
- Financial and commercial acumen
- Accurate typing
- Knowledge of xxx industry
- Supporting a sales team
- Leading and motivating a sales team, strong customer focus and outstanding ability to initiate and develop client relationships with multiple business partners.
- Proven strategic capability
- Highly developed negotiation skills
- An eye for business opportunities
- Management of significant commercial projects ideally related to licensing and within an event environment
- Sound financial acumen and human resources management skills
- Personal drive, integrity, high level interpersonal skills, ability to communicate and influence

Finance Director
Key Business Partner Role
Circa \$150k Package

As Finance Director of a \$300 million division you will be pivotal in **driving a change programme** that will ultimately ensure **commercial assessment** is applied to all organisational decisions and adequate succession planning is achieved. Reporting to the GM Finance you and your team will take responsibility for developing and implementing the **Management Reporting Framework** for the division, providing **timely reporting** to management of actual, budget and forecast information.

As a **mentor** to a large team with three senior managers you must provide executive stakeholders with critical management information to drive decision-making. Demonstrating your ability to deliver and construct meaningful **budgets, forecasts, operational and strategic planning** activities is critical as well as being able to interrogate and assess the feasibility of **business case** opportunities. Your mandate will also include **streamlining processes and procedures** to align with business imperatives; ensuring accuracy and integrity in the billing systems and processes for the Division as well as **contract management** and review to ensure that terms are in line with corporate guidelines and objectives.

We are seeking expressions of interest from qualified (CA/CPA) finance professionals who can demonstrate the ability to 'think bigger picture whilst being able to zoom into the detail'. You are an influential, commercially minded individual capable of adding value in a cross-functional executive team. Previous experience and a track record of success in multiple commercial environments would be viewed very favourably.

Exercise 15 – Write up your list of likely Key Selection Criteria

Exercise 16 – Type up a complete response for each KSC

It is recommended that your key selection criteria response is written in the first person tense. This is a more personal response. On the following pages, we have provided you with some sample responses.

Sample Key Selection Criteria responses

1. Strong customer focus and outstanding ability to initiate and develop client relationships with multiple business partners

As former Director of Key Accounts for AABCC Pty Ltd, I was responsible for winning and retaining \$1M clients. Over the past five years, I have been successful in developing strong relationships with those clients that converted into further sales and joint opportunities.

Some of my career highlights are the result of relationship building including:

- ♦ Winning BBCCDD account from our major competitor, resulting in a total of \$1.2M sales over the past 2 years
- ♦ Being asked to quote (instead of tender) for the CCDDEE corporation, competing with only one other organisation, as a result of close liaison with their decision makers and a key supplier

I am also a member of the DDEEFF club, which affords me the opportunity to mix with 'captains of industry' on a regular basis.

2. Proven Strategic Ability

As a member of the Executive team responsible for the strategic direction, financial success, operations and cultural development of the national business, my challenge was to lead Corporate planning and execution throughout the organisation, within a highly competitive marketplace and fast centralising retail climate.

Specific activities I have undertaken to drive strategic planning and growth:

- Shared responsibility with Executive team in strategic development from establishing Core purpose and values, through annual and mid term corporate plans, to drilling down to Divisional and Category plan levels.
- I acted as the sole conduit between Executive and Senior management teams to ensure a seamless planning process and operational consistency of 9 departments and over 200 staff.
- Led an annual 'business prioritisation process' to ensure we focussed finite resources and energies on key strategic and revenue generating categories.

Selected achievements:

1. Significant Corporate sales and profit growth over a 3 year period of over 70%.
2. Drove positive cultural development after difficult installation of complex new operating system (SAP) by deep focus on personnel development; full awareness and alignment to our end goal, personal and professional development and empowerment – leading to employee of choice recognition by independent reviewers.
Australian category plans presented to International on a half yearly basis became the benchmark for global business unit planning and was later utilised by other subsidiaries

3. CPA Qualifications

I have a Bachelor of Commerce degree from Melbourne University, 1986 and subsequently completed my CPA program in 1991. Since then I have converted my CPA program into credits for a Masters in Finance at RMIT (currently underway)

4. Ability to Motivate, encourage and manage staff

I have a passion for performance management and have implemented this style of managing the work of others. Many of those staff (and contractors) who have reported to

me have since moved on to higher duties and responsibilities, having developed their management competencies and strategic understandings.

Many of my roles have required effective communication at all levels of the organisation, being able to 'toggle' between operational and field staff to professional staff to Board members.

I have a reputation for building team spirit and encouraging staff to work towards common objectives. I have been described as having strong interpersonal skills, considered articulate and can grasp the nature of concepts and respond to situations very quickly.

I led organisational change, during the deregulation of gas markets, across multiple business units. This required daily management of task related outcomes such as developing and reviewing business cases, approving test strategies and results, ensuring business requirements were complete and approved, implementation planning, management reporting and reviewing the post-project outcomes.

Some of my achievements in this area include:

- Project management of retail contestability, within short time frames, managing a staff of 120.
- Received consistent performance appraisals that recognise leadership capability.
- Created a new organisational unit responsible for the management of large scale change and mitigation of operational risk containing 7 direct reports and staff ranging from 25-50 (depending on the volume of change initiatives)

5. Training and workshop facilitation

I have Certificate IV qualifications in workplace training and have developed the following courses for the ABC Corporation

- ◆ Key Performance indicator writing skills
- ◆ Product detail and learning
- ◆ Time Management

In addition, I have assisted the Organisational Learning department to write training manuals on the following subjects:

- ◆ Dealing with difficult customers
- ◆ Conducting Performance appraisals

I am an experienced workshop facilitator, having spent at least 50% of my time in the past 2 years running continuous day long workshops with an average of 15 participants each day. I am familiar with the need to be responsible for the room organisation, refreshments ordering and AV equipment.

Chapter 10 Summary

- ✓ When you have completed this summary, you will have a master document in Microsoft Word that has all the likely key selection criteria you may encounter during your job applications and interviews.

- ✓ This document will assist you to prepare for interviews and will provide a ready resource for writing an email to the recruiter or selector after the interview.

CHAPTER 11 – Adding to your Personal Presentation Portfolio

Introduction

If preparation is the key to success, your development of the appropriate documents to support your job search will ensure that efficient use is made of your valuable time.

In addition to your resume, we recommend the following documentation be developed to aid your job search:

- ❑ Standard Job application letter – which can then be 'tweaked' to customise it for the specific job being applied for
- ❑ Summary of skills document – to be provided as an addendum to your resume, during an interview, review for yourself prior to an interview etc
- ❑ Networking letters - to open doors and to say thank you after a networking visit
- ❑ Marketing letter

Job application letter

Who Needs a Cover Letter?

Everyone who sends out a resume does! Even if the cover letter never 'came up' in conversation or wasn't mentioned in an advertisement, it's expected that you will write one.

It is regarded as a sign of laziness (sorry about that) to send out a cover letter that is not tailored to the *specific* company. In the days before computers, you could *maybe* get away with it. Not any more.

Yes, it adds to the wear and tear of looking for a job! But the good news is: the cover letter gives you another chance to emphasise what you have to contribute to the company or organisation. Don't give the person screening the resumes a second to entertain the thought: 'But how can this person help US?' Your cover letter will answer that question in your own words. Your resume will also answer that question but in a somewhat more rigid format.

What makes a Good Cover Letter?

No spelling or typing errors. Not even one.

Address it to the person who can hire you. Resumes sent to the personnel department have a tougher time of it. If you can find out (through networking and researching) exactly who is making the hiring decision, address the letter to that person. Be sure the name is spelled correctly and the title is correct. A touch of formality is good too: address the person as "Mr", "Ms", "Mrs", "Miss", "Dr", or "Professor". (Yes, life is complicated.)

Write it in your own words so that it sounds like you, not like something out of a book. Employers are looking for knowledge, enthusiasm and focus.

Show that you know something about the company and the industry. This is where your research comes in. Don't go overboard; just make it clear that you didn't pick this company out of the phone book. You know who they are, what they do and *you* have chosen them!

Use terms and phrases that are meaningful to the employer. (This is where your industry research and networking come in.) If you are applying for an advertised position, use the requirements in the ad and put them in **BOLD** type. For example: the ad says:

NECESSARY EXPERIENCE / SKILLS:

- Minimum 3 years experience in a similar role
- Experience with off shore & local production
- Solid understanding of pattern making and garment construction
- High level proficiency in Excel and Adobe Illustrator on Apple Mac / PC
- Ability to work autonomously
- Strong communication skills

DUTIES INCLUDE:

- Create and maintain timelines for development, production and delivery
 - Oversee and coordinate processes for development, production and shipping
 - Sourcing materials and manufacturers
 - Liaise with and maintain positive relationships with suppliers and manufacturers
 - Prepare production budgets and negotiate on production costs
 - Prepare production specs and purchase orders
 - Responsible for quality, fit and consistency
 - Coordinating all fittings with design team
 - Working as part of a team.
-

Make sure your cover letter contains each of these requirements and shows how you measure up.

In summary, while a good cover letter can certainly contribute to your success in landing a job, its main purpose is not to get you a job, but to get you an interview. Hardly anyone is hired sight unseen, so obtaining an interview is crucial to getting a job. Every effective direct-mail sales letter tries to close the sale by motivating the recipient to take a specific action. A good cover letter works in the same way, as a direct-mail sales letter that closes the sale with a request for an interview.

Sample Paragraphs for your own draft Job Application Letter

Sample Opening Paragraphs

1. Your advertisement for the Officer Manager position advertised in the Age on 23 August YYYY caught my attention. This sounds like a most interesting position and I believe I fit your requirements very well.
2. I enclose my résumé in response to your advertisement for Officer Manager in the Age on 23 August YYYY. The position sounds very interesting and is very much in line with my career background and experience. Specifically:
3. I read with interest your advertisement in The Age on Saturday last for an Office Manager. From your description, my skills and background look to be a good match. In particular:
4. If your advertisement in the Age was written to attract my attention, it worked like a charm! As the enclosed resume demonstrates, my background, skills, experience and proven accomplishments combine to make me an excellent candidate for the Office Manager role (position reference ABS 2287E).
5. Eleven years of experience in Office Management in a number of differing organisations has made me more qualified than others who may respond to your advertisement in The Age on 23 August XXXX. The enclosed resume details my career experience and history; here is my overview:

Sample Second Paragraphs

Your requirements	My match for the position
Relevant Qualifications	✓ xxxxx ✓ xxxxx
Industry experience	✓ xxxxxxxxx ✓ xxxxxxxxx
Technical knowledge	✓ xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx ✓ xxxxxxxxx ✓ xxxxxx

and so on.....

or

- a. I have 15 years of experience managing a busy consulting practice
- b. I am an expert user of MYOB
- c. I type at 70 wpm
- d. I have an excellent eye for detail
- e. I love working with clients and customers, providing a 5 star customer service

Sample Final paragraphs

1. Should you agree that my background is a good match for your requirements, please feel free to contact me on the numbers listed above.
2. I will be in contact with your office next week. However, if you should want to reach me in the meantime, please telephone me on 9999 9999 or 0400 000 000.
3. I look forward to discussing your needs and further details of my experience with you in a personal interview. I will also be pleased to provide references and to discuss my history with you on a more personal basis. You can reach me during the day on my mobile as above.
4. Enclosed for your review is a copy of my resume which demonstrates my competencies and achievements as they relate to this role. I look forward to the opportunity to discuss my application further at interview.
5. I am enclosing my résumé for your consideration. I can be reached on 0400 000 000 and I look forward to hearing from you.

Sample Application Letter 1

Chris Candidate**Address Line****Tel: 9999 9999 Fax 9999 9998****Email: ccandidate@bigpond.com**

May 10, YYYY

Dear Firstname Lastname

Job Title

Company

Address

Address

Dear Firstname Lastname

I am responding to your advertisement in *The Age* of May 3, YYYY for the position of Manufacturing Engineer. Your advertisement is particularly appealing to me since the needs you describe match my background.

Specifically, I have:

- Developed and implemented an Early Warning System to identify start-up production problems which resulted in a 22% reduction in downtime.
- Introduced a modified MRP system for engineering projects that reduced stock outs by 12% and new product development time by 16%.
- Redesigned piece part manufacturing processes resulting in annualised savings of \$56,000
- Implemented Lean Manufacturing principles on a site involving more than 50 employees, resulting in reduced wastage (6% reduction) and increased productivity (estimated > 8%)

I look forward to discussing your needs and further details of my experience with you in a personal interview. I will be pleased to provide references and discuss my earning history with you on a more personal basis. You can reach me during the day at (03) 9999 9999.

Sincerely,

Chris Candidate

Enclosed: Resume

Sample Application Letter 2

Chris Candidate
27 Ballantyne Street, Southbank 3006
9684 9900 Fax 9684 9901
Email:

Date

Dear Ian Jackson,

I am applying for the Melbourne position of Trainee Valuer, reference No. 45678.

I am a Business Development Officer for xxxxxx, an Accounting/Financial Planning/Marketing Consultancy. I assist the owner in strategic marketing, financial monitoring and IT support to the firm.

I feel that I have a strong candidacy for consideration due to the different skills I have obtained to date:

- High level of research skills – honed through my university life and in my current role – skilled at internet searches, market research in cold calling and approaching people in specific industry as well as in the community, i.e. local community, accountancy, printing industry, IT industry, leisure industry
- High level of written and communication skills – necessary in day to day dealings within my role at the marketing consultancy through report writing, communication to clients and to team members
- Have a B.B. – Marketing/B.A – Sports Administration
- High level of quality and attention to detail in my report writing
- Highly adaptive to different environments
- Highly motivated and willing to learn
- High level of Microsoft Office and Excel skills – used for creating databases, graphs and formulating key performance indicators for strategic planning
- Willing to work flexible hours
- Own a car and have a Victorian drivers licence
- High level of knowledge of IT and pricings, I enjoy the area and I am involved in the operation of our system in the office. I recently researched and bought the components necessary for my own computer, gaining the best value for the budget I could afford and then built it. It didn't take long to gain a familiarity with specific costing for different componentry. I believe I can adapt these skills to different industries.

I am looking for a role in a company that xxxxxxxx (values, Ideal Job preference etc)

My high quality level of research skills – which are readily adaptable to client specific needs, costing of computer equipment for the office and business analysis skills are a strong match to the position described.

I look forward to meeting you in person to further discuss my candidacy for the role.

Yours faithfully

Chris Candidate

Sample Application Letter 3

Chris Candidate
100 High Street Road
Suburb. State. Postcode

30th October 2012

Ms Virginia Bacon
Tanner Menzies
Address Line 1
Address Line 2

Dear Virginia,

Ref. No: MF315343, for HR Manager

I am a highly skilled, tertiary qualified HR Manager with over 14 years experience in a variety of senior HR and marketing roles within a multinational oil company and over 6 years Human Resources experience in the leisure and entertainment and retail property industries.

Much of my career in both marketing and human resources has involved the introduction of change and new concepts requiring highly developed negotiating and influencing skills. I have successfully moved between multinational and privately owned companies with the styles of the organisations in question at opposite ends of the management and HR spectrum.

In two companies, previously devoid of any HR function, I established a professional HR Department, whilst personally maintaining both a strategic and operational focus.

All my HR roles have involved managing multiple sites throughout Australia, as well as PNG and initial involvement in setting up a drilling operation on the Caspian Sea.

I have dealt with high ranking professionals in marketing, IT, engineering, the geosciences and accounting to name a few. I have worked on high level committees, both within and external to the organisations with whom I have worked, as well as interfacing with board members when required.

I have dynamic, hands on approach to HR, can make tough decisions when necessary, have a consultative style of management, can work in isolation or as part of a team and have the highest work ethics and a good sense of humour.

I believe my track record, motivation and career aspirations match very closely with the requirements of the position.

I have attached my resume for your perusal and would be very pleased to meet with you at your convenience.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Candidate

Sample Application Letter 4

Chris Candidate
100 High Street Road
Suburb. State. Postcode

August 12, 2012

Metropolitan Children's Hospital
P.O. Box 112233
Suburb, State, Postcode

Attn: Robin Boyd, Human Resources
Re: Director for Patient Financial Services

Dear Ms. Boyd

I was very interested to see your advertisement for a Director of Patient Financial Services in the *Age on date*. I have been seeking just such an opportunity as this and I think my background and your requirements may be a good match. My resume is enclosed for your review.

