

Exceptional Living Coach

# MANAGING YOUR CAREER

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*To Create The Life You Were Meant To Live*

*Exceptional*  
**Living**  
Coach, LLC  
*Career and Life Coaching*





## Managing Your Career

This course looks at the techniques and strategies on how to manage your career, how to get that job interview and when you are there, how to succeed in the interview!

Today's job market is highly competitive so it is very important that you are well prepared and are one step ahead of the other candidates.

### Objectives

After completing this book, you will be able to:

- Clarify your career and life goals
- Know what direction you need to move in
- Know what is important to you in a career and what is not
- Know how to research a company BEFORE you send in a resume
- The importance of social media in job search
- Produce a winning resume that sells you as a person
- Answer with confidence any interview question that is thrown at you
- Overcome any interview nerves
- Communicate your strengths without bragging
- Understand what interviewers are looking for in a potential candidate
- Prepare and plan beforehand to ensure a successful interview
- Negotiate for a better pay deal
- Negotiate for better terms and conditions



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## How to Manage Your Career



There was a time when you would just drift into a career or a job, probably one that your parents wanted you to do or a career that was secure and had a good reputation.

Today, there are many career resources that can help one to choose and select what career and profession you want to do.

Today, you can actually design your life and your chosen career. You can actually go out there and get what you want – as long as you know what to do, that is!

This book is all about career management.

If you're like most people, you'll change careers at least several times over the course of your life.

How successful you'll be in making transitions among careers can at least be partially attributed to the amount of career planning and preparation you've done.

Every job-seeker needs to take the time to step way from the day-to-day grind of work and spend quality time reflecting on your career and developing some plans for your future.

Whether you love your current job and employer or feel frustrated and confined by your job, career planning can help.

We will look at what is important to you in a chosen career through to how to produce a winning resume that sells you right off the page! We will also look at interview techniques and how to prepare for them through to how to negotiate for better terms and conditions.

Fifty percent of your waking life is spent at work so it pays to make the right career choice and no matter whether you are preparing for your first job or whether you are looking for a career change – it is never too late.

So many people, however, choose a career that is not in line with their overall life plan.

For example, if you want a high flying executive role yet you also want a balanced home life where you go home at 5:00pm every night, you are going to run into conflict as you will probably struggle to fulfill both goals. Hence your

career management plan should be part of your overall life plan that is congruent with your goals, values, beliefs and what is important to you in life.

We have all seen the top manager who achieves and achieves at the detriment to their health or family.

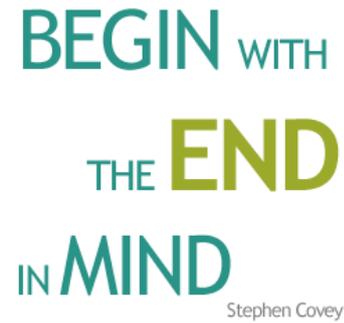
There are no rights or wrongs here – but you need to start with the end in mind.

Hence before we go into techniques and strategies to manage your career we need to spend some time looking at your own overall life plan and where your career fits in to this.

## Begin with The End In Mind

### Know Where You Are Going in Life

Creating a vision and a mission of what you want out of life will provide you with some direction and momentum to move forward and manage your career



Some people can get stuck in a rut and hence lack some direction and purpose to their life and therefore just drift along, letting events happen to them rather than going out and making them happen.

When you have a compelling vision, you will feel good about yourself. You know where you are going life and have a purpose to it all.

It will also make selecting your career choices a lot easier because you can easily assess whether it fits in with what you are trying to achieve with your life.

Ask yourself the following question:

### What Do You Really Want to Get Out Of Life?

A true mission has to express your purpose for existence.

I have devised a series of questions for you to ask yourself in order for you to do some soul searching and to give yourself some insights into what you are all about and why you are here. Take the time now and spend 30 minutes answering them before you move on.

- When you were a child, what did you want to be “When you grew up?”
  
- Name three people who have had the biggest influence on your life and why?
  
- If you could do anything for a living and get paid whatever you wanted, what would you do?

- Name your top three achievements of your life so far?
- What was so special about them?
- When you are at your happiest in life? What are you doing?
- Name three people that you admire the most?
- Why do you admire them? What characteristics and qualities do they have?
- Have you ever done anything for anyone less fortunate than yourself?
- If yes, what was it? If no, why not?
- What are your greatest strengths?
- What could you do in life to maximize your strengths?

- Is there anything that you would be willing to put everything on the line for?
- What would it be and why?
- If you could have your time over again, what would you have done so far?
- What results are you currently having in your life which you are pleased with?
- What results are you currently having in your life which you are not pleased with?
- If you could pass on a piece of wisdom to the whole world that you have learned in your life to date, what would it be?
- What do you value the most in your life?
- What would you really like to do with your life?

The whole point of getting you to think about those questions above was to really get you to think about what you want and wanted for your life.

So many of us had dreams and aspirations when we were growing up only to get caught up in the wheel of life and then they took a back seat as other opportunities and commitments came along

Now is the time to start from scratch again!

Look over the answers to your questions and then complete the following question:

The purpose of my life is to.....

Writing a mission statement is not easy and it shouldn't be something that is rushed.

It shouldn't be something that is just put on a "to do" list to be fitted in-between dinner and bedtime either!

Instead, if possible you should try and get away from your normal environment.

Go for a walk, or take a short break – your mission in life is far too important to be skimmed over.

When people lack a mission in life, they tend to just have materialistic goals and want “things”.

But after people have achieved, achieved and achieved some more they say to themselves “Is that all there is?”

Success without fulfillment is failure!

Your mission statement is just that; it is a statement about why you are here on earth.

Another good exercise for you to complete is to write your own obituary!

This is an ideal way to get you to think about what you want to do in your life time.

Pretend that you have just passed on; think about your achievements, your life’s work, your career and what you have done for others in your lifetime.

What will you be remembered for when you pass on?

