

Workforce Transition and Outplacement

Preparing for Job Search Success —Advice for Job Seekers to Approach the Market with Confidence



RIGHT VIEWPOINT™

Starting a job search can be an arduous task for people of all ages, professions and experience levels. Today's market is extremely competitive with more people vying for fewer roles. To gain an edge and stand out from the competition, you need to be confident and prepared. And this takes work.

GEORGE P. HERRMANN

For the past 30 years, Right Management's career management experts have coached job seekers to conduct successful job search campaigns. Recently, Right Management held complimentary job search planning workshops in 40 North American cities. Over 400 college graduates attended, learning valuable job search skills.

For someone who is entering the market for the first time or even seasoned professionals, we trust you will find this article contains useful tips and advice to help approach the job market with confidence.

What will set you apart from the competition?

1. Build a plan
2. Research and strategize
3. Come recommended
4. Align skills and strengths with employer needs
5. Practice core messages

1. Build a Plan

Thorough preparation is critical to identifying a gratifying career versus just a job. You need to assess your skills, strengths and interests to target suitable opportunities.

Build a career plan that includes short- and long-term goals for an appropriate career path. To assist potential employers in understanding your expectations, clarify your own strengths and abilities.

An **ability** is something you do well: a competence, a talent, or a capacity. Not every ability is supported by an interest; some of the things you do well may come as a result of repetition or simply because you have had to do them, not because you have chosen to do them. These abilities might include balancing a checkbook, typing 100 words per minute or developing a budget.

An **interest** is something that intrigues you or motivates you positively. Not every interest is supported by talent or ability. You may wish you could run a company or be a public speaker, but lack the talent to do so.

You will find some abilities match your areas of interest. These are your **strengths**. By determining your greatest strengths, you can define the functions you will perform best and with the greatest satisfaction in a professional position.

You will want to define your long-term career goals and short-term objectives in terms of these strengths rather than in terms of a specific job title. Be sure that you can list your strengths as well as give examples of them in action. It will be up to you to explain to those you meet how your strengths can relate to their business requirements.

The right position will allow you to use your greatest strengths, and challenge you with opportunities for growth and success. If you know your strengths and know what motivates you most, you will be able to present yourself to others in a way that will positively demonstrate how you can contribute.

2. Research and Strategize

Every good interview consists of a mutual question-and-answer discussion. The essential purpose is to exchange information to determine if you are the right candidate for an opportunity, as well as if the company you are interviewing with is aligned with your values and job expectations. It is important that you research and strategize your interview responses so that you can easily and clearly articulate your strengths and accomplishments.



Interviewers will essentially ask three key questions:

- CAN you do the job? This addresses your skills, knowledge, experience and accomplishments, learning potential, and ability to handle the physical aspects of the job.
- WILL you do the job? This relates to your interest in the position, company, and industry; your work ethic; your energy level and any outside influences that might affect your willingness or availability to do the job.
- Do you FIT? This is your personal chemistry, communication skills, values, style (work and management), general interests, and appearance.

Be prepared for the questions you may be asked, as well as the questions you will want to ask. Research and strategize your responses in advance of attending an interview.

You May Be Asked...


- Tell me about yourself?
- What do you consider to be your strengths?
- What do you consider to be your weaknesses?
- What kind of contributions can you make to an organization?
- What kind of a leader are you?
- In what kind of work environment do you do your best work?
- Why are you interested in this company/industry?
- What is most important to you in your work? What do you value?
- How do you like to be rewarded?
- What are your salary requirements?

You Will Want To Ask...

- How long has the position been open?
- Why is the position open?
- To whom does the position report?
- How will my performance be evaluated? How often?
- What developmental opportunities will be available to me, assuming I do an exceptional job?
- What are the company's objectives for the next year? ...for the next five years?
- What is your timetable for filling the position?
- Have I told you everything you need to know about my background?
- Do you have any concerns about my suitability for this position?
- What is the next step?
- Whom would I see next? When? What is his/her title?

3. Come Recommended

Networking continues to be the best source for finding new employment. Nothing beats tapping hidden opportunities by being recommended into an organization from a trusted source. A robust and diverse network can help you to seek information about industry trends and related internal opportunities, identify mentors, get referrals to specific individuals, connect with others in professional associations and meet with colleagues to gain new ideas and stay on track.