Of particular note for you and the members of your team as you consider this management placement are my strong accomplishments in **reducing outstanding debts and organising accounting and collections functions** to achieve improved operating efficiency internally and improved cash flow for the institution as a whole.

Consider the following:

- ✓ Reduced A/R days from 110 to 60.4.
- ✓ Reduced staff by 6.5 FTEs with concurrent increase in total departmental performance.
- ✓ Reduced patient complaints with simultaneous increase in A/R collected.
- ✓ Improved cash flow by \$200K per month.

Additionally, my contributions have been mainly achieved by improving information flow within the patient financial services function, improving patient financial services utilization of already available MIS services and improving cooperation between patient services and admissions, UR, contracting and medical records functions.

After fifteen years in patient accounting, I have a thorough understanding of every aspect of this function in a modern hospital/medical centre setting. My current employer is very happy with my performance, but I view myself as somewhat of a trouble-shooter and most of the reorganizations initiated here have already come to fruition, so I am eager to consider new challenges.

If you are seeking a manager who stays abreast of her field, who understands technology, who earns 100% staff support and who is as career-committed as it takes to achieve total success, then please consider what I have to offer. I would be happy to have a preliminary discussion with you or members of your committee to see if we can establish a mutual interest. I will call you within the week to answer any initial questions you may have and to hear about your hiring process.

Thank you for your attention to these materials. I certainly look forward to exploring this further.

Yours faithfully,

Chris Candidate

Summary of Skills

Making it easy for prospective employers and recruiters to understand your range of skills is a great idea. Documenting all your skills in an addendum, which is readily available (and readily edited by yourself), is good preparation.

Recruiters in particular love this summary; it enables them to match their client requirements with your skills in the simplest way. When compiling this document, remember that you may be asked to demonstrate proficiency in any of the skills listed..... so have your KSR statements to match!

Sample Summaries of Skills Listing

Business Skills Summary

Accounting Systems - varied experience with Oracle Financials, Sun Financials, Dynamics Financials and McCormack & Dodge.

Contract Negotiation - Prepared and Negotiated 7 Software Project Contracts and various personal construction contracts.

Data Conversion/Interfacing - vast experience converting and interfacing data from many types of databases.

Database Management - expert user of ACCESS and SQL with various RDBMS including ORACLE.

Financial Accounting - wide experience preparing financial accounts for various businesses' and tax returns.

Financial Markets - work experience with all money market and derivative products.

Investing - Managed up to \$3 million of family investments in the stock market and money markets. Managed and invested on behalf of many investment trusts.

Management Accounting - preparation of cost accounting and contract management information for CEO and Board reporting for \$100 million turnover organisation. Preparation of various management reports for Financial Markets Executives.

Project Management - experience with up to 10 resources, on 5 separate projects. Project Planning Preparation and Steering Committee Reporting.

Receivership - managed and administered several receiverships, e.g. timber mill, Fashion Company, forest partnership.

Report Writing and Data Analysis - proficient with 5 different report writers performed various management reporting and data analysis

Selling Experience - prepared and presented software to various potential clients. Request for Information and Proposal preparation and presentation.

Software Specification - wrote detailed technical specifications for Uniface and Oracle Software.

Spread sheeting - expert user of EXCEL.

Training - can prepare course material and present structured training courses.

User Acceptance Testing - written and performed testing.

Sample Skills Summary

Finance

- Management reporting, Board Reporting
- Budgeting and forecasting
- Fixed Asset Management
- Accounting Standards interpretation and implementation
- Cash flow management
- Facilitate annual audit process
- Transaction settlements
- Statutory Reporting (AGAAP/USGAAP)

Systems and Operations

- Implementation of new IT systems
- Project leadership IT team
- Change Management
- Process Problem identification and solutions

Strategic Planning

- Annual Business Plans
- Balanced Score-card
- 5 Year planning
- Gap Analysis

Management/Leadership

- Change management
- Restructure and re-organisation
- Performance Appraisal
- Selection and Recruitment
- Team Building

Treasury

- Interest and loan portfolio management
- Currency exposure management
- Loan Restructuring
- Relationship management

Mergers & Acquisitions

- Lead negotiator – acquisitions. Capital raising
- Deal Structuring
- Comprehensive financial analysis - Valuations
- Ability to transform strategy into high quality outcomes
- Documentation and due diligence

Networking

- Build business sales
- Achieve business outcomes

Investor Relations

- Presentations to investment community (UK and Australia)
- Managing annual presentations to investment analysts
- Organising presentations and logistics – national and international

Management experience:

- Supervision and management of full-time and part-time support staff
 - Budget management
 - Large scale Project Management
 - Equipment Purchasing
-

Marketing Letter

This **Cold-Contact Cover Letter** is worth your while since at least 80 percent (some experts say as much as 95 percent) of all jobs are on the 'closed' market.

This self-marketing letter is ideally sent to target companies and recruiters and to influential contacts who may be in a position to assist your job search. As with any marketing document, you will need to determine your target market and write this letter with a particular focus in mind.

We have included some sample marketing letters at the end of this chapter.

Networking Introduction and thank you

Contacting a lot of people over the next period of your job search is vital to landing a 'hidden job'. To make this easier, create a process which works for you. Such a process may include sending a standard email to each person you have met, on the same day or next day of your meeting.

After you meet with a contact, it is absolutely essential to write a thank you note. Tell your contact how much he or she helped you and refer to particularly helpful, specific advice. Everyone - even the most high-level executive - likes to feel appreciated. In addition to immediate follow-up after a meeting or conversation, keep in touch with your contacts. This way, they may think of you if an opportunity comes up and they will also be forthcoming with new advice. It's important to stay on their radar screens without being imposing or invasive. And, of course, if you get that new job, be sure to tell them and thank them again for their help.

We have included some sample networking thank you letters at the end of this chapter.

Sample Marketing letters

Sample Marketing Letter 1

Kimberly Lee
Address Line 1
Telephone 9999 9999
Email Klee@ozemail.com.au

Date MMM YYYY

Mr. Frank Randall, Partner
Company Name
101 Street Name, Name of City, Postcode

Dear Mr. Randall,

There's a reason why:

- Friends hand me the dinner bill to divvy up
- My cheque book always balances at the end of each month
- My tax return is always completed in time
- Community groups look to me to organise events

I am a 'detail person' — the kind of person you need as your administrative assistant.

For the last five years, I've handled all the scheduling, finances and logistics for my former employer, ABC Company. It's time for me to get back into the corporate work force and put my organizational talents to use there.

I'll contact you in the next few days to see if you or one of your associates needs an assistant.

Thank you!

Kimberly Lee

Enclosure: resume

Sample Marketing letters

Sample Marketing Letter 2

First and Last Name

Address Line

9999 9999 Fax 9999 9999

March 27, YYYY

Mr. Robert Morris
Morris Construction.
123 Harbor Road
Port Melbourne 3205

Dear Mr. Morris,

John Lovell advised me of a foreman position that is available at your company. From my enclosed resume, you will find that my experience meets the requirements you have outlined for the position.

As the former manager of a small business, I appreciate the importance of a following that comes from the recommendations of satisfied clients. I am considered a diplomatic manager, which enables me to get along well with clients, supervisors and crew. My ability to maintain high morale among workers increases retention and contributes to safety, a crucial factor in the success of construction work.

On Monday, I'll call you to see when we can meet for an interview.
Sincerely,

Eric Stadler

Enclosure: resume

Sample Marketing Letter 3

Chris Candidate
Address Line 1
Tel: 9999 9999 Fax 9999 9999
Email: ccandidate@ozemail.com.au

Date

Dear Firstname Surname
Job Title
Company
Address

Dear Name:

As a results oriented manager, I have initiated and executed timely strategies to increase criteria such as company uptime, quality and customer satisfaction, while reducing waste and down time. I have developed, motivated and managed a labour force of 25 to 40 employees and have a positive track record in the area of process improvement targeted to increase performance.

Big Corporation Company Ltd recently closed their Sydney plant after careful evaluation, as a strategic measure due to a buy out by 'Flowers'. As a result, I am seeking a challenging and stable position where I can contribute my professional experience and expertise toward company profitability and professional growth.

Please review my resume in the light of your current opportunities. The following profile may also be helpful:

<i>Desired Position</i>	Production or Product Manager, Process Improvement Manager, Customer Satisfaction/Quality Opportunities Manager with a medium or large growth oriented company
<i>Location</i>	Preference is Melbourne; CBD area; will relocate for the right career opportunity, preferable international
<i>Compensation History & Requirements</i>	Current salary \$95K + Super + Motor Vehicle and xxxxx

Name, with every confidence that I would become a valuable asset to any company, I would welcome the opportunity to discuss my professional experience and qualifications with you and explore whether I can add value.

Yours faithfully

Chris Candidate

Sample Emails after interview

Sample email after interview 1

Hi Donna,

I write to thank you once again for the opportunity to be interviewed for the position of Sales Co-ordinator.

I hope you and Roy feel as excited and certain about my fit for the role as I do. I believe that I have the skills, experience and product knowledge to excel in this role; the job is exactly what I am looking for. I know I can and will deliver the commitment you require, as my values and work ethic seem to be of the same standards as your own.

Specifically, you mentioned there is a strong need to introduce standard costing and better use of the SAP computer reporting. I have a lot of experience in those two areas and could really add value to your finance department.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Regards,

Vicky Candidate

Sample email after interview 2

Dear Donna,

Just a quick email to say thank you for your time yesterday and for providing such a comprehensive description of both the ABC Company and the role of Sales Coordinator.

I am very interested in the position, particularly after reflecting that my background and experience is a very good match – I know the product, the target market and am familiar with many of your existing clients.

I hope that in my interview, I was able to communicate all that I have to offer the ABC Company – I am feeling excited by the potential and hope it is shared by you.

Yours faithfully,

Vicky Candidate

Thank You Letters—How to Do Them Right

Excerpt from www.wetfeet.com

By Frank Marquardt
WetFeet

Dear Frank,

What's the general etiquette on 'thank you' letters after first-round interviews? E-mail okay? Do they have to be snail mailed? How should they be tailored? I don't know the first thing about them and I have interviews coming up!

—WJP

Dear WJP:

I'm all for 'thank you' letters. Sending them shows you're thoughtful, shows you're detail oriented and shows you care. They give you a chance to say: "Here I am and, by gosh, I'm interested in the job we discussed—and by the way, thanks for talking to me about it!"

However, as in every business agreement, there are caveats: If you misspell words, you'll sink your chances of landing the job. If you say the same thing to everybody you talked to, chances are they're going to find out—and that won't impress your hiring manager the way an individualised letter will.

It is worth noting that some hiring managers in different industries have different expectations regarding 'thank you' letters. Many investment-banking recruiters say they don't like them: 'thank you' letters do more harm than good, overall, because of snafus like those above. In I-banking, we've heard recruiters say, too, that they've made their decision before a 'thank you' letter arrives—so it does no good.

Still, I recommend sending them. I also recommend proofreading them three or four times, having a friend proofread them three or four times and then proofreading them again.

Should you e-mail or snail mail your thank you? That depends. If it's a tech company, you should e-mail it. No matter what type of company it is, if they're going to make the decision overnight, right after your interview, then you should probably e-mail it, too.

But let me ask you a question, WJP: when was the last time you received a 'thank you' letter in the mail? How did it make you feel? If it was sincere, printed neatly and on a nice card, I bet it made you feel good. And if a recruiter received a 'thank you' of that type, you can be sure it's going to make him or her feel good, too. Even if you're dinged from the job, they're likely to remember you as a thoughtful applicant. And who knows when your paths will cross again?

Good luck to you!

Frank

Sample Networking notes

Dear XXXXX,

Thank you very much for speaking with me a few days ago. I know that you are very busy, with your new responsibilities at General Re Financial Products and I appreciate the time you spent with me. Also, congratulations on your new position. I wish you the very best of success there.

By way of review of our conversation, I am searching for the best opportunity I can find that will allow me to utilise my background and experience in the actuarial and investment fields. I would appreciate any insights or advice that you may be able to offer on opportunities that may be available or on other people that I might contact in order to gain additional information.

As you may know, I have more than 20 years experience in a variety of actuarial and investment positions. I gained my early actuarial experience at Melbourne Life, worked briefly as a consultant and then branched out into the investment area at Home Life, which is where I completed the CFA curriculum and earned that designation.

Most recently, I have been with Provident Life and Accident in Ballarat, which I joined in 1996 as the Vice-President and Chief Financial Officer of the group pension line of business. Essentially, my position was eliminated when new company management decided to discontinue the group pension business and that is why I am searching for a new environment in which to make a contribution. I believe strongly that my varied experience and skills will provide a significant benefit to a prospective employer.

Enclosed for your information is a copy of a resume, which provides details of my accomplishments. I would be very grateful for any feedback that you are willing to offer. Also, if you could provide me with the names of two or three other people that I might contact, that would be most helpful.

Michael, best wishes for healthy and prosperous 2012. I will follow up in a couple of weeks. In the interim, please feel free to call me at (03) 9999 9999; alternatively, you may leave a message for me at 0400 000 000. Thank you in advance for the consideration of your time.

More sample networking notes

Dear Name:

Just a brief note to express my thanks and tell you how much I enjoyed the time we spent discussing your need for a xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

There is little doubt in my mind that the position we discussed and the opportunity it offers would be challenging, exciting and a great fit with my background and knowledge.

The qualities I could bring to this position include:

- ✓ **Enthusiasm for Sales, Service and Success.**
- ✓ **Results oriented and flexible individual with a strong work ethic.**
- ✓ **Technical and mechanical background complemented with equipment leasing experience.**
- ✓ **My approach to customer service is to create solutions to daily business challenges, which are mutually beneficial to the customer and the company.**

I would welcome the opportunity to answer any additional questions you might have and will follow up with you later this week. I look forward to the possibility of becoming a part of your team.

Dear XXX

I was referred to you by Susan XXX in your Accounting Department. We were discussing my job search strategy and she suggested that I contact you.

I realise that you may not have a current opening that would match my finance and accounting background; however; Susan did mention that you have excellent feel for the local market and this is where your expertise will be invaluable in assisting me with my strategy.

Name, what I would like is about half an hour to meet with you. I find the market fairly active and in several meetings with local business leaders, I've been able to get new and surprising insights into the marketplace. (Possibly this would be of interest to your office.) I would also like to get your ideas on my search strategy and resume.

I will contact you in the next few days to discuss a potential meeting time.

Thank you in advance for your consideration

More sample networking notes

Dear Name:

I am in the process of making an important career move. As a fellow member of the Society of Human Resource Management, I would appreciate your assistance.

My objective is to join a medium size manufacturing company as a Human Resource Manager.

Perhaps an opportunity exists within your company or one of its divisions. If not, you may be aware of such an opportunity with another firm. I am also trying to identify situations where mergers, acquisitions, divestitures and company expansion plans may create such an opportunity because I have a particular background in:

- ✓ Xxxx
- ✓ Xxxx
- ✓ Xxxx
- ✓ Xxxx

I have enclosed a copy of my resume to bring you up to date on my career. It would also be very helpful if you could suggest some other individuals that I may contact. I will call you next week to discuss your suggestions and ideas.

Exercise 17 – Prepare your personal presentation documents

Insert, after this page, some sample documents you have prepared for:

- Job applications
- Direct Marketing
- Networking introductions
- Networking thank you letters

Chapter 11 Summary

- ✓ At the end of this chapter, you will understand the benefits of preparing your 'master documents' including:
 - job application letter,
 - recruiter introduction letter,
 - networking letters,
 - marketing letter and
 - skills summary.

CHAPTER 12 – Developing and Maintaining Witnesses to your Career

Introduction

Your referees are the witnesses to your career.

Referees are important to cultivate during your employment. Referees have an impact on your future career; it is important to remember that they have influence. Ensure that you maintain contact with your referees throughout your career.

Many of our 'candidates' have not managed their referees in the past. It is never too late to start cultivating your referees.

Your referees may be an important source of networking, reminder of your achievements, spokespeople on your behalf and more.

Before you commence the marketing phase of your program, you need to talk things through with your referees.