Write your own obituary of what your life was about and what

You were remembered for.....



## What Is Success?

Everyone in life wants to be a success.

Success, no matter what it may mean to you or I usually results in more happiness, more fulfillment, rewards, money and the like.

There is no one definition of success. It means different things to different people. One person's definition may be totally different to another's.

Your definition of what success actually is can change as well.

**One thing that is common amongst everyone is that everyone wants to be a success and nothing in life is better than success!**

Just take time out and think what success actually means to you.

Write your definition of what success is in the space below or on a piece of paper. Do not carry on reading this until you have done so.

If you haven't filled in the above space do it now! Don't cheat yourself!

Sometimes you really need to have a good think about what is important to you when you define what success means.

Your definition of success will have been formed by a number of factors.

### How Your Definition of Success Is Formed



- Your upbringing
- Your beliefs
- Traits
- Your attitude
- Your peers
- Society
- Every experience that you have in life

All of the above will contribute as to what success means to you.

There is a myth that states that people are born winners or born losers.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

There are techniques, methods and ways of behaving that will enable and help you to succeed.

You owe it to yourself to get the most out of your life.

**The worst thing that you can do is to look back in 40 or 50 years time and say “I wish I had done this” or “I wish I had done that”.**

That’s why making sure you are in the right career is so important!

Improving yourself and developing is one sure fire way of making the most of your time on this planet.

## Forming A Vision for Your Career

It is extremely important to know where you are going in life.



Within this section we will be specifically looking at what you want for your career and will be going through a number of exercises to help to form your career vision of what your ideal day at work would look like!

Before we look at creating your vision for your career it is really important that you rid yourself of any “life conditioning” that you have had in the past.

When I say this I mean that you need to go into these exercises with a blank piece of paper and also a blank mind! Forget all of the advice that you might have had from friends or family with regards to what the “right career” would be for you. Forget the well intentions of your parents to find a respectable career that they did not have.

Instead, this is the chance for YOU to create the career that YOU want!

Therefore, you need to rid yourself of your personal barriers such as lack of motivation or laziness.

You need to rid yourself from family pressure such as following a certain career path, or to work in the family business or to work in a stable and respectable profession.

You also need to rid yourself of the expectations of your friends and family.

## Career Planning Exercises

The following exercises will help you to decide what your likes and dislikes are in a career. Please take your time in answering the questions. As you answer the questions you will start to formulate some conclusions as to what is “right” and what is “wrong” in a career for you.

### ***LIFESTYLE***

Identify the key characteristics of your ideal lifestyle – what would they be?  
i.e 2 hours quality time with the kids every night, earn \$50,000 a year, 20 minute travel time to work, 2 vacations per year, work in a team, etc.

Does/will your current career allow you to achieve your ideal lifestyle?

### ***LIKES/DISLIKES***

What are your likes and dislikes at work? Make 2 lists below.

What activities do you enjoy?

Which activities would you rather avoid?

Does your current job have more likes or dislikes?

## ***STRENGTHS & WEAKNESSES***

Put yourself in the shoes of a potential employer.

What are your key strengths and weaknesses? What would your employer, supervisor and co-workers say about you? What were you doing when you felt strong and competent at work this week? Weak, drained or bored?

Think experience, qualifications, training, ability, attitude and knowledge.

***PERSONALITY***

Does your current career fit with your personality type? Are you an introvert or extrovert?

Do you like to learn by doing or by thinking and reflecting?

Do you like variety and changes to the work that you complete or do you like routine and certainty?

***IDEAL DAY***

Describe in as much detail your ideal day at work - what sort of things would you be doing?

## ***IDEAL CAREER***

Based upon all you have written within this book so far, write down what your ideal career would consist of?

Imagine you are a kid again, what would you like to be when you grow up?!

**Your job search** will be shorter if:

- You have concrete proof that your skills have made a significant and measurable business impact for your current employer. If you are fortunate enough to be currently working, be sure you are working on important projects.
- You have developed skills that are so extraordinary that you are considered one of the elite in your field. You are well-versed in developments at the leading edge of your professional area. Invest in your own professional development, even if your current employer doesn't.
- You have built a strong professional network--the other experts in your field know your name, and your work. People outside your organization frequently ask for your advice in your area of expertise. Typically, this involves some level of engagement in social media.
- You are digitally visible when recruiters go looking for expertise like yours. (If you are not sure how that happens, you need to understand [how recruiters look for candidates](#)).
- There is a steady or growing demand for your skills in your geographic area. (Meaning: You are not in a declining career field, and your local economy is healthy). If your field is in decline, do whatever it takes to make the jump to a growth field, even if it involves a step back in the short term.
- Your resume does not look "risky" due to job-hopping, disreputable employers (like Enron) or other factors. Wherever you go, stick around long enough to make a difference (typically two years or longer).

**How to Put Together a Winning Resume Or CV That Sells You**

For all practical purposes the terms 'CV' and 'resume' are interchangeable. The abbreviation CV stands for Curriculum Vitae and literally means Life List.

It refers to what you have done in your life to date with regards to work, education and achievements.

Let's go through writing your own personal resume step by step and give you some tips along the way too.

Remember that your resume is an organic document, which means that you have a template or a draft of your resume that you work from every time you



want to send it to a prospective employer. I call this a Master Resume and I encourage you to record EVERYTHING on it. For each job applied for you will edit and adjust your Master Resume to suit that particular job.

### **Getting Started**

Before you sit down to write your resume you need to compile all your information and sort it within the sections I suggest as a resume layout.

**List all the jobs you have had including self-employment. Include duties and accomplishments for each.**

**List all of your volunteer work. Include duties and accomplishments for each.**

**What is your highest level of education? Where? Degree?**

**List every relevant certification and professional license that you have.**

**List your level of computer skills and the software with which you are competent.**

**What additional training have you acquired over the years?**

**What your personal attributes and assets? What are you really good at? Are you organized, dynamic, a good team-worker, analytical, excellent at maximizing resources, etc.**

## **What organizations do you belong to?**

## **Publications? Presentations? Awards?**

Make sure you have access to a computer and a printer.

