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RESUME & INTERVIEWING TIPS

A career change is considered by many a “major life decision,” and as such requires an investment of time and effort to identify, apply, interview and land the opportunity that is best for you.

Remember, your “best fit” opportunities are those that will capitalize on your strengths and offer more of the responsibilities and tasks that you enjoy, which creates a strong sense of contribution and job satisfaction.

The strategies offered in “Before you Begin” are designed specifically to identify “best fit” opportunities based on your specific competencies and preferences and illustrate your marketable strengths to best ensure your viability as a candidate for those opportunities.

Once you have completed this exercise you will be well equipped to take the next step and “Build a Better Resume” or “Interview for Success.”

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Whether you are writing a resume or interviewing for a job, you have a limited amount of space (1-3 pages) or time (1-2 hours) to effectively demonstrate how your knowledge, experience, passion and proven track record can add value.

Preparation is critical! TCG strongly recommends that you complete the following exercise.

1. Objectively assess your career history by considering each position you have held and asking yourself the following questions, noting your answers:

What were my responsibilities?

Which of my responsibilities were most rewarding and most draining?



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What impact did I make on the position, process, department or organization as a result of my efforts?

What specific example/situation exemplifies and supports the impact I made?

What did I do really well, and what could I have done better?

2. Thoroughly research companies of interest and positions for which you are applying. The information gathered is critical to sharpening the content of your resume or discussions in order to correlate your strengths and skill set with the demands of the opportunity and/or the organization.

BUILD A BETTER RESUME

The goal of a resume is to efficiently demonstrate your viability as a candidate and create interest that prompts further review/discussion.

General Appearance – a resume should be clear and concise; free from clutter, photographs and personal information (height, weight, marital status).

Contact Information – We recommend placing your contact information at the top of the first/each page.

Objective/Summary – These sections should be tailored to the position you are seeking. The research you have done on the position and/or company should assist you in creating a piece that reflects your desire for or experience as related to the position you are seeking.

Education – Each entry should include: Name of School/Program, Location (City, State), Degree/Certification achieved. In the event you have not completed your studies, you may indicate pursuing or credits earned.



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Employment History – Present in chronological order, beginning with your most recent position. Each entry should include:

- **Company Name** – with a brief overview of the company.
- **Location** (City/State)
- **Dates of Employment** (Month/Year)
- **Position/Job Title** – if you have held multiple positions within the same company, include dates served in that capacity.
- **Responsibilities** – include specific information such as: number of people managed, size of budget managed, any special hardware, software or equipment you have experience with.
- **Accomplishments/achievements** – select accomplishments that represent the tangible contributions (cost reductions, process improvements, increased profits) you made as a result of being in that position with those specific responsibilities.

[Keep in mind every position has specific responsibilities associated with it, and accomplishments demonstrate the rewards reaped by the company as a result of your efforts. A proven track record of success and accomplishment reinforces the premise: Past behavior is indicative of future performance!]

Community Service/Volunteer Activities – these types of activities beyond the regular duties of your position should also be included.

Awards/Accolades – should include how and why you were recognized as well as by whom.

Professional References – available upon request.

Proofread – a resume that contains grammatical errors, misspelled words, dates that don't jive, and incomplete information will be remembered...but for all the wrong reasons!



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INTERVIEW FOR SUCCESS

An interview is a meeting between professionals to exchange information in order to make an informed decision whether to continue in the process, or graciously walk away.

Before the Interview:

Prepare: Assuming you have completed the recommended preparation steps, you will now want to compile a written list of 10-20 business-related questions. These questions should reflect your interest in developing a thorough understanding of how your knowledge, skill set and experience will apply to the position and complement the organization; as well as how the company can help you achieve your career goals and aspirations.

For example:

What are the characteristics or traits of the person who you will hire for this position?

How does the company measure success for the position, and what obstacles would prevent me from reaching them?

Where will this position take me in the company?

Apply Fundamental Interview Principles:

- Don't be late! Allow ample time to arrive safely and have your interviewers contact information with you in the event of an emergency or unforeseen delay.
- Take a professional planner/portfolio, paper, and pen, 2 copies of your resume and a typed list of 3 professional references with you.
- Dress for Success - we recommend a conservative, clean appearance with limited use of cologne or perfume.
- Greet everyone with a firm handshake and make consistent eye contact.
- Speak clearly with a professional yet conversational tone.
- Listen proactively and never interrupt the interviewer.
- Build rapport with the interviewer; statistics show that the decision to hire is typically made in the first 15 minutes of the interview, with the remaining time spent justifying that decision. Your "technical qualifications" validate the reason for the interview, your personality and cultural fit will determine the success of the interview.
- Relax and enjoy the experience



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During the Interview: Be prepared for a variety of questions.

Qualification Questions:

These questions are asked to determine your mental ability; do you have the education, experience and skill set required to be successful in this position?

For example:

How have your education and employment prepared you for this position?

Why should we hire you?

Describe your managerial (sales, engineering, etc.) skills.

What are the things you are most proud of in your personal and/or professional life?

What are your greatest strengths and “areas for improvement?”

Why are you looking?

Personality/Style Questions:

It is important to possess the technical skills required for the job; however it is equally important that you are able to work well with others or in a given environment. These questions are used to determine cultural fit.

For example:

What would your supervisor tell me about you?

Are you a formulator or an implementer?

What motivates your best work?

How would your peers describe you?



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Interest/Commitment/Motivational Questions:

Companies view hiring as an investment in their organization. Candidates that are committed, passionate and motivated to succeed are more likely to deliver a return and are therefore a better investment.

For example:

Why do you want to work for us?

What aspects of this position would you find to be the most difficult?

If you had to choose a school or major again, what would you change?

When responding to any of these types of questions; be honest, correlate your knowledge, experience and skill set as it applies to the position, and support with examples whenever possible.

Behavioral Questions:

These questions are powerful because they identify past behaviors which are indicative of future performance. These questions typically have multiple parts and require you to share specific examples/situations as part of your answer.

For example:

Which of your past jobs has been most demanding in terms of having to handle a variety of tasks at once? What competing demands did you have to deal with? How did you decide what to do first? How did it turn out?

Describe the last time you disagreed with one of your bosses or co-workers. What was the reason? How did you express your disagreement? What was the person's reaction? What was the outcome?

When responding to these types of questions, we recommend the following technique (PAR), which is extremely effective in delivering a tremendous amount of information in a clear and concise format.



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Problem: Clearly state the problem.

Action: Discuss the action that was taken.

Result: What was the result of your action? (If possible, include tangible numbers, i.e. “decreased spending by 20 %” or “increased efficiency by 53 %.”)

Be prepared to ask questions:

Many of your questions will be answered during the interview. Refer to the list of questions you formulated before the interview and ask any questions that remain on that list that are critical to your decision making process.

End of Interview:

The interviewer will be interested in your initial thoughts and reactions to the interview. If you have determined this is a “good fit” opportunity, make sure to express your interest, and ask for the next step.

Before leaving, thank the interviewer for his/her time and let him/her know you are looking forward to hearing back.

After the Interview:

Always send a thank you letter!