Consider these points:

- Not certain about your employment references?
- Do you know if your employment references are good, bad or indifferent?
- Worried that a prior employer may be giving inaccurate or negative employment references?
- Confirming your employment references prior to submitting them to a potential employer assures you of the accuracy of the employment referral.
- Just assuming that your employment references are in good standing is a high risk in today's competitive marketplace. More companies than ever are now checking job references before finalising hiring decisions.
- Inaccurate job references from prior employers could jeopardise career choices.

Consider that some typical questions asked of referees include:

- ? **Are you able to enthusiastically recommend X?**
- ? **Is X eligible for re-hire within your organisation?**
- ? **Could you fully describe the circumstances and reason for the separation?**
- ? **Could you describe any strengths and / or weaknesses of X?**
- ? **Could you suggest anyone else that I could speak to regarding X?**
- ? **How does X deal with stress?**
- ? **Would you describe X's ability to attract, build and mentor a team?**
- ? **What was X's management style?**
- ? **What kind of contributions did X make to your company?**

Before you are offered a job, you will probably be asked to supply several referees. A referee is someone you have worked for or worked with; someone who can make first-hand observations on your work performance and attitude.

Choosing Your Referees

Now that you have developed a resume, it is time to list your referees, prepare yourself and arrange to meet with them.

To ensure that future reference checks are positive, choose your referees carefully and prepare them to say the right things about you.

Choose at least two referees who you can count on to say good things about you. Your former supervisor is the most logical choice if you got along well. If you do not use your supervisor, you can go 'up the line' to a higher-level supervisor, or use a peer who worked closely with you. Choose appropriate referees for each job. For instance, if you are applying for a job at a bank and a former supervisor now works at a bank, he/she is a better referee than a former supervisor who is now working for a trucking firm.

Tips on Managing Your Referees

- Choose most appropriate referees
- Ask for their permission
- Keep in touch with them
- Take them through your resume
- Ask referees for feedback and tips on your resume
- Remind them about what you would like them to say about you
- Prepare your own preferred response to "Weaknesses/Strengths/Areas for Development" and
- Plant these on to your referees.

- Suggest that they provide you with a written reference (to structure and guide their thinking). Write it for them to prepare
- Keep them in the loop during your career and job search process
- Keep them updated each time you apply for a position

- Develop a comprehensive Master Referee list, using a similar format to your resume. Refer to the sample Referee List later in this chapter.
- If you have several referees, choose the most appropriate referees for the position you are applying for
- Don't hand over referees' details until asked for them
- Don't put them on your resume – this can be a breach of privacy
- Involve your referees – extend their role as part of your career advisory board
- Use most current supervisor unless you don't want them to know you are applying - consider timing if currently employed and whether it is appropriate to give name of current supervisor
- If you are in doubt about what a supervisor will say, ask someone to conduct a referee check
- Follow up with your referees, acknowledge and thank them

MEETING WITH YOUR REFEREES

Managing your referees is the beginning of your networking. You are ready to make contact with your referees, because you have completed your self-assessment, prepared a resume, decided on some career options and are ready to talk about them.

If your search goes on for a while let your referees know that you are still in the job market, so they'll be prepared to receive more calls.

Thank your referees each time they are called upon to supply a recommendation. And call your referees when you get your new job to thank them for their part in your success.

PREPARING YOUR REFEREES

When you are on a short list for a position, don't let your referee receive a surprise call from a prospective employer. Get permission to use your referee's name. Inform the referee of your job search and give the details of the job you're seeking --

"Hello, Terry, this is Mary Jones. You remember I asked you to be a referee for me. Well, ABC Computer is considering me for a [insert role description] position. Peter Thomas, the recruiter from Recruitment Group may call you soon. He'll probably want to know how:

- ☐ I handled the implementation of the strategic plan
- ☐ Well I deal with difficult customers
- ☐ My general financial skills have been demonstrated
- ☐ My administration skills stack up
- ☐ Insert your own example

Remember when

- ☐ I implemented the five year strategic plan at ABC company and the Board were reluctant to take the vision beyond two years
- ☐ Richard Customer, that constant complainer sent in a letter of recommendation
- ☐ [Insert an example to assist your referee].

Also, I would be responsible for:

- ☐ Being Acting General Manager
- ☐ In charge while the customer service team leader is away

So anything you could say about my [insert abilities] would be appreciated".

WRITTEN REFERENCES

Written references are appropriate to collect over the period of your career. A written reference can also be useful. It can be used over and over, even if the referee has moved away. It's a good idea to get a written reference from anyone with whom you suspect you may lose touch. Obtaining written references is more difficult that it used to be because many companies no longer give written references. Many organisations will only verify your title and dates of employment.

Exercise 18 Summary of points to discuss with Referees

Insert the points for discussion.

Prepare a list of your referees and if possible, do NOT include this list on your resume for the following reasons:

1. Privacy Laws – it is preferable not to give names, addresses, telephone numbers on documents over which you have no control
2. By only providing referees when requested, you have the opportunity to prepare your referees in advance of any calls they may receive
3. Having control over your resume and where it goes and who sees it.
4. Having control over which referees are appropriate to call.

Sample Referee List**Referees for Chris Candidate
Applicant for Position No. A123456**

Fred Smith, Telephone 9999 9999
Production Controller, FIRST Company Pty Ltd

Career Reference: Was my direct supervisor at First Company, during YYYY – YYYY.

Joe Blow, Mobile 0400 000 000
HR Manager, First Company Pty Ltd, Port Melbourne

Career reference: Joe was the HR manager at First Company and can speak to my skills and experience.

Lois Lane, Mobile 0400 000 001
General Manager of the Second Employer Ltd

I have been on several committees, special projects and reported directly to Lois for 12 months during YYYY to YYYY.

Chapter 12 Summary

- ✓ You have decided who your referees will be and have compiled a complete list
- ✓ You have made appointments with your referees to discuss your resume, your job search plans and aspirations
- ✓ You have planned your discussion with your referees and have scripted a summary of the points to be covered

CHAPTER 13 – Research

Introduction

You have taken stock of yourself; you know what you have to offer and have packaged it in a collection of documents we will call your 'Personal Presentation Portfolio'. Your referees have been contacted and are ready to assist when you need help.

Now you need to assess the job market, by finding the answers to some important questions.

Whether you are just beginning your job search or already have a big interview coming up, make **Job Research** an important step in your campaign.

Questions to ask

- Which industries most need people with your background and skills?
- What are the major companies in your area?
- Which companies or industries are hiring at the moment?
- If you want to work close to home, which companies are located near or in your postcode?
- How could you contact hiring companies? Through personal contacts, employment agencies, sending a resume, phone calls or walking into the office?
- What is the likely title of the person who would hire your ideal position in a particular company? (CEO? Director of Office Services? Procurement Manager? Warehouse Supervisor? Customer Service Supervisor?) How can you learn this person's name?
- What is the average wage or salary for someone with your skills and experience? Which companies pay more? Less?
- Which industries are on the upswing in your professional area of expertise? Which ones are downsizing or have a hiring freeze?
- Which companies are moving into or out of your area?

Researching the job market

The labour market constantly changes. So even though you may have a **job target** and thoroughly researched the job market a few years ago or even a few months ago, it is important to keep your research up-to-date. Certain jobs may be more in demand than others, while others may have become obsolete or new jobs may have been created.

Researching helps you stay up on top of the job market – both visible and hidden.

Over 70% of all available jobs are found through what is called the 'Hidden Job Market'. These are jobs that are not officially advertised.

How can you research where the current jobs are – both visible and hidden?

Many people use the newspapers as their only source of finding jobs, but there are other ways to find job openings:

1. One easy way to start is to conduct a 'Newspaper Scan'. The days where available jobs were advertised in the print media are waning; however the newspaper scan is a worthwhile activity to get an overall sense of the job market.
2. The obvious one is the internet. By trawling through major job sites (in Australia this is www.seek.com.au) you will see market trends, industries of interest, descriptions of skills and so much more about options to consider.
3. Check out the 'Job Opportunities' section of websites of target companies for more information and links on finding jobs.
4. Use 'Networking' to help search out jobs. It is the best way to access the hidden job market. A chapter in this manual has been devoted to the topic of networking.
5. If appropriate, check out job boards in your local employment centres
6. Read current journals and magazines in the area that you are looking for a job.
7. Join your professional organisation and attend activities, learning from participants what the latest trends in your area of interest are.

The Newspaper Scan

Refer back to chapter 5 to refresh your memory. This exercise can reveal new trends, new careers for your consideration, companies who are hiring at the moment, recruiters who specialise in your profession etc.

Researching on the internet

Research is a critical component of your job search campaign. Knowing how to research potential employers, job market trends, major skills required for a profession you wish to enter or re-enter will inform your resume, key selection criteria response, job application letter, networking activities and skills at interview. The more you know about your area of expertise, target companies, their clients, products, business objectives, share price (if applicable) the better able you will be to determine and articulate your potential value to them. You can convey your understanding of their needs within your tailored resume and cover letter and you will definitely want to communicate this during your interview. The hard work that you put into your research will provide dividends by reflecting your interest and enthusiasm to employers.

Begin by trying to locate general information about each company you are interested in. Focus on details that will relate to your skills, knowledge and qualifications. You may wish to develop a filing system to organise the information that you obtain. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- What is their location? How long have they been established there?
- How many locations are there?
- What are the services and products that they sell?
- What is the size of the company?
- How many employees do they have?
- What are their sales? Assets? Earnings?
- What has their growth pattern been like?
- What are the various divisions and subsidiaries?
- Who are their competitors?
- What are the names of key executives?
- What is the general reputation of the company?
- Is the company publicly or privately owned?
- Is the company foreign owned?
- How successful is the company? What have been their major achievements?
- Have there been any major issues or events in the recent history of the company?
- What are the objectives and philosophy of the company?
- What is their forecast of anticipated growth?

You may also want to gather several other items on each company whenever possible:

- Brochures and sales flyers.
- Magazine and newspaper articles about the company.
- Trade journal articles.
- Press releases.
- Reports from business information agencies.
- Employer recruitment brochures.

O.K. If you are ready to go onto the Internet to begin your research, keep a few things in mind...

1. Know what you are looking for before you go online. Keep a list beside you so that you can cross items off as you locate them. It is too easy to get distracted if you do not remain focused!
2. Bookmark major sites as you come across them. Most browsers will even allow you to create folders or directories to organise the links even further. Make the effort to stay organised now and you will be glad you did later on!

3. Print out a hardcopy of important information. If you are concerned about saving the trees (like I am), you could save a copy of the document to your hard drive instead.

Because there are numerous Internet sites that are valuable for conducting research on employers, it is beyond the scope of this manual to list them all. The ideas presented below may get you started. You will undoubtedly find many other lists of links by browsing through the sites.

- **Google 'How to research Company information'**
- **Chambers of commerce**
- **Specific Company Home pages – Annual reports are an interesting read**
- **Fortune 500**
- **Share market trading sites**
- **Government statistics**
- **Linked In www.linkedin.com**

Chapter 13 Summary

- ✓ This chapter stresses the importance of research in your job search process. It provides you with suggestions and sources for research.
- ✓ To succeed in the job market you need to do thorough research before contacting potential employers
- ✓ To succeed in the job market, you also need to know how to find the information you need

CHAPTER 14 –Understanding the Job Market

Introduction

The job market is constantly changing. It is impacted by:

- Economic climate
- Emerging (and redundant) technologies
- Supply and demand
- Government initiatives
- Time of year

One way to gain a relatively clear picture of the current job market at any particular point in time is to conduct a **Newspaper Scan**. This simply involves combing through the Age or Herald Sun with a highlighter in hand, reading through **ALL** the jobs and gaining an understanding of what is involved in the roles described.

We highly recommend this activity to assist you to learn more about the job market, to see how employers are describing jobs and what they are looking for as they recruit those roles.

There are several advantages in undertaking this research:

- Greater understanding of the job market and the roles that exist
- Helping you to identify your own skills and see how they are described in job ads (highlight these)
- "Borrowing" their words to use on your own resume
- Gaining a sense of how competitive the roles are (and how in demand your services might be)
- Discovering descriptions that resonate with your own ideal work preference. (extracting these elements will help you build your own ideal role profile)
- Find out who the main recruiters are in your field and which companies are in hiring mode

Case Study:

Former manufacturing factory worker completes newspaper scan and finds a job he would never have thought up by himself: Property Manager for Real Estate agency. Completes some networking for information and finds that he only needs to complete a 2 week course at Real Estate Institute of Victoria to be qualified. Other than the 2 week course, he has a strong interest in the property market AND has renovated a number of houses in the past. Now running a successful property management division in Cheltenham.

The Newspaper Scan is an effective research tool and the newspaper advertisements are one source of jobs, however the newspaper scan is only one of many avenues for finding jobs.

The Entire Job Market is like an Iceberg

The job market is split into two distinct parts and it is important to concentrate appropriate chunks of time on each.

We use the iceberg model to illustrate the volume of jobs that are available in the **External** job market as opposed to the **Hidden** job market.

External Job Market



Accessing the External Job Market

The Advertised Job Market

Typically comprises only 30% of all available jobs.
Advertised jobs are usually easy to find through:

- ☐ Newspapers
- ☐ Internet job search sites listed in previous pages of this manual
- ☐ Recruiters
- ☐ Job agencies
- ☐ Careers section on company websites

Strategies for tapping into the Advertised Job market are usually well known. They include:

- Searching through newspapers and applying for jobs
- Registering on job search internet sites for emailed job matches
- Applying online
- Applying in direct response to an advertisement
- Sending resumes and "marketing letters" to recruiters and job agencies to get on their data bases
- Telephoning recruiters to get an introductory interview.

Most job seekers mistakenly spend 80% of their time on the advertised market, which is disproportionate to the amount of jobs available - approximately 30% of the job market.

Techniques for Tapping the Advertised Job Market

1. Write a resume that can be tailored for each advertisement – a “master resume”
2. Develop a list of Key Selection Criteria for your target role
3. Write your responses to each of the criteria
4. Write a great job application letter that is easily tailored for each job
5. **ALWAYS** attach a Job Application letter when applying for roles
6. Register yourself on internet job search sites such as SEEK and My Career with appropriate key words and get the jobs sent to your email address
7. Compile a list of recruiters who operate in your area of interest
8. Mount a recruiter campaign by phoning recruiters and sending your resume with a marketing letter in the hope of sparking interest and gaining a meeting
9. Scan the newspaper on a weekly basis and apply for the jobs that suit your knowledge, skills and attributes.
10. Identify target organisations and go to their websites, as many will advertise their own vacant positions instead of using expensive recruiters.

Exercise 19 Register on the internet sites

Job Search Sites

www.jobsearch.com.au – Government job website for registered job seekers (Centrelink)
www.defencejobs.gov.au – Australian Defence Force Jobs
www.bluecollar.com.au – Manual labour and trade positions available Australia wide
www.byron.com.au – Provides links to jobs advertised in newspapers from all over Australia
www.careerone.com.au – Lists jobs found in the Herald Sun and Leader community newspapers
www.careersonline.com.au – Information and helpful tips for jobseekers and positions vacant
www.jobserve.com.au – Jobs available Australia wide covering all industries
www.mycareer.com.au – Lists jobs found in the Age and Fairfax community newspapers
www.seek.com.au – Australia's largest job search site covering all industries
www.jobs.com.au – Australian job search site covering all industries
www.positionsvacant.com.au – Australia wide job search site covering all industries
www.monster.com – Job search site, follow links to Australian jobs section
www.justsecretarialjobs.com.au – Specialises in secretarial, administration, and PA/ EA positions
www.nowhiring.com.au – Jobs available Australia wide covering all industries
www.jobsintravel.com.au – Travel industry related jobs
www.genesis.net.au/links/jobs - Page that offers links to many job search sites
<http://naturalresource.alphalink.com.au> – Australian jobs within the natural resources sector
www.nrmjobs.com.au – Jobs in the natural resources, water and environment sectors
www.wineindustryjobs.com.au – Jobs within the wine making and growing industry
www.infoxchange.net.au – Jobs in the community and not-for-profit sectors
www.hospitalityjobs.com.au – Positions available Australia wide in the hospitality sector
www.ragtradejobs.com – Jobs in fashion and ragtrade

Allow approximately three hours to register yourself on the main job search internet sites:

<http://www.mycareer.com.au>

<http://www.seek.com.au>

You need to consider the key words, which will lead to the roles being advertised that are of interest to you.