If you don't most libraries, employment offices, business development centers or Workforce Network Centers have IT stations that you can work in.

You also need a disk or memory stick that you can keep your resume on for future use.

It is always a good idea to have more than one copy of your resume on a couple of disks in case you lose one or something goes wrong with it.

That way you won't have to start from scratch every time you want to send your resume out to an employer.

**Your resume is the first impression a prospective employer gets of you –  
Don't make it the last!**

85% of resumes go in the "round file" -- they never get read or even looked at.

So make sure yours catches enough interest to be read – you want that interview!

## **Resume Layout**

The following are sections that should be displayed in your resume and generally in the order I suggest although there are variations which I will cover later on, but for now it should look as follows:

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Telephone No:**

**Cell No (optional):**

### **E-mail (optional):**

This section is one of the most important to get right because the employer needs to know where and how to get hold of you.

If you don't have a telephone number ask a friend or a family member to take messages for you, but remember to include that information in your cover letter. Or better yet, get a phone just for job search. You can get a simple cell phone and buy minutes for a very reasonable price. (A separate template on how to write a cover letter is available from me).

Please give them your full name. And for hard copies going directly to an employer be sure to include your street address and zip code.

This is to make sure that any mail they may send you reaches you promptly.

You can place your name at the right hand corner like above or...

On the left hand corner as such or...

In the middle on the top of the first page...

The preferred option these days is either in the middle or starting from the left hand corner as I have done above.

But it is totally up to you as long as it is displayed before anything else.

You can make your name stand out by making the **font larger and bold** and then have your address and the rest of the information in smaller writing than the rest of your resume.

However, remember it has to be readable without a magnifying glass.

So it could look like this:

**James Smith**  
78 James Street  
Smithville, SC 12345  
(111) 111-1111  
Cell: (111) 222-2222  
[jamesmith@hotmail.com](mailto:jamesmith@hotmail.com)

## Some Criteria Before You Start

The following are some important points that you need to follow when you construct and send out your resume.

- Your resume shouldn't be more than 3 pages long unless applying for an academic position or a high level position that requires more detail be given. That said, 2 pages is best. If you have just left school or university it shouldn't be any longer than 2 pages with 1 page being most suitable.
- Most resumes will be read electronically.
- Write your resume on quality paper. Don't get watermarked paper because most resumes get photocopied and a watermark will not show up on a photocopy. Don't use "cutesy" paper. Keep it professional. A white or off-white color and high quality or linen paper is good.
- If possible, don't fold your resume. Get a large size envelope to put it in even if you are handing it in personally. If it is necessary to fold it put it in a matching envelope.
- Use 10-12-point font size.
- Don't use abbreviations in your resume. Most resumes will be scanned by a computer before a human ever sees it. They are searching for keywords. The person that will most likely read it first may be in HR and may not understand what you are talking about and you risk your resume being tossed.
- Your résumé should be a quick read. Use bulleted statements that begin with action verbs (i.e, allocated, negotiated, streamlined) in the body of your résumé, and avoid blocks of text. Remember that your résumé will be scanned quickly, and you must provide information bytes that can be readily understood by the reader. Whenever possible, use the simplest words that most accurately describe your accomplishments. Is there plenty of white space?
- Don't lie on your resume. You will only be found out. If not at the interview, then once you have started in your new job and you risk being fired. You don't want that on your next resume. You want to make yourself look as good as possible but you don't have to lie to do that.
- Proofread, proofread, proofread!!! Ask a friend with a strong attention to detail to proof your résumé for you. Realize that spell checkers do not catch correctly spelled but inappropriate words, such as "manger" instead of "manager."

- Use a professional sounding email address if you are providing one. Your first and last name @ hotmail or gmail is fine—like [johndoe@gmail.com](mailto:johndoe@gmail.com) . Do NOT use cutesy addresses like [sunshinelove@comcast.net](mailto:sunshinelove@comcast.net) or something that does not have your name in like [spiritwoman23@yahoo.com](mailto:spiritwoman23@yahoo.com)
- You will probably need different resumes for each type of position applied for. I prefer to have a master resume with absolutely everything on it then edit it for each position putting the important highlights in the “Summary of Qualifications/Professional Summary” section and the most relevant information first in the body of the resume.
- The résumé should show **accomplishments** -- how you used your skills to add value to your previous employers. Demonstrate your understanding of the bigger picture by citing results or a solution you developed. Use numbers, dollars and percentages to illustrate the value you added to the previous employer's business. For example: " Developed and implemented regional safety incentive program that contributed to a 50% reduction of claims "
- Don't use personal pronouns such as I, mine, me.
- Don't use passive descriptions such as “responsible for. . .” “Responsible for allocating” becomes “allocated”
- Don't mention political, religious or controversial information, or personal information such as height, weight, and marital status.

### Professional Summary or Summary of Qualifications or Highlights

Career objectives on a resume are no longer used. That space is better utilized with a “Summary of Qualifications” or “Professional Summary”.

This section goes directly beneath your name and contact information. It's like a table of contents for your resume and lets the reader know that it is worth reading the entire document. This is also the section that you change for each position applied for that reflects the minimum qualifications and preferences in the job description and from your behind-the-scenes research.

This is also where you can include any language skills you may have. Other languages are important to mention in your resume irrespective of importance or relevance to the job.

If you speak more than two languages put them under a separate heading entitled “Languages” and if one of those languages is more relevant to the position include in the Summary as well.

Below are examples of a *Professional Summary* (for a facilities management position), a *Summary of Qualifications* (for a bilingual counseling position) that includes a tagline and a *Highlights* (for a customer service position in a convenience store) below. The first two don't use the section title (Professional Summary and Summary of Highlights) as that is prime real estate on a resume. Instead they use the professional title which can be adjusted according to the purpose of the resume.