Create a list of networking contacts that you know from your college alumni, social groups, professional associations and work experience. Utilize online social networking resources such as LinkedIn® to expand and manage your network. Both recruiters and hiring managers are increasingly tapping Web 2.0 technologies to find high-value candidates with skills that match their specific criteria. Be sure to keep your profile up-to-date and accurate as these sites have proven to be an effective avenue for job seekers to showcase talents, grow their networks, and more actively manage their careers.

4. Align Skills and Strengths with Employer Needs

The key to defining who you are and what your abilities are is to closely examine some of your most significant accomplishments. Accomplishments may be big or small, recognized or hidden. What counts is that you achieved them. Accomplishments are mini-stories of productivity. They show the strengths and abilities you have used to get things done.

Knowing (and expressing) what you can do well will help you to build your self-confidence, seek out the position that fits you best, and to communicate effectively in interviews and meetings. This is a critical step in aligning and articulating your skills and strengths with a prospective employer.

5. Practice Core Messages

Your resume is an excellent written introduction to a new contact or a prospective employer. How do you handle a verbal overview of who you are? A smooth “30-60 second commercial” communicates your background and strengths, accomplishments and objective in a clear and compelling way. This verbal summary should contain three major elements:

1. Include your background and strengths, including education, work history and any special training. Focus on how you match the needs of the potential hiring manager and their organization.
2. Include one or two significant accomplishments and/or special interests that illustrate your strengths. Describe the things you have done or are interested in which relate to the company, function or industry you wish to enter.
3. Include your future plans and/or career objective as it relates to the organization you are considering. Indicate how the position aligns with short- and long-term goals and how you see this helping you explore the field or function of interest.

To increase your confidence and polish your presentation, write out your “commercial” on a piece of paper. Practice it out loud, in front of a mirror, or in front of others. Try videotaping yourself to practice communicating your message smoothly and fluently.

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION=CREDIBILITY

Want to be considered a credible candidate for employment? How effectively you communicate makes all the difference. Your body language can convey a stronger message than your words. How you enter a room, shake hands or make eye contact all create strong first impressions. Both your non-verbal and verbal communications will tell your future employer a great deal about you. The job market is highly competitive and the best way to differentiate yourself is through careful preparation and a confident approach. Position for success by investing time and effort in honing your communication skills.

About the Author

George P. Herrmann is Group Executive Vice President of the Americas for Right Management, the world's leading provider of human resource consulting services and a subsidiary of Manpower Inc. George is responsible for ensuring quality excellence and overall revenue and profit growth for all lines of business across Right Management's human capital life cycle service offerings in North and South America.

About Right Management

Right Management (www.right.com) is the talent and career management expert within Manpower, the global leader in employment services. Right Management helps clients win in the changing world of work by designing and executing workforce solutions that align talent strategy with business strategy. Our expertise spans Talent Assessment, Leader Development, Organizational Effectiveness, Employee Engagement, and Workforce Transition and Outplacement. With offices in over 50 countries, Right Management partners with companies of all sizes. More than 80% of Fortune 500 companies are currently working with us to help them grow talent, reduce costs and accelerate performance.

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Be Aware of Negative Body Language	
Applicant's Body Language	Typical Interpretation
Avoiding eye contact	Evasive, indifferent, insecure, passive, nervous
Scratching the head	Bewildered
Biting the lip	Nervous, fearful, anxious
Tapping feet	Nervous
Folding arms	Angry, disagreeing, defensive, disapproving
Raising eyebrows	Disbelieving, surprised
Narrowing eyes	Resentful, angry
Flaring nostrils	Frustrated
Wringing hands	Anxious, nervous
Shifting in seat	Restless, bored, apprehensive

CONCLUSION

As a job seeker, you need to have a solid understanding of the value you bring to an employer and be able to articulate this succinctly and clearly. Preparation is key, no matter how long you've been in the employment market. You'll benefit greatly from having a plan with a clear focus, a strong network to refer from, and practice in presenting your value and responding to interview questions. Our expertise in career management helps to hone these skills and the result has been bolstered levels of confidence and preparedness.