Do not post your resume online! Your resume needs to be tailored for each role you decide to apply for. Your resume should ALWAYS be accompanied with a cover letter.

Answering Newspaper Ads

Plan to spend time every week scanning the Saturday Age, The Australian and Friday Financial Review.

Most job search candidates are very familiar with this process.

In advertisements placed by recruitment companies, the name of the organisation is often concealed – only an industry is given. These are 'blind advertisements'; advertisements that include the organisation name are called 'open advertisements'.

Advertisements typically generate few interviews (or even replies) because of the high level of competition. An attractive advertisement in a major publication will often draw hundreds of replies. This means your response must:

- ☐ Get their attention – Stand out in the pile of replies
- ☐ Correlate closely with the advertiser's expressed preferences – and secret prejudices
- ☐ Arrive before closing date – but not too early

Thus, your chances of being contacted are increased if your letter:

- ☐ Is first class in appearance and content
- ☐ Clearly and immediately matches their needs – stated and implied – against your qualifications
- ☐ Arrives about a week after the advertisement was published – but not on a Monday
- ☐ Avoids any obvious negatives that would serve as an excuse to screen you out.

With this information, take special pains to tailor your reply, such as expressing your interest in the organisation. If candidates are encouraged to obtain and position description or telephone the recruiter, do so.

Your first challenge in tailoring a reply is to decipher the organisation's needs. You often have to read between the lines; some of their specifications may not be essential. For instance, if they required an MBA degree, they may really mean that an MBA would be desirable but not essential. To avoid spending excessive time on advertisements, here are some suggestions.

1. Learn to skim the papers in a few minutes. Make copies of the advertisements you want to examine more closely.
2. Learn to pick out their most salient needs, especially the ones aligned to your career goal and which your skills can meet.
3. Concentrate on their needs at the start of your letter and pair them with your matching skills and experience.
4. Finish with your general background as presented in your standard marketing letter (no attachment) or refer to your attached resume if they request one.

Above all, keep complete records of your replies and avoid committing too much of your time to this pursuit. As you get your other job search methods underway, you can then afford to discover for yourself if advertisements are a worthwhile source of job leads for your particular vocation and allocate time accordingly.

The Recruiter Campaign

Recruitment agencies are usually private organisations set up to provide a recruiting service to organisations for a significant fee – paid by the employer. There is a commonly held misconception that recruiters are there for the purpose of assisting candidates. To avoid disappointment, candidates need to remember that they are not the primary concern for recruiters, except when they are the top preferred candidate for a role. Then it is in the interests of the recruiter to communicate, manage expectations, make a good impression and generally look after the candidate – albeit for a short period of time.

There are two types of employment agencies - permanent and temporary. Often they are under the same roof so you might consider registering with them both. "Temping" or taking temporary contracts can be a very sensible way to approach the job market. You can gain an inside look at a variety of companies and receive an income while you are looking for a full time job. People commonly receive an offer for full time employment if a company likes what they have seen in a "temp".

If you know your target employer, find out which agency they use, as some companies use only a few agencies and come to rely on these agencies for a steady stream of applicants.

Some agencies specialise; only dealing with a particular level of role, industry or salary range. Make sure you're targeting the right ones. It is always helpful to gain recommendations for an agency. If someone you know has had a good experience with a particular agency or recruiter, make contact with that same recruiter yourself and mention the recommendation. This might afford you a little more attention from the agency.

Conducting the recruiter campaign

You have 2 primary objectives when conducting your recruitment campaign.

- Firstly to arrange meetings with recruiters
- Secondly to tell the recruiter what you are good at, that you are what they are looking for and have them prepared to put you forward as preferred candidate.

1. Identify your target recruiters

- Ideally you need to establish 20 target recruiters.
- Look at job advertisements, then drill down on the recruiter to see whether that recruiter actively covers your chosen job targets
- Gather the contact details and establish a spreadsheet to capture the timing and outcome of your calls/meetings.

2. Prepare

Your job is to make it as easy as possible for recruiters to recommend you, so:

- You need to have a current resume that sells you.
- You need to be prepared for an interview to discuss your background and your target roles/companies.
- You need to be ready to present for interview at client companies
- You need to be prepared to devote time to phoning and visiting recruiters
- You need to impress them with your physical presentation, punctuality and ability to sell yourself – after all, that is how the recruiter will earn their fee!

3. Telephone the recruiter

- Your primary objective is to arrange a meeting.
- Telephone the recruiter, introduce yourself and indicate that you would like to meet with them as they seem to be advertising roles from the sector that you are targeting.

Sample Conversation

- I've recently left [INSERT NAME OF ORGANISATION] where I was the [INSERT THE POSITION YOU HELD]
- So I'm now in the market in Job search mode
- I really don't want to over expose myself, but your organisation is one that I have chosen because your reputation is excellent and you obviously get the roles.
- If you're amenable, I'd like to be able to make a 20 MINUTE appointment to come and chat to you and introduce myself as a worthy candidate.
- Also, I was head hunted to my last role so I'd also like to know if I'm hitting the mark with my resume and thought you may be able to give me some advice.
- I've had [description in a brief sentence the roles you have held and a "theme" in those roles]
- In my last two roles I was [insert some specific reporting roles for example "part of the executive management team reporting directly to the MD"]
- I'm very bottom line focused, so I'm looking for roles where I can add some real value to an organisation.
- Would you be available in the next week or so to have a brief chat?

4. Interview

If you get the interview opportunity, take your resume along and be prepared to fill out forms. **Your objective** is to tell the recruiter:

- What you are good at (level/experience/reported to etc)
- That you are what they are looking for
- Why they should put you forward as a preferred candidate

Note:

- You are there to put your face to your name
- You want to share recent experiences including level, scope and who you reported to
- Be very aware of your ideal job preference
- The impression you make is very important. The recruiter's reputation is on the line every time he/she sends someone out. Dress well and present your skills in a professional manner. If the agency likes you, you may be sent to interviews right away

5. Follow up with an email

Within a couple of days of the meeting send a thank you email and reiterate

- What you are good at (level/experience/reported to etc)
- That you are what they are looking for
- Why they should put you forward as a preferred candidate

6. If no interview

- If they will not make time to interview you, send your resume and a covering letter (example at the end of this chapter) through anyway.
- Follow up with a call a few days later to attempt to get an interview – if you don't, nothing ventured nothing gained

Maintain Control of Your Job Search

Don't let the recruiter's enthusiasm push you into a job you do not want. Remember, an agency makes money by placing as many people as possible. They may not care if you are happy on the job; you have to look after your own interests. You are free to say "no" to an interview or job and if you don't like the way the agency is handling you, you can decide not to work with them at all.

You will want some control over where your resume is being sent. Ask the agency to contact you before sending out your resume, so that you can effectively monitor who has received a copy and for what purpose. The last thing you want is two different agencies submitting your application – it can cause your application to be “disqualified” due to confusion over recruiter fees!

Reverse Marketing

Be aware that one way recruiters undertake business development is to market a good candidate with an existing client or establish a new client. You need to ascertain whether the recruiter you are dealing with does this, knows about and is likely to do so for you (they are really doing it for themselves)

Business Card

It will now be valuable to have a business card to **leave with the recruiter and later network contacts**. One option is to use this shortcut to:

<http://www.clickbusinesscards.com/>

Applying for Jobs

Even though you have registered with a recruiter, you must still apply through the normal challenges for advertised positions. They may not have conducted a thorough search on their database, or they may not have captured an accurate assessment of your abilities

Conducting the Recruiter Campaign can take up to 2 weeks full time.

Sample Cover Letter to a recruiter

Chris Candidate**Address Line****Tel: 9999 9999 Fax 9999 9998****Email: ccandidate@bigpond.com**

19 September 2004

Ron Grimshaw, Senior Recruiter
Grimshaw and Associates
9 Mask Street
Melbourne VIC 3000

Dear Mr Grimshaw,

With your expertise in executive placement, you might know of manufacturing companies looking for an experienced and accomplished General Manager, Chief Executive Officer or Direction of Operations. If so, please review my resume and consider introducing my credentials to them.

When I started as GM for ABC Company seven years ago, I inherited the leadership of a recently purchased food processing plant operating at a \$3M loss with low production rates (63% of budgeted capacity), unscheduled downtime problems (20%) untrained staff, poor safety practices, high turnover (200%) and lack of cooperation between departments. I made the decision to retrain and empower our staff while building accountability, short and long-term goals and continuous improvements into the system. Within three years we accomplished quite a bit:

- Doubled production output, reaching 1110% of budgeted capacity while capturing 83% of the raw material available via strategic pricing and contract negotiations.
- Increased ROA to 11% as profits approached \$24M
- Decreased material disposition time from 3.3 weeks to 24 Hours
- Reduced unit production costs (from \$0.64/kg to \$0.33/kg, unit raw materials handling costs (from \$0.40 to \$0.14) and unscheduled downtime (from 20% to 2% range)

These results are verifiable and have set the stage for unprecedented growth expected in the next fiscal year. Please do not hesitate to call if I can provide any additional information that will help you present my qualifications to one of your clients. I have travelled extensively throughout my career and would gladly entertain a challenging position that requires either domestic or international relocation.

Thank you for your assistance and reply. I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours faithfully

Chris Candidate

Chapter 14 Summary

- ✓ The External job market is familiar to most of us; job search candidates most commonly use the newspapers, the Internet and recruiters contact methods.
- ✓ If you have worked through this chapter, you will have:
 - Registered on the www.seek.com.au site
 - Registered on the www.MyCareer.com.au site
- ✓ You will also have made contact with relevant recruiters so that they know about you.
- ✓ Your action plan now includes the habit of scanning the relevant newspapers (The Age, The Financial Review and others) and you are prepared to submit quickly to any suitable role which is advertised.

CHAPTER 15 – The Hidden Job Market

Introduction

It is well documented but not widely known that the Hidden Job Market produces many more jobs than the Advertised Job Market. However we only know one (ONE!!!) way to tap into that job market: NETWORKING.

Networking is:

- Making connections with people to find out more information about a topic related to your job search
- Letting people know about you and what you are looking for
- Being available for others to contact you for their own networking purposes
- Keeping the contact/ relationships going into the future

Networking is not:

- Asking for a job
- Attending cocktail parties
- Using people up for your own purposes then dropping them

Tapping the Hidden Job Market Through Networking

Over 70% of jobs are not advertised, not placed with recruiters or lodged on the internet. Networking is so successful because it helps you find the *unpublished*, or "hidden" job openings. Until a job opening appears in the newspapers or the company job posting sheet, it is unpublished. Think of your experience in your own company. Didn't the staff often know about upcoming openings in the department long before they were published?

How did they know?

- They heard the supervisor complaining that there was so much work to do, he/she had not even had time to post the job or put an advertisement in the paper to advertise a job opening.
- They learned that a colleague would be promoted to supervisor soon, leaving his/her current job vacant.
- They saw that the company had rented another floor and brought in new desks, computers and telephones.

External Job Market



Why are so many openings unpublished?

- The supervisor hasn't had time to write a job description, post the job internally or advertise it externally.
- The need for the job may exist ("I need an assistant!") but it has not yet been created or approved.
- The supervisor or company does not want the expense and trouble of running an advertisement.
- When an advertisement does appear in the paper, a company receives hundreds of phone calls and resumes from people whose reliability and skills are unknown. Someone has to sift through all of these calls and resumes to find (the few) qualified candidates.

The first thing many supervisors (often) do when they need a new staff member is ask their employees and acquaintances if they know of someone qualified and reliable. You want that "someone" to be you.

You can increase your chances of accessing the "hidden jobs" by discussing your job search with friends, relatives, and colleagues and asking them to introduce you to people in other companies.

How many people know you, know your skills, what you are looking for and how to find you?



The Purpose of Networking

Your objectives in networking are to:

- Increase the number of people who know:
 - a) Who you are
 - b) What you are good at
 - c) What you are looking for
 - d) Where to find you
- Find out more information about your field and different companies in that field and related areas.
- Increase your contacts and enlarge your network to get as many people involved in your job search as possible.
- Using informational networking to get exposure and practice your interviewing skills in an informal, low pressure situation.
- Be remembered, so if a job opens up, the contact will think of you.

Informational Networking

Through informational networking, you are asking your sources for information that might provide you with information or exposure that leads eventually to the right job. **You are not asking your sources for a job**, so the networking interview is not a job interview. The networking interview differs from a job interview in these ways:

- You take control by setting it up.
- It is a less formal situation because you are seeking information, not a job.
- Your contact may tell you things that he/she would not tell a job applicant.
- You can ask your contact for referrals to other contacts. You cannot do that in a job interview.

A networking interview may turn into a job interview. Later, we will talk about how that happens.

Planned and Targeted Networking

When you have identified a specific person, role or organisation that you wish to speak to or find out more about, you are considered to be “targeting” your networking.

Whether your networking is purely for information or for gaining a meeting with your target organisation, you need to thoroughly plan before each meeting. You also need to follow up soon afterwards, and ideally down the track as your journey unfolds.

The Networking worksheet on the following pages will guide you in your preparations as you target, plan and further develop your networking strategy.

Using Your Network

People sometimes initially feel reluctant to begin using their contacts. It is important to remember that what you are asking for is information, not favours.

Your contacts will want to help you for different reasons:

- Many people like helping others. It gives them a good feeling to be consulted.
- Some people like to help others find good employees. If your contact refers you to someone who hires you, your contact will have saved the hiring manager a lot of time and money! Some companies even pay their employees a bonus for finding new staff.
- Many people know that some day they could be in the same position you are in.
- Many people realise that they may learn something from you, either about your field or your former company's approach to common industry problems.

The Telephone as a Networking Tool

The best way to set up networking meetings is by telephone. Here are a few tips on how to use the telephone as a networking tool:

- **ORGANISE YOUR THOUGHTS:** Write them down on a card, particularly your opening statement, which should be brief and confident, not apologetic. Be ready with a good answer for, "What is this in reference to?" (E.g. - "I've been referred to her by Joan Eldridge.").
- **BE CONFIDENT, POSITIVE AND FRIENDLY:** This is communicated more by the tone of your voice than by what you actually say. If you don't believe this, tape record your opening statement in different tones of voice. It makes a big difference!
- **KEEP IT SHORT:** Once you have the information you need or have obtained the interview you want, close the conversation! The telephone is a great tool but it is best to use it to arrange an in-person discussion.

[illegible][illegible][illegible]

Describe the types of people you would like to meet during your research/ networking phase

Write the sequence for gaining a new contact name and number

Never, Never, Never ask for a job when networking.

- 1. Be Prepared.** First, define what information you need and what you are trying to accomplish by networking. Remember, your purpose in networking is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Some of the many benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding suitable mentors, increasing your chances of promotion and perhaps finding your next job. Second, know yourself—your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of areas in which you are interested. Your networking meeting needs to include the following elements: introduction, self-overview, Q&A, obtaining referrals and closing.
- 2. Be Targeted.** Identify your network. For some, 'I don't have a network. I don't know anyone', may be your first reaction. You can start by listing everyone you know who may be potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty, neighbours, classmates, alumni, supervisors, co-workers and community associates. Attend meetings of organisations in your field of interest and get involved. You never know where you are going to meet someone who could lead you to your next job.
- 3. Be Professional.** Ask your networking prospects for advice—not for a job. Your networking meetings will be a source of career information, advice and contacts. Start off the encounter with a firm handshake, eye contact and a warm smile. Focus on asking for one thing at a time. Your contacts expect you to represent yourself with your best foot forward.
- 4. Be Patient.** Career consultants recommend avoiding the feeling of discouragement if networking does not provide immediate results or instant answers. We advise, 'Be prepared for a slow down after you get started. Stay politely persistent with your leads and build momentum. Networking is like gardening: You do not plant the seed, then quickly harvest. Networking requires cultivation that takes time and effort for the process to payoff.'
- 5. Be Focused on Quality—Not Quantity** In a large group setting, circulate and meet people, but don't try to talk to everyone. It's better to have a few meaningful conversations than 50 hasty introductions. Don't cling to people you already know; you're unlikely to build new contacts that way. If you are at a reception, be sure to wear a nametag and collect or exchange business cards so you can later contact the people you meet.
- 6. Be Referral-Centred** The person you are networking with may not have a job opening, but he or she may know someone who is hiring. The key is to exchange information and then expand your network by obtaining additional referrals each time you meet someone new. Be sure to mention the person who referred you.
- 7. Be Proactive** Stay organised and track your networking meetings. Keep a list of your contacts and update it frequently with the names of any leads given to you. Send a thank-you note or email if appropriate. Ask if you can follow-up the conversation with a phone call, or even better, with a more in-depth meeting in the near future.
- 8. Be Dedicated to Networking.** Most importantly, networking needs to become an ongoing practice and skill. You will want to stay in touch with contacts over the long haul—not just when you need something. Make networking part of your long-term career plan.