## Professional Summary

### REAL ESTATE & FACILITIES MANAGEMENT PROFESSIONAL

With 20 years of demonstrated achievement in cultivating productive relationships with stakeholders and negotiating project deliverables for the successful implementation and deployment of complex, large-scale multi-site operations projects.

- Innovative & Analytical Problem Solver
- Superior Planning, Organizational & Forecasting Skills
- Motivational & Cross Functional Team Leader
- Exceptional Negotiator
- Metrics Based Performance Management
- Highly Flexible & Proactive

## Summary Of Qualifications

### BILINGUAL COUNSELING PROFESSIONAL

*Strong commitment to coach and empower people to achieve their highest potential*

- Master's Degree in Counseling Psychology
- Certified Global Career Development Facilitator
- Nationally Certified Counselor
- 15 years experience of career and life transition counseling
- Speak, read and write Spanish
- Excellent written and oral communication skills
- Excellent presentation and group facilitation skills

#### Highlights:

- Over 4 years experience in friendly and courteous customer service
- Accurate cash, credit, debit and check transactions
- Well-organized and efficient.
- Work well in a high-pressure environment.
- Available for all shifts, weekends and holidays
- Able to please customers under all circumstances.
- Able to work well as part of a team as well as individually.
- Computer literate.

## Work History or Professional Experience

This section is dedicated to the jobs you have had in the past and the one you have at the moment if applicable.

Put your work history before (including volunteer work and internships) your formal education and certifications.

From the list you made earlier with all your past jobs put them in reverse chronological order—i.e. put the one you are either doing right now or your last job – first.

Put the position or job title in bold as the first thing, then put the company you worked for as follows:

<b>Sales &amp; Marketing Executive</b> <i>Alpha Beta Company</i>	2006-present Smithville, SC
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The year and location could be placed as above or they could be placed below the company name or they could follow the description of duties and accomplishments/achievements. The important thing is to be consistent with each job entry.

After that put the main duties and responsibilities you had in that job in a point form, as follows:

Maximized industry sponsorship and advertising sales for company name products and services for industry and other suppliers.

After that you list your achievements, with metrics whenever possible, while in that job in bullet form, as follows:

### Achievements

- Increased sponsorship and funding levels by 10% over a 1 year period
- Built and maintained relationships with up to 90 vendor companies

Your achievements must relate to your main duties and responsibilities to show the prospective employer that you have worked from your job description and improved things within your job.

This is an opportunity to show your prospective employer just how good you are and the successes that you have had.

Too many resumes focus on what you are responsible for rather than what you have achieved.

Employers want to see evidence that you have done a good job in the past and what you are capable of.

So the work history will look like this:

**IT Project Manager**  
*Company Name*

Date  
Location

Main Duties & Responsibilities 1. Main duty 2. Main duty 3.

- Achievement 1
- Achievement 2
- Etc.

After this job you place the job you did before that and use the same procedure.

If you studied, worked at home, or other, before that you just take the job you did before then.

If this is your only job, then you must milk it for all it is worth and don't leave anything important out.

Any gaps in your resume can be covered in your cover letter such as having been at home for a period to look after your family.

But don't forget that looking after your family will have given you a lot of invaluable experience and transferable skills. We all know how difficult it can be to run a household.

Include all jobs relevant to the position you are applying for. If there are some jobs in your work history that are not relevant just write the date, the company name and your job title with a few lines of bullets of what you did in that job or achieved.

If you have had a lot of jobs in your life and haven't stayed in them for very long you may need to consider grouping some of them.

For example, if you had a year where you tried out a couple of jobs you may write them within the same heading and briefly explain why that is.



## Volunteer Work

This section goes below the Work History or Professional Experience section and uses the same format.

## Education

Your highest level of formal education is usually sufficient unless the job requires some specific education that would be better showcased by a lower level degree. For example, if the position requires an education degree but your highest level of degree is a Masters in Psychology be sure to list that Bachelors in Education as well as your graduate degree.



Use the ordering as with your work history, list the last first and work backwards.

If you wrote a thesis or dissertation and the topic is applicable to the position include it with the relevant degree.

Put the degree first, then the subject area and then the name of the institution where you earned it.

**Master of Arts: Counseling Psychology.**

University of Oregon. Eugene, OR

Thesis: "Treatment Options of At-risk Teen Girls"

**Bachelor of Arts: Education**

University of Oregon. Eugene, OR

If you attended some college but did not graduate then use the format above minus the degree.

**Business Administration**

University of Oregon. Eugene, OR

I generally don't include education dates unless it's relevant –i.e. in the technology field information is changing so rapidly that a more recent education is preferred. However, there is nothing wrong with including the completion date. Older job seekers should definitely avoid dates of degrees as age discrimination is alive and well even though it is illegal.

If you have only completed high school or a GED list it and the institution where you earned it.

Eugene High School  
Diploma

Eugene, OR

This is also where you include any relevant apprenticeships, specialized training or any other work based training that you have completed during your career. If your continuing education is extensive create a separate section entitled "Continuing Education".

## Certifications and Licenses

This section is dedicated to certifications or licenses that are relevant but are not covered in any of the sections mentioned above. Such as:

- Advanced Toast Master
- Coaching certification
- Food Handler's Card
- Computer software and networking certifications
- Professional licenses (i.e. Massage, Nursing, Tax Consultant)
- First Aid courses
- Etc.

Certification  
Information



It is enough to list these in a bullet point form and you can include dates and the institution that you earned it from if that adds value or clarifies.



## References

Don't put your references on your resume. Don't put "References available upon request" at the bottom of your resume or anywhere for that matter. Put them on a separate sheet of paper and take them with you to the interview.

Some application processes will ask for them to be included with the application package in which case enclose the separate reference sheet.

Include name, their position, their relationship to you and contact information.

Jane Doe  
Psychology Department Chair  
Former supervisor for graduate internship  
University of Oregon  
Eugene, OR  
(123) 456-7890  
[jdoe@uoregon.edu](mailto:jdoe@uoregon.edu)

Do not use friends or family. Use supervisors, former supervisors (from both paid and volunteer work), teachers, religious leaders if you are active in that community, community leaders, etc. Former and current co-workers can also be acceptable.

Imagine that you are the boss and have two equally qualified candidates. One has her mother, best friend and boyfriend for references. The other has a former supervisor, her rabbi and a well-respected city council woman. As an employer—who would you choose?

You will need at least three references. If you met your best friend at work and you don't have a third person to use for a reference you can call him or her a co-worker or former co-worker.

Call all of your intended references before you list them and ask if they are comfortable giving you a good reference. This gives them an out if they don't want to do it and ensures that you will be getting rave references.

Make sure they have a current copy of your resume and, if you are interviewing for a specific job, be sure to send them the job description so they can address key points that are relevant to that position's requirements.

## Preparing For The Interview



So your resume has done it's job and you now have an interview!

Let's look at ways in which you can prepare and be ready for whatever the interviewer throws at you.

Many people believe that the interview is the hardest part of getting a job but I actually believe it is *getting* the interview that is the toughest.

After all, when someone is reading through your resume you are not there to provide help if the reviewer has got any questions – they merely make their minds up based upon what you write.

You should give yourself a huge pat on the back!

You made it through to step 2 – the interview!

It is now time to show your prospective employer exactly what you have done in the past and is also an opportunity to build up a mental picture in their minds of what you will do in the future.

With some careful planning and preparation the job will be as good as yours!

Remember that the company has gone to a lot of time, effort and expense to get you where you are at in the selection process.

They may have:

1. Paid for a job advertisement
2. Hired a recruitment company
3. Spent time and effort producing a detailed job description
4. Spent time and effort producing a personal specification
5. Spent time and effort in planning out start dates and contracts
6. Spent time and effort in planning out an training program for when you start

The company has completed its preparation and they will expect you to do the same as well.

The cost of getting a wrong “fit” goes way beyond the financial implications of recruitment and selection.

## How to Prepare a Career Statement

During an interview you usually get the chance to tell the interviewer all about yourself.

They usually will ask open questions like:

“Tell me about yourself?”

“What kind of a manager are you?”

“What are your strengths?”

“Why should we hire you?”

“What would you bring to the company?”

Now while these questions on the outset seem to be asking for a certain type of specific answer, all of these 5 questions give you the opportunity to tell the interviewer almost anything – even something that you have prepared beforehand – like a career statement!

A career statement is a brief 20-second piece that highlights some of your most powerful and beneficial skills, behaviors, knowledge and experience. Since you prepared the Summary of Qualifications or Professional Summary in your resume I encourage you to use that as the foundation of your career statement.

Here are some examples:

*“I am a highly motivated and ambitious person with a 23 year proven track record in delivering major projects from inception through to post implementation review”*

*“Having worked in HR all of my working life I have a vast experience of all of the elements in HR and have worked across multi-functional teams across 5 industries – there is not a lot that I haven’t seen”*

By preparing and memorizing the career statements above all you need to do is amend them slightly to respond to each of the questions we posed earlier.

By having the career statement up your sleeve you can use it when the time is right.

Let's have a look at some examples:

**QUESTION**

“What are your strengths?”

**REPLY**

*“Well, having worked in HR all of my working life I have a vast experience of all of the elements in HR and have worked across multi-functional teams in 5 industries – there is not a lot that I haven't seen. One particular strength of mine is that I am able to relate to people at all levels – I have found this be an essential skill over the years that I have had to master to become successful at what I do ”*

Your career statement can be used very effectively to this sort of question.

Instead of just jumping in with a reply such as “My strengths include xyz”, you are conditioning the interviewer before you answer the question and you are providing him/her with some further evidence of how good you are.

The response sounds more professional as well.

Let's take another example:

**QUESTION**

“What kind of a manager are you?”

**REPLY**

*“I would say that I am a highly motivated and ambitious manager. With a 23 year proven track record in delivering major projects I found that my style of being firm but fair gets the results. Being highly motivated myself means that I am able to motivate others easily....”*

What you are doing here is using your career statement to lead into and actually answer the question that has been posed.

Preparation goes a long way!!!



Think of three different roles or positions that you would like to apply for and for each one write down a career statement.

## Why Should I Hire You?

Along with a career statement, you need to have an answer to the following question:

“Please tell me, why should I hire you?”

Now an interviewer might not come straight out with that direct question but somewhere down the line you are really going to need to sum up what you have to offer the company and it pays to do so without endless amounts of waffle!

Some call this your USP.

# U

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The whole reasoning behind a USP is that you will be in competition with a number of candidates for the same role and you need to stand out from the rest.

What will make you stand out from the rest?

What will make you so different?

What is your uniqueness?

Usually there are a number of candidates that will fit the specification for the job, perform well at the interview and be on the short list of 3 for the role.

Seeing as you are nearly all the same it will be the uniqueness and the USP that sells the candidate.

Make a list of your USP's.

What makes you unique?

What will make you stand out from the rest of the candidates?

## Preparing Your Successes and Proof by Example

There can be nothing worse than going away from an interview wishing you'd have said this or said that.

It will be your only chance to demonstrate that you have been successful in the past and your chance to convince the interviewer that you will be successful in the future.

Hence you need to have a think about the successes that you have had over the years, the key skills you can bring to the role and what you are good at.

Another important point to remember is that the interviewer will only know what you tell them!

They are not psychic!