Exercise 20 – Building your network list

If you have access to a spreadsheet, we recommend that you use it.

BASIC NETWORKING LIST:

A basic networking list has the following headings:

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	Notes	Date contacted

A COMPREHENSIVE NETWORKING LIST WOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING COLUMNS:

1. Category – e.g. Recruiter, Friend, Referral, Colleague
2. First Name
3. Surname
4. Title
5. Organisation
6. Mailing Address line 1
7. Mailing Address line 2
8. Referred by:
9. Dates contacted
10. Notes
11. Referred to:

Following up a network meeting

Send a brief thank you note after the meeting. Call the contact periodically as you offered; he/she may have new information that was not available at your first meeting. Your contacts may even call you to let you know about possible job openings. Some other benefits of networking are:

- You will make valuable personal and professional friends.
- You will be able to practice your interviewing skills before the actual job interview.
- You will learn a lot about your field and get an inside view of various companies.

Exercise 21 – My purpose for networking

Write your purpose for networking on a fresh page. This exercise can take up to an hour – but well worth the time!

Sample – My Purpose for networking

My current circumstances are that following the successful completion of the ABC Company asset sale program and closure of the Corporate Office my services are no longer required.

I am now determining my future career direction.

I have a number of competencies and skills that I believe are transferable i.e. they were well utilised and developed in the roles I have undertaken but they are not specific to the organisations or industries in which I have worked.

I now want to:

- Undertake a reality check on the transferability of those skills to assist in defining my future direction. (I have decided they are transferable, the reality check is about having an agenda for an initial networking meeting.)
- Gain access to the unofficial job market.

I am networking (in the first round) experienced/knowledgeable/connected people to:

- explain the process I am following,
- discuss and review my resume,
- seek an opinion on (i.e. confirm) the transferability of my skills,
- acknowledge the unofficial job market and
- seek referrals to others who may be able to assist.

This assistance from referrals can be in a number of forms. e.g.

- someone who is recruiting/is thinking of recruiting/has a problem/has an impending retirement or some other need,
 - someone who works in my field with whom I can share experiences to firm up my view on transferability,
 - someone who has someone in my field report to them that I can use to firm up my view on transferability,
 - someone in a non familiar (to me) industry or organisation that I can use to test transferability,
-

Linked In for Job Search



LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) is the world's largest professional network with over 120 million members. LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals. In today's business environment an invitation to "join my professional network" has become more obligatory - and more useful - than swapping business cards and churning out resumes.

Your LinkedIn profile is your chance to showcase your skills and talents and help the right people and opportunities find their way to you. As your professional representation online, you can set it to be discoverable through the millions of searches on leading search engines and on LinkedIn. In addition, LinkedIn is a valuable tool for researching potential industries and employers.

Be sure that your profile is up-to-date with your latest work information and you have a well-written summary that touches on your experience, interests, and where you'd like to go, but not in a way that reads like a resume. Remember to include key words that could bring up your profile in a search, write your profile more like a biography.

Develop a profile that truly represents you and control your online identity.

- List your current and past positions & education along with your tenure there. This helps the right people and opportunities find you.
- Add a profile photo- people never forget a face!
- Add a summary paragraph. Think of it as your professional elevator pitch.
- Add a list of your skills

Leverage your LinkedIn network in the job search process.

- Look up someone's profile before you meet with them. Learn their background and see who you know in common to get off to a fast start.
- Search on LinkedIn Jobs: LinkedIn Jobs has thousands of job listings for each category. You can search using keywords, title, company, and location to find the perfect opportunity for you. You can apply online using LinkedIn.
- Use LinkedIn is to research your recruiters or interviewers. You can learn more about their background to have an edge over the other candidates.
- Post a question on Answers and tap into the experts you're connected to and the entire LinkedIn network.

Ensure your connections represent your "real-world" network.

In today's professional world, people change jobs and locations constantly. By connecting on LinkedIn, your address book will never go out of date. Your contacts update their profiles, keeping you current with their latest jobs, projects and contact info. You'll stay in closer contact with tools to communicate and collaborate.

Make sure you have adjusted your privacy settings so others cannot see your connections and your activities. <https://www.linkedin.com/settings/>

Chapter 15 Summary

- ✓ This is one of our most important chapters.
- ✓ Your networking list has been started. Ideally, if you have access to a spreadsheet, you have created a comprehensive list of people to contact. As you progress through this stage, your list will grow as you remember people and are referred to new people.
- ✓ Reluctance to network will impede your chances of securing a new position from the 'hidden job market'. Be honest with yourself if you are feeling nervous or concerned.
- ✓ Face-to-face interactions are an essential part of job search.
- ✓ There are several types of interactions during a job search: telephone, social contacts, informational interviews and job interviews. You should be prepared for all of them.
- ✓ It is important to 'get over' any feelings of being a nuisance or a 'user'. Your networking will ultimately be a mutually beneficial building of relationships and sharing of information, which all parties will value.
- ✓ Be focused about your purpose for networking. This will give you the ability to tailor your questions and responses to any given situation.
- ✓ For another person to refer you to his/her network contacts, you need to win his/her confidence through being well prepared regarding your mission and by taking the time to get to know about the existing relationship/connection, so that you can also assist the referrer by keeping that contact warm.

CHAPTER 16 – Planning your Campaign

Introduction

Having completed the preceding stages of the manual which included: (1) Cleaning up and getting ready, (2) self assessment, (3) developing your personal presentation portfolio and (4) learning job search skills, you should now be ready to commence a genuine campaign. This campaign needs to be targeted and have key performance indicators to be a sign of your progress.

Staying focussed on a plan is the best and quickest approach to transitioning into another job.

'If you fail to plan, you plan to fail.' An old adage which still rings true.

Planning your campaign

Getting job offers typically involves dozens of interviews, which in turn require hundreds of contacts, using any or all of the job search techniques listed in preceding chapters: networking, the 'Recruiter Campaign', answering advertisements and direct approach marketing.

In order to manage yourself through this process, you will need to be organised; keep good records, allocate your time appropriately and plan your marketing campaign. Failure to do so will result in wasted time and money.

The next step is to look at the realities of the job market and how the different job search methods compare in effectiveness.

Getting Organised

To conduct an effective job search campaign, draw on your planning and organising skills to:

Focus on the essentials of the process:

- Searching for prospects - using research, your contact network, recruitment firms, advertisements and marketing letters.
- Selecting good targets - identifying high potential prospects that seem to be worth a concentrated effort.
- Determining the best way to approach your targets and get appointments - via personal introduction wherever possible.
- Preparing yourself, through research, at each stage - the approach stage, the first interview, the subsequent interviews and negotiations and your final decision.
- Using your communication skills to sell yourself and to elicit the information you need for negotiating and deciding.

Step back from the detail

- Refresh your perspective of what is most important and what is most urgent in your marketing strategy.
- Some activities take time to unfold and so they must be started earlier. Often, these activities are necessary prerequisites for later, more critical activities, e.g. preparing a networking list, complete with addresses and phone numbers.
- A handmade time line or PERT Chart may be helpful - showing the sequence and confluence of events that optimise completion time.

Balance your time allocation

- Avoid letting a favourite or easy activity dominate your work week.
- You will usually be juggling several activities simultaneously each day, rather than working on them sequentially like a flow sheet.

Be organised

- Set up a record system that helps you track your results - what is working and what is not.
- Constantly revise your strategy and tactics according to results.
- Keep your Personal Presentation Portfolio documents in one folder in your computer.
- Set up your computer folders (or manual folders) in a systematic way.
- Backup your documents – it can be devastating to lose your contacts, your personal presentation portfolio documents etc. through a computer malfunction.

Set up your support systems

- Maintain close rapport and communications with a support group (such as your family, friends, career consultant if you have engaged one, a coach if you have engaged one) as you pursue your career goals. That way, you can debrief and adjust as you complete key steps.
- Be persistent but patient! Negotiations and decisions often move slowly, through many channels, at the top levels.
- Plan for re-invigoration activities – leisure, sport, time out – whatever works to keep you balanced and focussed.

Productivity Tools

No doubt you have developed your own ways of setting goals and monitoring your progress. However, since job search is a unique task, we suggest a number of tools that have proven useful to other people.

The foundation of your system is your marketing strategy. As you create a system to fit your own style, remember the essential ingredients of that strategy:

- The general plan you intend to follow after exploring each job search method.
- The sequence or relative timing of the steps.
- The degree of emphasis on each - i.e. the approximate percentage of time you will devote.
- The planned outcome for each method or step - to compare with the actual outcome.

Take a fresh look at your initial draft strategy and see if you want to modify it as you start your campaign. Then, as you test the marketplace, continue to revise it when something isn't working as planned. Share this updated strategy with your consultant.

Since you will have so many strategic activities to plan and track, we recommend you set short-term goals, also. Many people find that a Weekly Action Plan - a sort of 'punch list' - helps them stay on track (see sample, which appears later, along with other sample tracking forms.) It also allows them to keep score: how many phone calls, networking interviews, job interviews or letters mailed each week. These are indicators of productivity, but the results they produce are even more important.

The weekend is a good time to evaluate progress and plan the next week. Some people like card systems or notebooks as a planning aid; others use computer programs. The method you use is not as important as your commitment to the discipline of regular short-term planning.

Other types of records you will find essential:

- A networking contact record with notes on each visit or phone call, including planned next steps.
- A record of mailings of all types, showing the intended recipient (your mailing list), what went out and when, so you can follow up on schedule. Also note your phone calls and replies received. With good records, you can 'test-market' your mailings and discover what works best.
- A record of ads answered, similar to above - plus a copy of each ad.
- A record of interviews. Include any notes you took, as well as your appraisal of what should happen next. Be careful to get names and titles (preferably cards) of people you met. Record your overall impressions and planned follow-up, right after the interview, while details are fresh in your mind.
- For the first two or three interviews, you may want to use an 'Interview Analysis Check List' to evaluate how you did. A sample appears later in the module.

Choosing a Base of Operations

Some departing executives negotiate the privilege of occupying a company office, often with administrative/secretarial help and even continued executive perks. This could last for a few weeks or for the duration of their search. This arrangement has both pluses and minuses:

- It is a plus to be able to phone people and meet them while maintaining the association with your company, even though your official duties are over. It lends an air of dignity and comfort to the search and it keeps you close to a lot of useful contacts.
- Your assistant can be of great help in handling calls gracefully and even in getting your contact records together.
- Continuing in the old environment reduces the trauma or sense of loss, thus easing the transition.
- On the minus side, your physical location in that old environment sometimes makes it difficult to break the psychological ties to the organisation and continue with the next career step. You might even get involved in ongoing company activities, to the detriment of the job search or entrepreneurial plan.

If you have this company office privilege, you may wish to use it for a few weeks until it no longer serves any purpose for your search or your psyche. You may also want to explore securing an executive suite on a rental basis.

Some people have good, private office facilities at home and can work well there. They may save some travel time, too. But there seems to be more risk of isolation or distraction with the 'home office' arrangement.

- If you plan to receive calls at home, get a separate phone line and an answering machine or service - to help ensure a business-like atmosphere.
- Make it clear that the time in your 'home office' is working time and you are not available for household errands and chores.

Alternatively, you may wish to avail yourself of our office facility. Discuss whether this option is available to you under current arrangements.

Of course, your constant goal must be to get out of the office - visiting your contacts, conducting interviews, exploring leads. So whatever offices you use, their main purpose is to serve as a base of operations for making phone calls, receiving call-backs, updating records, getting out letters, scanning the ads, receiving mail and conferring with your consultant.

In choosing your base of operations, your objective should be to select the place(s) where you can work most effectively. This will depend partly on your own make-up and self-discipline. Discuss and evaluate the alternatives with your consultant.

Work Habits

Without the structure of familiar responsibilities, it is easy to become either too relaxed or too frenetic in this job search venture. We recommend you work at least as hard and long as you did on your previous job. This will increase your chances for early placement in several ways:

- You will cover more ground, turn over more stones.
- Your 'buyers' will sense your energy and drive.
- By establishing new routines and rituals, you will feel less cut off from the old ones.

So establish a new ritual of starting in the morning and quitting after a full day's work.

One reason that participants sometimes work at half-throttle is that they have not completely defined their new goals or fully grasped the Career transition process; they haven't taken inventory of the many activities that they can gainfully undertake. If you catch yourself wondering what to do next, see your consultant.

One positive feature of the office can also become a distraction - the presence of other participants. While we encourage you to network with the other participants, some of the 'networking' can degenerate into longer conversations, which have little to do with job search and prevent you from pursuing strategic career transition activities. If this begins to happen, politely explain that you 'have work to do' and excuse yourself.

Formulate a routine, which is conducive to a proactive/outside-oriented job search campaign. Unfortunately, we have seen clients get too attached to life in our office. They start dressing informally and spending time on unfocused activities such as reading the entire newspaper. One way to audit yourself is to notice how much of the time you are out of the office, having informational or job interviews.

Keeping the Right Pace

It will help you maintain perspective if you think of your marketing campaign as unfolding in five stages, and I will use the analogy of harvesting:

1. The 'exploration' period of testing your new career ideas, researching target companies and trying out your new interaction skills. In the harvesting analogy, the farmer would be testing to see which seeds are most likely to succeed.
2. The 'ploughing' period of heavy work: the self assessment process, writing up your personal presentation portfolio, researching.
3. The 'sowing period' of writing letters, getting appointments, networking – involving hundreds of telephone calls as you reconnect and start to connect with a professional network.
4. The 'watering period' of following up promising leads, stay in contact with your network.
5. The 'reaping' period of interviews, second interviews, final negotiations, weighing up decisions, closing the deal and accepting a position.

Some people complete the process rapidly, connecting with their new position in just a few weeks. But, more commonly, our clients launch their campaigns with a flurry of exploration, ploughing and sowing, sometimes including some promising interviews - only to find a lull occurring a month or two from the start. As with a farmer, the watering period is critical to success.

Sometimes, a dormant seed they have planted sprouts into active negotiations, just when everything seems to have come to a standstill. Often two or three things surface at once.

But if the lull extends more than a month or so, it can be unnerving and discouraging. And it may also be a warning sign - to guard against getting bogged down or stuck. Again, the ways you can prevent this:

- Regular work habits. Full workweeks.
- Regular planning of your work - with short-interval goals.
- Good records to track your activities and results.
- Keep full activities going. Don't slow down.
- Keep developing new prospects. (Don't relax and count on one or two favourites to come through.)
- Continue to learn from each experience through honest self-critique and sharing observations with your consultant and other participants.
- Add more practice on the types of interactions that did not go smoothly.

Trouble-shooting your campaign and remedial action

If you sense things are not proceeding effectively, initiate early diagnosis for the cause.

Analyse your Actions Plans and records as to your output, productivity and results being obtained.

- How many job advertisements have you responded to?
- What is the ratio of interviews per job application?
- How many prospective targets have been identified, explored and accepted or discarded?
- How many phone contacts each week?
- How many informational interviews?
- How many marketing letters sent?
- How many phone follow-ups?
- How many job interviews?
- How many job offers?

Analyse how you are balancing your time among various activities.

Notice the passage of time against your own schedule for relocation.

Evaluate your work habits and environment. Have you been able to concentrate and implement your plan most days?

Notice how you are feeling about yourself and your prospects for a successful search.

Get readings from your family and your associates as to how you are coming across to the world. How are your relationships? Your 'executive image'?