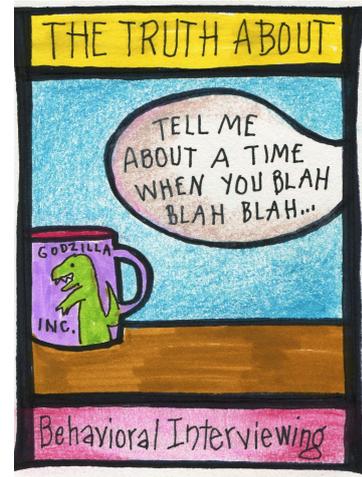
You cannot assume that they know how good you are, what you are good at and what you have done – you have to tell them everything and assume that they know absolutely nothing about you! **The interviewer(s) may not even have read your resume.** An HR professional may have simply handed them a list of qualified candidates.

Preparation in advance is critical for this.

You will want to have between 5 and 20 key achievements, strengths, skills and attributes that you can call upon at will when the time is right.

But when answering a question that enables you to talk about your strengths for example do not just say:

“I am very good with people”



Instead, say your strength and then back it up with evidence from something you have done in a work related matter which is also related to the job you are going for – don't be shy! This is called "Proof by Example".

So in our example above let's assume you are going for a HR job:

"I would say that one of my main strengths is that I am very good with people. Having worked in a HR department with over 50 people I have had to work well in a team as well as on my own and I have been in constant contact with employees everyday helping them out with their problems and providing support for them"

Do you see how a simple question such as "Tell me your strengths?" can be used to your advantage?

Let's look at the response again:

"I would say that one of my main strengths is that I am very good with people. Having worked in a HR department with over 50 people I have had to work well in a team as well as on my own and I have been in constant contact with employees everyday helping them out with their problems and providing support for them"

Firstly, you have highlighted a strength – **"very good with people"**

Then you have given evidence that you have worked in HR before and seeing as you are going for a job in HR this is a vital point to bring up – **"Having worked in a HR department"**

You then pointed out that you have worked in a department **"With over 50 people"** This means that you have worked in a large team and most likely with a lot of experienced people.

After that you have pointed out further strengths and attributes!

**"I have had to work well in a team"** and **"as well as on my own"**

Means that you are good with others, you have had to get on with other people but at the same time can work on your own and get things done so that you are not dependent on others!

**"I have been in constant contact with employees everyday"**

Once again evidence of working with others especially employees – if you are going to have contact on a regular basis with employees in the role that you are going for this will be a big plus point for you.

“Helping them out with their problems and providing support for them”  
Conditions the interviewer that you help employees but providing help and guidance for their issues.

Use the following structure when answering these type of questions:

**Start off by saying:**

“One of my key strengths is that... (say what your strength is)

**then**

“In the past I have....(link in your strength to what you have done in the past)

**then**

“Which means that...(give a benefit to your strength)

For example:

*“**One of my key strengths** is that I can deal with difficult people effectively. **In the past** I have had to do this on numerous occasions when faced with difficult situations when in my previous HR role for example when I helped with the layoffs or when workers were asked to take a pay cut. **This means** that I have the skills and knowledge of how to handle tough situations that come up from time to time in a HR department”*

Practice makes perfect!

List down 5 of your key strengths and back this up with evidence.

Use the model as described before:

**Start off by saying:**

“One of my key strengths is that... (say what your strength is)

**then**

“In the past I have....(link in your strength to what you have done in the past)

**then**

“Which means that...(give a benefit to your strength)



**KEY STRENGTH 1**

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

**KEY STRENGTH 2**

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

**KEY STRENGTH 3**

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

**KEY STRENGTH 4**

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

**KEY STRENGTH 5**

“One of my key strengths is that...

“In the past I have...

“Which means that...

## You Can Also Use a PAR Format: *Problem, Action Result*

Another excellent format for talking about your achievements and strengths is the PAR format:

**Problem:** As a dispatcher for our entire trucking fleet I noticed that there was no tracking system for who was where, when and with what and information was getting lost and a lot of time was spent tracking it down, deliveries were not consistent and customers were complaining.

**Action:** Using Excel I created a system that tracked all deliveries. Everyone in the company had access to this system, including the drivers on the road.

**Result:** Information was no longer being lost so we weren't spending time looking for it and we saved \$175K in overtime costs last year. Our deliveries are now 98% on time. Customer complaints dropped by 75%. I received the Employee of the Year Award for creating this system.

Now, make a list of:

- 5 key skills that you have got and stress what you have done in the past and the benefits to the role that you are going for
- 10 key achievements in your working life. Try using the PAR format.
- 5 key achievements outside of work (i.e. perhaps you want to convey the ability to plan events and the best example is that family reunion you planned last year that involved extensive research to locate 150 distant relatives)

## How to Answer Interview Questions

Where a lot of people fall down at the interview is their inability to answer questions.

You may feel that an interview is all about answering questions and you are right – but there are techniques and strategies to use to enable you to answer the questions in the correct manner to land you the job.

Overall, within an interview you will be asked 3 types of questions.

### **QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 1**

**“Are you capable of doing the job?”**

### **QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 2**

**“Will you do the job?”**

### **QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 3**

**“Are you a team player and will you fit into the company?”**

That's it!

All of the questions that you will be asked will be related to one of those three questions.

So, armed with this you can prepare thoroughly beforehand and have an unfair advantage over your competitors!

It's easier when you know how!

## QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 1

### “Are you capable of doing the job?”

These types of questions are all about what you have done in the past.

It is when the interviewer is assessing your abilities and what you have done before to see if you are suitable for the role that you have applied for.

Whichever question is asked think about how you can relate it to what you have done in the past and PROVIDE EVIDENCE.

Avoid vague statements such as:

“I have worked with all types of people from all different backgrounds”

“I have managed teams in the past”

“I enjoyed working at BLOGS COMPANY”

These are just generalizations, they provide no substance or evidence.

Instead you should say:

“I have worked with all types of people from all different backgrounds this has meant that I have been able to build up a tool box of communication skills so I can get the best out of people and also know what motivates different people to get the job done”

Can you see how powerful this statement is now?

Start to think like an interviewer.

Ask yourself the “So what?” question.

This means that whatever you say in response to a question pretend that the interviewer says to you “So what?”

This will make sure that you provide benefits and real life evidence of what you have done, how you did it.

## QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 2

### “Will you do the job?”

These types of questions are basically probing your motivations and character traits of whether you will do the job and your approach to work.

It is about your attitude and what you will bring to the workplace in terms of your outlook and positivity.

The interviewer will want to know what you are like as a person so you need to convince them that your personality, your drive and your will to work hard is what they need.

When answering the questions you need to bring in your motivations and your character traits into the conversation to prove to the interviewer that you are willing to do the job.

Some examples could include:

“I am a highly motivated person and like to get the job done”

“On occasions plans have to change and I am extremely flexible when this is concerned – if it is a case of staying behind to get the job done I will do this”

“I have only ever had 2 previous jobs that both lasted for a period of 8 years each. This means that I am fully committed and don't look for jobs often and when this one came up it looked a perfect fit”

Always think to yourself:

“How can I demonstrate that I am willing to do this job?”

Then follow up each statement with Proof By Example/ a PAR story.

### QUESTION TYPE NUMBER 3

#### “Are you a team player and will you fit into the company?”

While you are answering the questions the interviewer is building up a mental picture of your capabilities and your attitude to get the job done.

They are also imagining whether you will fit into the culture of the organization and whether you will fit in.

Companies have their own culture, missions, values and ways of working – they will be forming a mental picture of whether you will fit in with that.

Some offices have a more open and fun environment, while others have a more serious outlook.

How you look and come across at the interview will determine your best fit to the company and it is one of the most important factors in whether you will get the job or not.

Let's think about this for a moment.

You could have all of the credentials, have a proven track record and could have a first class attitude but if you will not fit into the team and company as whole it is most unlikely that you will get the job.

Why is this?

Well, firstly potential employers may see a “non fit” as having a disruptive and negative impact on the team. If you are a very serious person yet the team philosophy is fun and doing things in an alternative manner it is probably going to be unfair to you and the other members of the team if you are forced to fit in.

The opposite is true if you are a very outgoing, outrageous person yet the company is known for conservatism and a serious outlook.

It will be a bad fit for you and a bad fit for the company.

Please remember that you also need to assess whether the company will be a good fit for you as well. While the interviewer is deciding whether you are a good fit for them, you need to be forming an opinion of whether you would like

to work for them as well. You are interviewing them as well as them interviewing you.

## What's in It for the Employer?



We have discussed the importance of stressing the benefits of your skills and past experience to your prospective future employer every time that you answer an interview question.

You really do need to do some preparation with regards to how you can articulate what you have done in terms of future benefits to the company.

Sometimes it is not straight forward to see the benefits in what you have done but if you question yourself enough times and use the “So what?” approach you will find that you start to produce some benefits almost straight away.

You need to answer the question:

“What’s in it for me?”

Whenever you respond to a question think to yourself that the interviewer is asking themselves that question.

What better way than to answer it for them!

Think of certain phrases that you can use that stress the benefits of your skills or experience.

Use these phrases at the end of talking about your skills and experiences:

Which resulted in...

Which meant that...

The benefits of this were....

The advantage of this were...

We achieved...

Exceptional Living Coach

The end result was...

## Interview Scheduled? What do you do next?



**Want to know how you can go into an interview fully prepared, ready for any question, and ready to sell them on the best thing that ever happened to them—your candidacy?**

You have an interview scheduled.

It's a company you'd really like to work for.

And, the job is perfect for you—it's just what you've been looking for.

Now, all you have to do is convince them!

Whether your background provides a clear match for the job, or, it's something you've been working your way up to, and represents the next step for your career, following are some guiding tips for how best to present your background, skills and talent so that you can confidently ace that interview!



### **Research the company**

Find out as much as you can about the company before you even go in.

It's history, mottos, values, mission, and vision.

What have they already accomplished, and what are they striving for?

Knowing how you can contribute to the big picture will communicate a clear interest and capability.

If you know anyone who works there find out more about the workplace culture. If you don't know anyone directly—do you know anyone who knows anyone? Remember you can use LinkedIn for this.

### **Understand the position they are working to fill**

Find out as much as you can about the position before you go in.

Why is it vacant—is it a refill or an add-on?

What are the responsibilities?

To whom does it report and who reports to it?

### **Consider your career plans**

Where do you want to be in five years?

Then ask yourself: “Will this position be a step in the right direction?”

It may be a step to the side, or a step up, be sure it will ultimately help you achieve your career goals.

### **Know with whom you will be meeting**

Is this the individual to whom you will be reporting?

What is this individual’s role in the organization?

In the hiring process?

### **Outline your strengths**

Complete the work that we covered in an earlier session

Know your strengths—you know this is a perfect job for you, but how can you convince them?



Outline your strengths—your skills, your qualifications, and your talents.

Don’t forget to mention your personal qualities—these will help the interviewer determine whether or not you are a “fit” for the role/department/organisation.

If you are truly a team player, say so.

Manager of the year at your last job? Mention it!

This is not the time to be shy.

### **Tackle the “challenges” question with confidence**

As an interviewee, your least favourite question is probably:

“What are your challenges/weaknesses?”

Sometimes it’s positively rephrased as

“If there were any skills or talents you would say/your references would say you could benefit from improving, what would they be?”

Either way, it still gets to the same thing—what don’t you do well?

This is the interviewer’s shot at making you nervous, penetrating that cool, confident exterior you’ve been presenting up to this point.

Some advice I’ve heard:

“disguise a negative with a positive.”

Although I agree with it in theory, my word of advice to you on that is, whatever you offer up, consider the role for which you are interviewing, the company’s mission/culture, and identify something that would not be considered a red flag (e.g. a common false negative: I’m overly-independent—might be considered a red flag for an organization/role where teamwork is especially considered important).