Examine your behaviour and living patterns for any marked change. Gaining or losing weight? Eating, drinking, smoking more? Sleeping poorly? How is your energy level? Your mood and morale?

These psychological and physical factors can show through in an interview - the event where all your efforts will pay off. If you are feeling angry, people perceive a tinge of hostility in your bearing. If you are feeling down, they will sense low energy. If you are sad about what you have left behind, your enthusiasm will sag.

These are difficult things to ascertain by yourself. If you suspect you are projecting these feelings, discuss this with your consultant. Try to get feedback from someone who knows you well and will be honest in the appraisal - perhaps a consultant or a close friend.

There are several other obstacles which commonly impede the effectiveness of a job search:

- **Perfectionism:** Striving to be too well organised, equipped and prepared - to the detriment of productivity. This is often a way to avoid tackling a difficult or frightening task.
- **Procrastination:** Finding excuses not to tackle something. 'It's probably too early to call people this morning.' Or, 'It's 3:30. People are getting ready to leave now. It's a bad time to call.'
- **Butterflying:** Flitting from project to project without finishing anything. This results in confusion and lost momentum.
- **Elitism:** 'This routine work should be done by my secretary. I'm an executive.'

Remedial Action

Any new awareness you gain in the above diagnostic phase will be remedial in itself. It will also indicate corrective action you need to take.

You may need to work out a new marketing strategy - a Plan B or C to replace the Plan A that isn't working.

In light of what you have learned about the market; reconsider the realism of your career goals. Do you need to change industries? Widen your geography? Broaden your specifications? Adjust your salary requirements?

Graeme S wanted to move back into a senior Finance role in Local Government. In his past, this was the period in his career he had felt most challenged, interested, engaged and fulfilled. After a reality check of the available roles within 35km of his home, it became clear that no such role was going to become vacant within the next 12 months. His networking conversations broadened as a result and he was brought to the attention of a recruiter from a neighbouring state who was looking for a CEO in local government. Graeme and his wife relocated after he accepted the role as CEO.

Trevor was at the top of his game as an HR Director. The local market for positions of his calibre were scarce and this was revealed through networking activities and the recruiter campaign. In the light of what he learned, Trevor adjusted his campaign to include a wider geographic area because he was not prepared to compromise on his remuneration package.

Practise the interactions that you suspect you are not handling well.

Develop a checklist for change - the things you want to do more (or less) or better.

Consider hiring a professional to assist you

If you feel you are falling too far behind your own schedule, or getting seriously discouraged, consider hiring the services of a Career Strategist or Professional Coach.

1. Find a career development professional who can help you explore career options, can inform you of labour market trends, and can assess your skills, interests, and work related values.
2. To find professional help get recommendations, search the internet or check the yellow pages under 'Career'.
3. Check the person's credentials.
4. Interview the person before hiring him or her. Ask how she/he will help you. No one should be able to promise you a better job, more money, etc. Make sure you feel comfortable with that person.

Occasionally, in a long, difficult search, participant and consultant will conclude that they have exhausted each other's resources and that a new consultant assignment would be appropriate to investigate fresh approaches and re-energise the campaign. Feel free to broach this idea with your consultant or the head of the office.

Exercise 23 - Weekly Action Plan

Activity	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Internet job search					
Recruiter campaign					
Networking meetings					
Following up networking meetings					
General administration					
Phone calls to set up networking					
Job interviews					
Meeting career consultant or coach					
Total hours					

Tracking your efforts

Keep track and summarise data from your Planning Calendar

Exercise 24 – Tracking your efforts

Campaign Activities	B'fwd	Planned for Period	Period Actual	Cumulative Total	Period Hours Planned	Period Hours Actual
Internet job search						
Recruiter campaign						
Networking meetings						
Following up networking meetings						
General administration						
Phone calls to set up networking						
Companies researched						
Job interviews						
Other						
Total						

Problems/Obstacles/Concerns (during period):

Who could assist you to overcome these obstacles?

Networking Contact Records

Mailing List Record (Company or Search Broadcast)

Name, Address, Phone Number	Phone Follow-up Date		Result of F/Up	Written Reply Rec'd	Further Action
	Scheduled	Actual			

Chapter 16 Summary

- ✓ The job search process is a demanding full-time job.
- ✓ Get organised for your current job (finding a new position or situation) in a businesslike way.
- ✓ Set up the needed records and systems and follow them meticulously.
- ✓ Include measures of your productivity.
- ✓ Pick a base of operations and work patterns conducive to good time management and concentration.
- ✓ Focus on networking with external contacts; don't get trapped in the comforts of an office. You can't get a new job or launch a new business without marketing yourself and you can't market yourself unless you make many face-to-face contacts.
- ✓ If you find yourself bogged down, do a thorough, analytical review of your methods, productivity and image.
- ✓ With the help of your friends, family, a career counsellor or coach find ways to change your luck by changing your approach.
- ✓ Be aware that many job seekers hit a mental wall temporarily once the campaign is up and running. This often happens after the first or second knock back following an interview. The antidote is to stay in action and to focus on what you do want – not on the negative feelings you manifest when something that you don't want to happen does happen.

CHAPTER 17 – Interviews

Practising Interaction Skills

Interacting with other people is an essential part of searching for a position or starting a business. You will be seeking information, exploring leads and marketing yourself. You will be playing a sort of courtship game where liking and trusting each other (the chemistry) is as important as competence, track record and accomplishments.

Most of these interactions will be one-on-one - you and a contact, or you and an interviewer - plus an occasional two-on-one or group interview. Your challenge will be to handle the unpredictable dynamics of these interactions in a way that works best for all parties.

For you to have succeeded in your career so far, your natural communication skills are probably highly developed. Yet, in job search your role will be different. You will be on the other side of the desk, with less power, in an unfamiliar environment and with a lot at stake. So this is the time to see yourself as others see you and to prepare to be at your best - poised and prepared.

Practising interaction skills will help you to disengage from your preoccupation with your needs and goals and notice the needs and style of another person across from you. You will be polishing your social and communication skills - how you interact with others.

Types of Interactions

There are many varieties of contacts or interactions that will weave together into the fabric of your job search. Here are a few examples:

- **Telephone (networking) contacts** involve dynamics and skills quite different from face-to-face. They are usually briefer (perhaps only two to three minutes) and the nonverbal signals are hidden from you. Your goal is usually simple - to get an appointment.
- **Social contacts** bearing on your career plans may occur quite casually (or appear to) over lunch at the club, a discreet question during a social event, a neighbour dropping by. Your goal, if you sense a hidden lead, is to follow-up at the appropriate time and place.
- **The informational interview (networking)** is usually a comfortable meeting with a friendly contact, built around your well planned agenda (you are pretty much in control). Typically it will last 20-30 minutes. Your goal is to get information. The networking interaction is an excellent training ground for the subsequent job interview.
- **Job Interviews** can be a bit more stressful. There is more at stake and the candidate has less control over the agenda. They often last from 45 minutes to a couple of hours and there are many possible variations, such as:

The Ways to Sharpen Your Skills

There are four basic steps to sharpen your interaction skills:

1. Hone knowledge of interviews and interviewer styles (thinking ahead as to how you would handle a question or a situation, plan how you will present yourself and use all you have learned to date).
2. Watch and hear others handling interviews, using audiotapes and videotapes.
3. Avoid being hung up on providing the 'right answer' to an interviewer's question. Think 'How do I best use this question to my advantage?'
4. Practise and receive feedback. You will do this by role-playing, first by yourself and then with a trusted individual. Video taped mock interviews are an excellent vehicle for focusing on actual performance and generating positive change.

Of these four, practising is the most essential. Merely studying and watching will not ensure your being in top form.

Then, you will continue to learn from real experience out in the field, post-analysing and critiquing your own performance in various interactions and also soliciting feedback from friendly contacts. Preferably, you will practise first with some friendly informational interviews - not a critical job opportunity.

Getting Ready for the Tough Questions

Although many of your interactions will be quite informal and seemingly unstructured, there will be some interviewers who are quite incisive in their style, asking penetrating and often difficult questions. Search consultants tend to be this way; they have limited time and are skilled at securing sensitive information.

Even your good friends and business contacts can ask questions that you will find tough to handle if you haven't practised ahead of time.

You cannot anticipate every possible difficult question. But if you practise answering the tough questions which appear later in this chapter, you will be prepared for almost anything you encounter.

- Start by writing rough notes of how you would answer each one. (There may be a few that seem irrelevant for you.)
- Then, put away your notes and try answering the questions aloud to your tape recorder.
- Listen critically to the playback - to see how convincing and concise your answers are. Repeat your practise where you need it.

Here are a few guidelines for handling tough questions:

- The more embarrassing or sensitive a question is, the shorter your answer should be. For example, if asked why you are leaving, it's tempting to over-explain, arousing more suspicion than you allay. It is much better to answer the question briefly:

'Our industry had been experiencing tough economic times and my position became redundant when two levels were combined into one.'

'Our acquisition by an offshore firm changed the style of management and I could no longer see the opportunities for as much personal achievement.'

Then, stop after these 20-30 words and leave it alone. If they want more detail, they will ask.

- If the interview stress level builds up a bit, your biggest problem may be to make sure you heard the question accurately. If in doubt, ask it to be repeated, rather than go off on a tangent. If you need time to consider your answer, take time.

'Hmm. That's a difficult question. Let me think a moment how I can best answer you.'

- When you have answered any question, stop - like a good courtroom witness. Don't embroider, elaborate or ramble.
- Avoid boring details - especially anecdotes about people, places and situations, which are no longer relevant.
- Be honest. If you don't know the answer, say so.

Again, we emphasise the need for **practising aloud**, using a tape recorder, as the most effective means of preparation. Rehearsing in your head does not help much because thoughts race while words stumble.

Now, flip to 'The Tough Questions' later in this chapter and note the assortment of typical interview questions you may encounter, together with some suggested answers. (Be sure you compose your own.) The first five are almost sure to come up in some form.

Interviewing Styles

Since you may not have been interviewed in many years, it would be understandable if you had a few misgivings. We will try to forearm you in several ways. In this section we will venture some guesses as to what interactive styles you are most likely to encounter at your level.

Your Executive Consultant also can show you a video tape of some role-played job interviews, which will illustrate one set of interviewing styles - probing, but relaxed and professional.

The tough questions themselves imply another style - structured, incisive, probing, even confronting.

Professional Interviewers

You are most liable to find the penetrating, no-nonsense style among people who do a lot of interviewing. An important example is the recruitment consultant - your second most likely source of job leads (after networking). These people will treat you with respect, but they may also probe into your vulnerabilities once the formalities are over. They are especially intolerant of verbosity or evasiveness in résumés, letters and conversation.

If you dare ask for it, you may get a very frank and professional reaction to your résumé, your strategy and your interviewing style. They may even identify their most worthy competitors and suggest whom to see. Thus, the search consultants can be quite helpful to you, even when they have no immediate search assignment that fits you.

How do you manage your interaction with the recruitment consultant? Suggestions:

- Be direct and concise in your oral and written communication.
- Be open and honest about your background and ambitions.
- Go out of your way to help them if asked - e.g. if they want your ideas on candidates for another search.
- Leave when it is time. Look for both verbal and non-verbal signals.

In very large target companies, there may also be professional, trained interviewers - say, in corporate Human Resources. They may also use inside or outside psychologists to assist in screening. The same suggestions should be helpful with these professionals, too.

Executives as Interviewers

You may have interactions with senior managers. Most of them are not trained as interviewers, so their styles follow their every day communication modes. Some will cling to your résumé as a framework for discussion. Others will be so indirect and informal that you will wonder if it is a job interview.

When a high level executive grants you a job interview, you can assume that the firm has already done some checking on you - and liked what they saw. So rather than induce you to do most of the talking, executive interviewers will often take over and talk at length - in effect, selling you on the company. CEOs, founders and entrepreneurs often like to tell about their deeds and their problems. Suggested strategy for these talkative executives:

- At the outset, you can establish support by being an attentive listener. Ask questions for clarification. That way, you will be learning much of what you need to guide your later responses.
- However, as you get the sense of the interviewer's message, you can gradually join in with more substantial responses, weaving in your own experiences and strengths. Otherwise, when the interview time is up, you may have registered as rather passive and the interviewer may not really know you.

- A good way to use your interaction skills to balance the communication is to interject (at the appropriate time) questions that are important for you, such as *'What are the most important issues facing your management team today?'*

A number of senior level interviewers will allocate limited time and may deal with you rather impersonally. If they like what they see, they will schedule more time later, or refer you to some close associates.

- Communication should be on their wavelength - direct, concise, action oriented.
- Don't be put off by their brusqueness.
- Talk about your achieved results, what you might do for them, not the personal details of your history.
- When you get the wind-up signal, ask about the next action step and then leave promptly.

Exercise 25 Preparation before an interview

1. Choose what you are going to wear and ensure all is ironed, clean and ready
2. Review your Key Selection Criteria document and your resume
3. Review the job advertisement and position description if you have been provided with one
4. Practice your self introduction out loud
5. Practice your responses to anticipated questions out loud
6. Find your BOAST Stories to match your Mind Mapped version for this job

Review...

7. The name and address of the company you are going to
8. The name of the interviewer if it has been provided
9. Map, directions and knowledge of parking arrangements if travelling by car

Take...

10. Copy of the Job Advertisement
11. Hard copy of your resume
12. Hard copy of your list of referees (the witnesses to your career)
13. Relevant samples of your work if applicable
14. Business cards if you have them
15. Working pen and notebook
 - a. Write a copy of your mind map in your note book
 - b. Write down your questions to ask at the end of the interview

Make sure you have a good night's sleep before interview day and eat something healthy 1.5 hours before the interview.

Interview analysis check list

Good signs

<input type="checkbox"/> Asked appropriate questions <input type="checkbox"/> Comfortable with silence <input type="checkbox"/> Confident voice <input type="checkbox"/> Dress is appropriate <input type="checkbox"/> Enthusiastic <input type="checkbox"/> Excellent grooming <input type="checkbox"/> Genuine and sincere <input type="checkbox"/> Good eye contact	<input type="checkbox"/> Good vocabulary <input type="checkbox"/> Great handshake <input type="checkbox"/> Handles tough questions well <input type="checkbox"/> Has researched the job and company <input type="checkbox"/> Modern clothing, glasses, hair <input type="checkbox"/> Pays attention <input type="checkbox"/> Provides good examples <input type="checkbox"/> Puts emphasis on key points	<input type="checkbox"/> Relaxed and composed <input type="checkbox"/> Seems friendly <input type="checkbox"/> Sits well <input type="checkbox"/> Smiles frequently <input type="checkbox"/> Structures good replies <input type="checkbox"/> Uses humour well
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Areas to improve

<input type="checkbox"/> Hands to face too often	<input type="checkbox"/> Too compliant	<input type="checkbox"/> Stilted body language
<input type="checkbox"/> Hygiene or smells of cigarettes, food	<input type="checkbox"/> Fidgets	<input type="checkbox"/> Shows tension
<input type="checkbox"/> Overdressed/under dressed	<input type="checkbox"/> Sits badly in chair	<input type="checkbox"/> Eyes wandering
<input type="checkbox"/> Overuses humour	<input type="checkbox"/> Answers questions in an evasive manner	<input type="checkbox"/> Mumbles or voice trails away
<input type="checkbox"/> Too much perfume or aftershave	<input type="checkbox"/> Interrupts	<input type="checkbox"/> Forgets the question
<input type="checkbox"/> Clears throat often	<input type="checkbox"/> Monotone voice, lacking interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Goes into too much detail
<input type="checkbox"/> Talks too much	<input type="checkbox"/> Sounds very rehearsed	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses too many clichés
<input type="checkbox"/> Poor vocabulary or incorrect use of words	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

The tough interview questions

1. *Tell me about yourself.* (This is a very common opening for interviewers.)

Use your scripted self introduction. Keep your complete answer to not more than two to three minutes. Don't ramble or elaborate. For your interviewer, this is a get-acquainted, warm-up question - not an invitation to tell it all.

2. *What can you bring to our firm?*

Through your prior research (preferably), or through your initial probing in this interview, you must know something about the position and the company before you try to answer this. Then you can tell where you have solved problems that appear similar to theirs. (But don't sound too cocksure about bringing them a quick fix.) You may also mention some of your basic strengths (see next question).

3. *What are your strengths?*

By now you should be able to enumerate three to five key strengths relevant to their needs - and do it in a concise, systematic way. These may include know-how and personal traits.

Ask yourself the question, '*If I were hiring for this particular job, what would I look for?*' Your answer needs to include evidence of both job related skills and social and management skills.

4. *What have you accomplished?*

Pick out accomplishments that bear on their challenges. Stay away from old accomplishments and actions which have little relevance to their company.

5. *What are your limitations (or faults or weaknesses)?*

Respond with a strength which, if overdone, can get in your way and become a weakness. For example, you might say, '*My ambitions to get the job done sometimes cause me to press a little too hard on my organisation. But I am aware of this problem and believe that I have it under control.*'

Or deal with your need for further development in some aspect of the business or your profession - not essential to this job. For example, a top financial executive may aspire to develop more direct contact with the big lending institutions. A CEO may want to learn about matrix management or strategic planning.

Do not claim to be faultless. But do not wallow in self-criticism.

Note: If you have some obvious limitation (such as a speech impediment or physical limitation), surface it now - and deal with it frankly. Can you still do the job?

6. *What salary would you expect?*

It is a mistake for both parties to begin compensation negotiations too early. Many an opportunity is lost this way. However, sometimes companies need to know if the two parties are thinking within the same parameters. This is such a central issue and so complex that we would like to refer you to the module on negotiating.

At a later point, you will probably reveal what you have been earning - either base salary or total package. But at this time, it is better to imply what your eventual attitude is going to be regarding compensation. For example:

'Salary is just one aspect of rewards at the senior executive level. I don't expect we will have a problem in this area if we eventually decide my talents fit your needs.'

But avoid closing in on a price too early.

7. *What are your ambitions for the future?*

Indicate your desire to concentrate on doing the immediate job well - and your confidence that the future will then take care of itself. You do not want to convey the idea that you have no desire to progress, but avoid statements that convey unrealistic expectations - or that might threaten incumbent managers.

8. *What do you know about our company?*

If you have done your research, you can honestly state that you have studied the information that is publicly available about their organisation.

Don't try to impress the interviewer by reciting all the things you have learned. And don't challenge your interviewer with questions that sound critical. Merely let your knowledge show gracefully through the informed way in which you ask questions and handle the whole interaction.

9. *Why do you want to work for us?*

Indicate that, from your study of the company, many of the activities and problems are the sort that would give you a clear chance to contribute to the company - through your past experience and skills. If you can honestly say so, express your admiration for the company and the top management team - and what it is that appeals to you.

10. *What do you find most attractive about the position we are discussing? What is least attractive?*

(This is really a continuation of #9.) Mention three or more attractive factors, but hold the unattractive factors down to one or two minor ones - things you can adjust to.

11. *What do you look for in this job?*

Keep your answer opportunity-oriented. Talk about the chance you would have to perform, contribute and get recognition for those contributions.

12. *Please give me your definition of a . . . (the position you are discussing).*

Keep your answer brief and task-oriented. Deal with responsibilities and accountabilities. Relate these to company strategy and goals.

13. *How long would it take you to make a meaningful contribution to our firm?*

Be realistic and speak in terms of six months to a year. Relate your target to available resources if relevant - e.g. capital and manpower.

14. *Don't you feel you might be over-qualified or too experienced for the position we have in mind?*

This question sometimes arises when a senior executive tries to join a much smaller firm, or if the new employer is not sure he/she can attract and hold you. Management turnover is their concern. Possible reply:

'An ambitious company like yours needs strong people, with the right experience to deal with current and future problems. My interest in your company would be a long-term one and I am willing to bet that my accomplishments in the first year or two will lead eventually to growth opportunities.'

15. *What is your management style (or philosophy)?*

If you have never analysed or verbalised this, some mental preparation is in order. You might want to talk about how you set goals and get your people involved in them. Or describe the techniques that you like to use to bring out the best in people. Avoid clichés like, *'I believe in the open-door policy'*.

Try to sense whether the company believes in a highly participative style, or is more directive in its approach. (Presumably, you can adapt to either.) You might ask your interviewer how he/she perceives the company's culture or style.

16. *Why do you feel you have a good potential as an executive here?*

Keep your answer oriented toward your past achievements and the task to be done. Explain how you go about getting things done - either by yourself or through your organisation.

17. *As an executive, what would you be looking for when you hire new people?*

Their skills, initiative, adaptability - and whether their chemistry fits with that of the organisation.

18. *As a manager, have you ever had to fire anyone? If so, what were the circumstances and how did you handle it?*

Answer in brief that you have indeed had experience with this necessity and tell how it worked out to the benefit of both the individual and the organisation. (Sound courageous but not bloodthirsty.)

19. *What do you see as the most difficult task in being a top manager?*

Answer truthfully. Your answer might include getting the proper people and resources assembled, getting the jobs planned and done on time or maintaining quality while controlling costs. Give examples when you have done this successfully.

20. *What important trends do you see coming in our industry?*

A top executive should have some clear ideas on this topic. Pick out two or three key developments. This is your chance to show that you have thought about the future, the economics, the markets and the technology of your industry.

21. *Why are you leaving your present job?*

This is one of those sensitive questions that must be handled crisply and briefly. If it was a forced reduction due to economic circumstances, make that clear - explaining how your termination was part of a larger movement. When you have finished answering, let it go. Avoid analysing your friction points with your supervisor or the Board.

22. *How do you feel about leaving all your previous benefits and perks?*

You will miss some of them, but job satisfaction lies more in a feeling of accomplishment. And you are confident that you will gain in the long run.

23. *Describe what you feel would be an ideal working environment.*

Bring in some of your satisfiers and preferred position parameters - but don't make it sound too sublime or impractical. Otherwise, they may conclude that you are not ready for the realities there. Down play the dissatisfiers.

24. *Looking back, how do you perceive your past employer?*

State that it is an excellent company, which has given you a lot of good experience and opportunities to perform. (Stay away from criticism.)

25. *What have you done that helped increase sales or profit? How did you go about it?*

This is your chance to describe in some detail an accomplishment or two in this area that are relevant to the proposed new job.

26. *How much financial responsibility have you had to account for?*

If you were a general manager with P/L responsibility, you can answer in terms of sales, profits and investment. Or if you were a functional manager, answer in terms of your budget or head-count, the size of the project or amount of sales that you directed.

27. *How many people have you directed on your recent jobs?*

Be specific - and feel free to refer to those over which you had influence, such as a task force or a matrix organisation.

28. *Which do you like better - working with figures or words?*

Answer honestly. Emphasise your positive feelings for the area you prefer, not your dislike of the other area.

29. *How do you think your direct reports perceive you?*

Be as positive as you can, but remember to be realistic, too. When they check your references, the truth will come out, either directly or obliquely.

30. *In your last position, what were the things that you liked most? And liked least?*

Be careful on this one. Emphasise the positive and don't carry on at length about the negatives.

31. *In your recent position, what were some of your most significant accomplishments?*

This calls for more elaboration than Question #4. Be ready to describe three or four of them in detail. (Be alert for signals of boredom.) Where possible, try to relate them to the nature of the new challenges you might be facing.

32. *Why haven't you found a new position after these many months?*

State that finding just any job is not too difficult, but finding the right job takes thought and time, especially at the senior level and you want to give it the care it deserves.

33. *What do you think of your previous superior?*

Be as positive as you can and avoid in-depth discussion of negatives. This is a loaded question, because most supervisors shy away from a contentious or difficult direct report.

34. *Describe a situation in which your work was criticised.*

Be specific and brief; avoid getting emotional or defensive about it. Tell how you took specific action to rectify any mistakes.

35. *If I spoke with your previous superior, what would he/she say are your greatest strengths and weaknesses?*

Be honest about this one, but do not emphasise the negative. Your old superior will probably want to give you a good send-off, especially if you have worked out the Reference Statement with him/her. Recount some of the good things you did for the company. But if you know your reference will be less than glowing, tell the interviewer now. Then, it won't be so damaging if it surfaces later.

36. *How do you hold up under pressure or deadlines?*

Pressure and deadlines are a way of life in the business world. Explain that you have had to handle progressively more pressurised situations and deadlines as your responsibilities increased. Give specific examples.

37. *Do you think you are better suited for staff work or line work?*

I can handle either one and my preference depends a lot on the specific job, the supervisor I would be working for and the challenges in the position. (Emphasise the position you are discussing.)

38. *In your most recent position, what problems have you identified that had previously been overlooked?*

Another accomplishments question. Keep your answer brief and don't brag unduly. It's particularly bad form to strongly disparage the efforts of other members of the management team.

39. *If you had your choice of jobs or companies, where would you land?*

Talk about the job at hand and what is attractive in the company that is interviewing you. Make clear you want this job. Don't confuse things by revealing long-term aspirations, like starting your own business.

40. *Why aren't you earning more at your age?*

Don't be defensive about this one. Explain that you are hoping to rectify the situation through this career change.

41. *What do you feel you should earn in the proposed position?*

Another variant of Question #6.

42. *Do you have any objections to taking our battery of psychological tests?*

No, none at all! (This would mean you are a serious candidate.) You might express interest in hearing the results from their psychologist, as a guide to how best to fit into the organisation.

43. *What other types of jobs or companies are you considering at this time?*

Don't reveal details of your other negotiations. If you have other possibilities, you may increase your attractiveness by alluding to them in a very general way. But concentrate mainly on the position at hand.

44. *What sort of outside reading do you do?*

Be honest. If possible, mention some of the things you read in order to keep yourself up-to-date in your business or professional field. However, it is okay to show balanced interests by your recreational reading as well.

45. *Do you consider yourself to be a creative person?*

Yes. And be prepared to give a few examples - perhaps the solution of long-standing problems that stumped everyone else.

46. *How would you describe your own personality?*

Mention two or three of your useful personal traits, but stay away from psychoanalysing yourself. Emphasise a combination of task and people orientation, giving examples.

47. *What about your leadership qualities?*

Give examples of situations where you have mobilised your organisation to conquer a problem. Be prepared to describe how you motivate your people to tackle tough assignments.

48. *What are your long-range goals?*

Relate your answer to the company you are interviewing with, rather than giving a very broad, general answer. Express ambitions which are realistic for this company, given its present management structure and prevailing market conditions.

49. *What are your strongest points?*

An echo of Question #3. Give at least three - in a way that relates them to the potential position.

50. *How long would you expect to stay with our company?*

(Again, this reveals anxiety as to whether you can adjust to the realities of life in the company.) Possible response:

'I would expect to be here a long time - as long as we both feel that there is challenging work that I can do which contributes to the organisation's goals.'

51. *What would you expect to be earning, say, five to ten years from now?*

This is a hypothetical question and so you can hedge a bit, while stating that (1) you would expect to progress with your new company and (2) your salary would keep up with this progress, as well as inflation. If you are pressed, you might answer that ten years might well bring a doubling of salary for a person that is a moving force.

52. *What sort of relationships do you have with your associates - at the same level and above and below you?*

This is a very important question, because it deals with how you will fit in. Take your time and answer it carefully.

When talking about your relationships with direct reports, be prepared to state your philosophy of handling them, particularly when they have performance problems. When discussing peer relationships, emphasise your ability to balance the compromises of team play with the successful achievement of your own goals.

With regard to superiors, indicate your keen interest in understanding your supervisor's expectations, so that you and your organisation can build your goals in a way that will support his/her goals. You may also want to talk about how you would go about keeping your supervisor informed. Give past examples so your answers are more specific and credible.

53. *What are some of your outside activities or recreational pursuits?*

Hopefully, your answer can show that you lead a balanced life. But avoid throwing in so many outside activities that it casts doubt on how much time you will have for the job.

If you share common interests with your interviewer - tennis, horses, wines - this is safe ground. Or if your community activities would enhance the company's position, mention them.

Remember too, that your hobbies and recreations can be quite revealing as to your own personality. You may want to discuss this with your Career Management Group Consultant

54. *What are you doing to continue your personal and professional development?*

Discuss the outside reading, professional seminars, or classes you have undertaken in order to keep yourself fresh in your chosen field. The interviewer will be doubly impressed if you have invested your own time and money, not just an employer's, to enhance your professional development.

Asking questions in an interview

Generally you need to demonstrate your understanding of the role and the organisation through your questions. When planning your questions, ask yourself why you want to know the answer and how the question is serving you. If it does not deliver an opportunity to further sell yourself, you have wasted your question.

If an interview has gone well, the time will run out before anyone is ready. Typically, the interviewer may suddenly look at their watch and exclaim: "we have run out of time. Have you got any questions?"

We recommend that you take this moment to pause and thank the interviewer(s) for the opportunity to meet and discuss the role. Reinforce that you are very excited by the prospect and that you know you would be a great fit for the role. Use the **Willing/Able/Matched** model and **SQUEAK** to reinforce the ways you match the position.

Then ask the following question/s:

1. How **will** you know that my appointment to this role was a success in, say, 3 or 6 months time? *(This exact wording using an NLP technique – they need to picture you in the role in order to answer your question. Typically, they will look up to their right and visualise you in the role before their answer is provided)*
2. During the time of my induction and getting to know the more intricate details of the organisation and my new role, is there anything outstanding, anything that my expertise can take on immediately, to relieve your workload? *(This question would be asked of your supervisor to be).*

Exercise 26 – Ask someone to interview you

In our 'mind's eye', we all seem reasonably articulate in our interview responses. This is often not the case when we are asked to talk about ourselves, our achievements, our skills, our values or ideal job preference in an interview..... Even in a mock interview.

Some of our candidates are provided with programs that include a video taped session. To gain most benefit from this exercise, preparation (OUT LOUD) is the key. If you don't have a video taped session with the Career Management Group, don't hesitate to ask friends or family to create a mock interview scenario for you. They can use any of the questions above. You might even like to write a few technical questions for them to ask you.

A mock interview is best prepared for by providing a job description to interview against.

Chapter 17 Summary

- ✓ You will conduct a better interview and feel more at ease if you have prepared answers to a set of questions which you have created from your key selection criteria list, as well as the frequently asked tough questions. Simulate the question / response process several times before attending the interview.
- ✓ Set goals for the interview. It is your job to leave the meeting feeling secure that the interviewer knows as much as he or she possibly can about your skills, abilities, experience and achievements. If you sense there are misconceptions, clear them up before leaving. Don't leave the meeting without your own questions being answered, so that you have a clear idea of what you would be getting yourself into.
- ✓ Know the question behind the question. Ultimately every question boils down to 'Why should we hire you?' Find a way to address fears if you sense they are present for the interviewer.
- ✓ Speak from experience at every opportunity – and always in the first person.
- ✓ Keep in mind your Unique Selling Proposition as you interact.
- ✓ Be prepared to answer the question 'Tell me about yourself'. Carefully prepare your answer so as to include summaries of experiences and achievements that closely match the elements of the job before you.
- ✓ Make and keep eye contact. Walk and sit with a confident air. Lean toward an interviewer to show interest and enthusiasm. Speak with a well modulated voice that supports appropriate excitement for the opportunity before you.
- ✓ Enter into a state of relaxed concentration before the interview. Quiet the busy chatter in your head and focus on the present moment.
- ✓ Act spontaneous but be well prepared. Be your authentic self, professional yet real.
- ✓ Follow up with an effective 'thank you' letter. Don't write this letter lightly. It is another opportunity to market yourself. You will stand out from other candidates if you thoughtfully consider this follow up letter as an additional interview in which you get to do all the talking.

CHAPTER 18 – Ensuring success

Introduction

Your process of deciding started informally the day of your first contact with a company; perhaps even when you selected it as a target and your research excited your interest. But this chapter covers the final step, where you accept or forego the opportunity in favour of others, known or unknown. It is designed to:

- Offer a framework for weighing and deciding on your offers.
- Acquaint you with some of the sensitivities (and hazards) of the final closing and public announcement.

Propose some guidelines for entering your new organisation in a way that fosters you long-term success.

Responding to an Offer

Let's assume that you and your prospective supervisor have negotiated earnestly, you have attained as much as you prudently can and you both feel you have the makings of a deal.

Your first response to this 'final offer' should be to express your appreciation and your serious interest in the company, the situation and the position. Let the supervisor know you would enjoy working for him/her.

The next step is to request a little time to consider the offer and get back with your response. (What constitutes 'a little time' will be discussed.)

It is usually best not to accept an offer instantly, even if you are reasonably certain it is what you want. Take a few hours - overnight or the weekend - at the minimum to review your negotiating aims (your prioritised position preferences) and evaluate the total situation.

(As we will discuss later, when you are ready to accept, you will also want to get the final package confirmed in writing.)

Keeping the Door Open

You may have other talks in progress at this point and be striving to bring them to a conclusion. This is where you may need a 'little time' - more than overnight - and you must get a sense of what is acceptable.

- A company's enthusiasm may cool off if it feels you are merely practising gamesmanship.
- Sometimes a prospective employer is in no hurry about filling the job, particularly if it is a new position that was created for you.
- You may have previously alerted them that you had another situation under discussion so they understand your need for time.

One way to explore the company's feelings about a delay would be to ask a direct question along these lines:

'I appreciate your offer very much. As I mentioned to you earlier, I have one other serious negotiation in progress, which I must see through to a conclusion.'

'I am wondering if you could give me until the end of the month (or week), so that I could accept your position with no backward glances. How would this affect your plans?'

Then, if they feel displeasure, you have given them an opportunity to show it - either verbally or non-verbally.

This sort of delaying or juggling action requires finesse and sensitivity. If the company is impatient, you may have to bite the bullet, making a 'yes' or 'no' decision without being able to make a comparison to another firm offer.

Making the Right Decision

Throughout the negotiation you have been weighing all the pros and cons. It is also important for you to sort out any internal pressures that may be affecting you. For example, you may have experienced a lot of stress during the months of your job search; perhaps you were rejected a number of times. This is enough to shake one's self-confidence and perhaps even tempt a person to lower his/her original aims.

Your prospective new company's enthusiasm for bringing you on board can make it difficult for you to be objective. They may have sent a company car to pick you up. Perhaps the final interview took place in an impressive atmosphere - the Board Room or the big corner office or an elegant French restaurant. Your future supervisor was a charming salesperson - sensitive to your needs and appreciative of your virtues. Heady wine!

Moreover, you are thinking, *'I might not get another offer for another six months. And I'm not getting any younger or more marketable!'*

To maintain objectivity in your decision, Career Management Group recommends carrying out the following steps.

Re-Examine Your Preferred Position Parameters

Review your satisfiers, dissatisfiers and prioritised position preferences. See if they are still meaningful to you. Or in your encounters with the realities of the job market, have some of your values and aspirations changed substantially?

Discuss your present frame of mind and inclinations with your family or friends. Hearing yourself describe the situation will often clarify it for you.

If you have several job options to consider

Construct a Weighted Position Decision Grid

At the end of this module is a chart, 'Weighted Position Decision Grid' that will help you sort out the decision factors on a systematic, weighted basis. On it we have identified a number of key factors and the chart allows you to rate their relative importance to you. (Add others that have special significance for you.)

Wherever your rating of a company on any factor is substantially lower than the importance you placed on it, you have a warning sign. Avoid bending your ratings of Company #1 toward a favourable decision.

If there are other companies, #2 and #3 in the running, even though your data is incomplete, force yourself to fill in ratings and calculate the weighted result for them, as well.

Then compare the 'A x B' ratings for all targets and be as objective as possible. Highlight the factors where you would have to accept important compromises or dissatisfactions. Think through whether these compromises will be tolerable for you over the years.

- Do you think you can realistically adjust to the 'non-ideal' factors?
- Or would it be better to decline the offer and keep on looking? (Or accept Company #1's offer and still keep looking?)

Sample Weighted Position Decision Grid

Samples of the things that may be important to you	Importance to Me	Job offer 1 Score out of 10		Job offer 2 Score out of 10		Job offer 3 Score out of 10	
	A	B	A x B	C	A x C	D	A x D
		Rating	Total	Rating	Total	Rating	Total
Motivation (Values)							
1 Location (City)	10	10	100	2	20	0	0
2 Time Freedom	10	6	60	10	100	10	100
3 Change and Variety	10	10	100	6	60	10	100
4 Influencing People	10	3	30	5	50	7	70
Company Factors							
Image, prestige, Brand	10	10	100	5	50	0	0
Reward System							
Salary & Superannuation	All within range						
Work/life balance	10	0	0	9	90	5	50
Parking	10	10	100	0	0	10	100
Career Planning							
Step to ideal career – it will open up my job market	30	9	270	6	180	5	180
TOTAL SCORE	100	760		550		600	
Maximum Points	100						

Based on a real life example, this weighted decision grid shows the results of scoring three job offers.

Job Offer number one scored 760 out of a possible 1,000.

(Well known brand, great job title, large company so less influence)

Job Offer number two scored 550 out of a possible 1,000.

(On the fringe of the city but no parking, great worklife balance but not as strong on future career steps)

Job Offer number three scored 610 out of a possible 1,000.

(Located in suburbs, small company, longer commute so less work/life balance, higher reliance by company on the role – not perceived as a strong step in career)

Your Long-Term Career Perspective

Think about how the pending decision fits into your life plan. If a go-ahead decision would involve considerable risks or compromise, how binding and irreversible is the decision?

- If you accept a disappointing position late in your career, it becomes more difficult to reactivate your search two or three years down the road.
- On the other hand, perhaps you are young or flexible enough to try out a somewhat risky situation and, if it proves disappointing, to make another job search a few years hence.

If you have worked many years for one company, you may have made an unconscious decision that your only strategy is to land the next job and stick with it until you retire.

There is nothing wrong with doing this, but still keep an open mind to alternatives, such as making a radical career change three to five years from now when you have better prepared yourself for a major new challenge.

Also, if you accept the offer at hand, one of your other prospects may resurface in the next few weeks to give you a better job offer. Then you would have another decision - perhaps agonising or delightful - as to whether you should accept the second offer and resign from the first.

This is not to encourage irresponsibility in your decision-making but merely to get across the point that no job needs to be forever. Further job change might be strenuous, but it could also be a deliberate part of your overall strategy.

The most courageous decision of all (and often a sound one) is to turn down a *bona fide* job offer when you have nothing else in view.

- If you have canvassed your market for several months, resulting in this single offer and if it is somewhere near your goal, perhaps you could consider accepting it.
- On the other hand, accepting a poor-fitting job can be devastating, particularly if you have just been through that experience

Your Family's Interests

Of course, your spouse, partner and/or family have a vital interest in your decision, especially if your spouse has a business or professional career, too.

In fact, your time of self-evaluation may have inspired your spouse to take a fresh look at the need for self-fulfilment, leading to surprising conclusions. Your spouse might have decided to initiate a new career, or not to make another cross-country move.

Your children's needs (schools, friends, graduation, etc) may also enter into a decision if a move is involved. (Career Management Group's observation is that children often have more resilience or tolerance for change than their parents. In an ever-changing world, do you want to shelter them from change?)

Accepting the Offer

Now, assume that after objective analysis (using the Weighted Job Decision Grid), you are finally ready to accept. For top-level executives, there are certain niceties that ensure a graceful start at your new company.

Naturally, the first step is to call or visit your new supervisor, tell him/her enthusiastically of your decision and share with each other your mutual pleasure, excitement and general good feeling. This is an important event in both your lives!

This is also the ideal time to explore obtaining a written offer, if you don't already have one. Most corporations make it standard procedure to confirm a job offer in writing, especially for upper level executives. This is for the organisation's protection as well as the new employee's.

An employment proposal for a top executive can run to several pages, involving complex provisions for the many benefits, profit-sharing, perks, job scope, etc. It may take a few days to draft (usually done by Human Resources) and you will want to study it carefully to be sure it covers all the bases, including job scope, organisational span, authority and other factors you deem important.

Often companies have to get such an employment proposal approved through their own internal procedures, even up through the approval of the Board and the Compensation Committee. (This will almost certainly be true for officer level jobs.) If an employment contract is required, the solicitors (yours and theirs) may take another week or two.

If you are going to work for a smaller, less formal company or an individualistic entrepreneur, the idea of a written job offer may not have arisen. In such a case, it is proper for you to raise the issue, perhaps along these lines:

'I'm wondering if you would normally confirm a job offer like this in some sort of letter form. Then, I will feel free to notify the other people with whom I have been talking.'

The answer may come back something like:

'No, we are not very fancy around here and we assume that we can trust each other.'

In such a case, you might try:

'That's fine with me. Would it be alright if I accept your offer with a note that summarises my understanding of what we have agreed on?'

Then, if your new supervisor accepts that approach, you can draft up an informal acceptance letter that summarises the key aspects of the offer and your negotiation - salary, fringes, job title and scope, location and starting date.

Before you terminate your other search efforts, you must also clarify whether there are any other contingencies to the job offer, such as passing a physical exam or completing a reference or credit check. Or whether it is subject to approvals at higher levels, such as the Board or the parent company.

Of course, confirming an offer in writing, either the company's letter or yours, is not absolute protection against a change of heart by the employer. Nor is it a binding commitment since either party is free to terminate the employment relationship at any time. (You will remember that not even a contract can prevent you from being terminated.)

However, the formality of a written job offer or acceptance does add a bit of assurance against misunderstanding, confusion, ambiguity or oversight. There are also rare occasions when a *bona fide* offer is rescinded because of some high level organisational change or second-guessing.

When the company gives you a written job offer, respond with a short letter of acceptance. Offer, acceptance, intention to create a legal relationship and 'consideration' (remuneration) are the four basic elements of a contract. This permits the company to begin the process of getting you on the payroll, preparing for your official arrival and notifying other candidates that the position has been filled.

Starting Date

Once you have finalised your agreement, it will be to your cash benefit to get started as soon as possible. However, some situations may require an extra waiting period for the new executive to get organised and the organisation to prepare for his or her arrival - perhaps a couple of weeks. (If you have clearly indicated your readiness, perhaps the company will be generous and back-date your date of employment to the time you accepted.)

Incidentally, asking for a vacation before commencing work can reflect poorly on your ambition and eagerness to begin the task, unless the company clearly indicates their own need for some getting-organised time. It would be better to negotiate for time off after you have been performing in the position a few months.

Internal and External Announcements

A well organised employer will want to announce an arrival at your level in several different ways - the company newsletter, an internal memo or organisation announcement, a release to the local newspapers, a news item in the national press, or an article for a professional journal. Be prepared to co-operate by furnishing biographical or family data and perhaps posing for an official photograph. (If your new organisation is not quite so public-relations conscious, you may want to help in that direction by suggesting where a press release would be appropriate.)

They may also need to hold a series of meetings with other key people who will be impacted by your arrival. For upper level executive positions, especially where relocation is involved, the internal announcements may be followed by a social event to introduce you and your partner to the whole executive team. This will help your partner make initial social contacts and develop knowledge of company and local resources.

Before you make any broad public announcements, be sure you co-ordinate with your new company, giving them a chance to break the news in their own time and manner. Otherwise, you could cause embarrassment in your new organisation, especially for a newly created top position.

Your Own 'Public Relations'

Once you have clear assurance that you are hired, you have some 'personal PR work' to do, as well:

- First, graciously notify any people with whom you have been negotiating that you have taken this new job. Let this notification be as pleasant and appreciative as possible. You may have more dealings with these people at later stages of your career, or encounter them at professional meetings.
- Inform any search consultants who have been helpful; thanking them for their assistance and letting them know where you will be located. They may be very useful to you later and you want to maintain good relations.
- Most of your network contacts and your references will also be interested in how your campaign turned out. Some of them may have been very involved in it and deserve a letter of special thanks.

For other important contacts, a phone call is probably best. But for those you can't reach easily, or for the bulk of your contacts, you may want to send out a word-processed letter.

Planning Your Re-Entry

The first few days on the job can critically shape your reception by the whole organisation and influence the long-term outcome. It is during this start-up period that:

- The whole organisation is sizing up the new member - how you behave, your personality and strengths and how you are going to affect their lives.
- The supervisor is anxiously waiting to see:

How you are fitting in.

How you are tackling the new challenges.

How it is to work with you - fun, tense, supportive, etc.

Having been idle awhile, you may be tempted to rush in and seek immediate results. Actually, a gentler, easy-going start-up may work much better, even though you and your supervisor have agreed on all sorts of urgent things that need doing.

If you are perceived as being insensitive or impetuous or a poor fit, an 'antigenic reaction' can arise in the organisation, resulting in your eventual 'rejection'. Remember, it may take you a few months to learn the history, the economics, the politics and the culture of the organisation. So 'make haste slowly' for the first few months; decisions made without adequate knowledge of or sensitivity to the organisation's culture can hurt your reputation and the effects can be very difficult to undo.

Possible exceptions: If you are the CEO with an emergency save-the-company mission, then immediate draconian measures may be justified - provided you are sure you have the power of your supervisor, the Board and important stockholders squarely behind you.

Your 'Boss-Relationship' Program

Another temptation for action-oriented newcomers is setting up new goals and initiating projects without taking time to learn what the superior's real priorities are. The more goal-oriented you are, the more risk there is that you will be intent on your own goals, based on past successes. Moreover, during the interviewing process, supervisors sometimes voice ambitions they know are unrealistic, at least in the short term.

Therefore we suggest a start-up plan along these lines:

- Arrange an early meeting with your new supervisor and ask him/her to review the most important goals or areas of improvement for your function. (In some cases, the first objective might be to re-establish harmony and get everyone calmed down and pulling together.)
- Next, agree on your schedule of activities for the next few days or weeks - things like meetings, trips, introductions, orientations and briefings.
- Then offer to spend the next few days with your organisation, getting acquainted with them and soliciting their views and reactions to the broad goals defined by the supervisor. This gives you a chance not only to get acquainted with them, but also to test their creativity and enlist their help.
- Promise to get back to your superior in a decent interval (perhaps a week or two) and propose your tentative near-term plan for getting started.
- At this second planning meeting, you will want to listen and watch carefully for your supervisor's reactions so that any reservations are allowed to surface and be worked out. Remember, the supervisor may stifle his/her true reactions - in order to be 'nice' to you - unless you sincerely seek inputs. Make it clear you prefer the unpleasant truth now to even more unpleasant surprises later.

During this breaking-in process, it is especially prudent to discuss with your supervisor any organisational moves you contemplate (hiring, firing, promotions, restructuring, etc). Try to sense how much initial change both the supervisor and the organisation can tolerate.

Agree on what sort of communication your supervisor prefers to receive from you and how often. Bosses hate surprises, even good ones!

Some superiors like written reports, while others hate to read and prefer to listen. Your supervisor may want to be informed in one-to-one discussions, or he/she may have an established reporting ritual like Monday morning staff meetings. However you confer, keep notes of what you agreed to do.

All of these suggested steps are designed to help ensure that you get started on the superior's wavelength, not merely your own.

You will find other good suggestions in the 'Starting a New Job' chapter of **Parting Company**.

The most basic principle is to establish good communications - in the style that is most comfortable for the supervisor - right at the outset. And then have some written record, however informal, of what the two of you agreed to do. Your new supervisor is as

anxious as you are to make a success of the new arrangement. If you keep in touch, the supervisor can do a lot to smooth the way and help you integrate yourself into the team.

Introspect and Retrospect

- What have you learned about yourself that will serve you in the new position - especially in the start-up months?
- What improvements or changes in your behaviour or management skills will reduce your future vulnerability?
- What do you intend to do to build on your strengths and become an even better executive?
- What career plan do you have in mind, beyond this immediate new move?

This is the perfect time to address these issues, before you become immersed in the daily activities and challenges of your new position.

Chapter 18 Summary

- After an offer is made, negotiating the position and entering the new organisation demand additional interaction skills.
- You can practise these skills by studying interviews and styles, watching and hearing others and practising yourself.
- React graciously to an offer, but don't accept on the spot. Go home and evaluate it *vis-à-vis* your career and financial goals.
- If you have other situations pending, see to them immediately. Define how much time you will need - and can gracefully ask for.
- To help weigh your offer against your needs, use the Position Decision Grid.
- Think about the long term, not just how much an immediate position would mean to you.
- Consider your family's needs, too.
- If you accept, do so with enthusiasm - and get it down on paper.
- Co-ordinate your announcements with your new supervisor and be sure you are attuned to his/her priorities.