### **Answering the weakness question**

The weakness question can be one of the best questions to respond to in order to fill the interviewer with just how great you are!

If you learn the technique that I am about to teach you, you can turn the weakness question into a MASSIVE positive for yourself.



Answer the weakness question incorrectly and you could very well hear the interviewer shouting “next!”

Answering the weakness question always seems to be difficult on the outset.

All of us would love to reply with “I HAVE NONE” but this seems a little arrogant!

Ok, let’s get to it!

To answer the weakness question you must first go into the interview with 2 that you have prepared earlier.

Answer the question “What are your weaknesses?” in the following way:  
Never mention a weakness that you have not already addressed.

For example using the PAR format, if attention to detail is not exactly what you are known for you might answer like this:

*“Attention to detail is not my strength. I’m really more of a people person. So I have created systems so that information doesn’t fall between the cracks. It could be as simple as a sticky note on my computer, or blocking out time on my calendar to address detail-oriented tasks or it could be a cheat sheet that outlines a complex process. The result is that my paperwork is always turned in on time and is done accurately.”*

The interviewer has forgotten all about your weakness and is left with a IMPRESSIVE positive. And just in case they haven’t forgotten about the weakness it shows that you know what your weaknesses are and you address without being a problem for the employer.

OR another approach is to discuss from an “in-progress” point of view:

*“I am very results focused and like to get a job done on time and to the high quality that I set myself. I get a little impatient at times when things do not go my way. I’m aware of this though and I am working to be a little less hard on myself”*

A weakness of impatience is suddenly turned into a MASSIVE positive.

- Answer structure should be:
  - State a positive “I am very.....”
  - What do you get “Because I like to.....”
  - Bring in the negative “Which means at times I have a tendency to.....)
  - “However, I know this and I am doing.....”

When you go into the interview I mentioned you should have two.

The first I'd like you to come out with yourself. Never tell the interviewer more than one weakness unless he asks for it.

So now it's your turn!

What I would like you to do is to write down 3 weaknesses that you have got and turn them into POSITIVE responses as I have done above.

## On Pace

Try your best to “mirror” your interviewer’s pace.

If you are an energetic, fast-talker, but your interviewer’s idea of speed seems to be a turtle race, slow down!

And, vice versa.

This simple technique can give you a leg up in the “establishing rapport” requirement.

However, don’t hesitate to pause when asked a question.

If you are asked for a specific example, or for a “time when,” don’t hesitate to ask for a minute and pause before coming up with a great response.



It’s better to appear thoughtful, than uncertain by offering up a less than stellar example—all in the interest of being quick.

In short, inform and prepare, and you will ace the interview! And, practice—take on the role of interviewer.

If you were hiring, what would you want to know?

But, above all, be yourself—it’s the glove that fits best anyway.

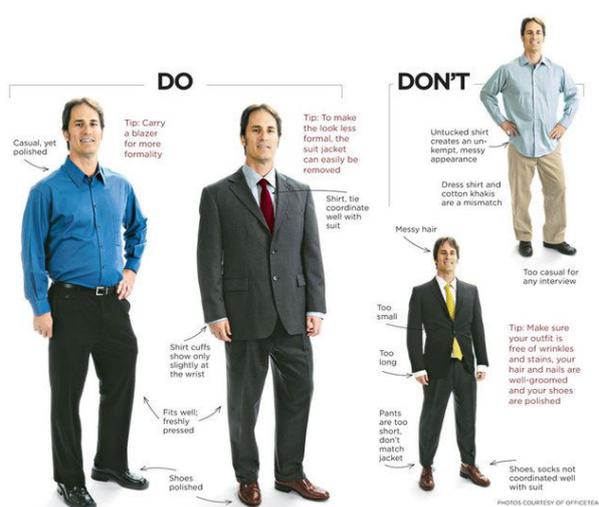
## Impression Management

Doing all of the preparation in the world is one thing but the first impression that you make during the interview and the signals that your body language make to your interviewer are critical if you are going to be successful.

How you look and the way that you say your answers both need close attention.

## Dressing The Part

During the interview it will not only be your skills, experience and personality that will be weighed up but also your appearance as well.



Many people just go with what they would normally wear to any formal function but you really do need to give a lot of importance to your appearance – the interviewer will be giving you the once over from head to toe!

No only will you impress the interviewer when you are best dressed but it will also give your inner confidence a boost and will make you feel great and ready to take on the interview and show them

what you're worth!

Here are some top tips for dressing the part:

- Research the company - companies and even industries for (example Accountants) have definable corporate cultures. Find out what the corporate uniform is - and wear it.
- Much as you may want to be an individual you will really want to play it safe at an interview. Interviewers will want to recruit team players so as wear the corporate uniform as close as you can.
- Even if the company dress code is casual, i.e. no ties, or that you can wear jeans etc, your interviewing clothes should always be formal and conservative. A good rule of thumb is to dress up one notch above what the everyday attire is.

- Select an outfit you have worn before that makes you feel good and confident.
- A couple of days before the interview go over your clothes with a fine tooth comb! Look for any repairs that need doing, missing buttons etc. It's better to find them then than on the morning of the interview!
- Everything must be clean, neat and ironed. Shoes polished. Nails trimmed and cleaned.

## Body Language

Body language plays a very important role in an interview.

What we communicate through our non-verbal actions and signals always has a direct impact upon whether we are successful or not.

Experienced interviewers are skilled at “reading people”. This means that they know that what the interviewee is saying and the way that they are saying it and moving their body are all congruent with one another.

The interviewers can pick up “clues” as to whether you are meaning what you are saying, whether you are telling the truth and how comfortable you feel.

Most people realize that making eye contact when talking with someone is important, and that the lack of eye contact suggests anything from shyness and insecurity to the inability to tell the truth.

Some “clues” are obvious like sweating or fidgeting, while others are not.

For example, if someone rubs their nose or covers their mouth when talking this often comes across that they are hiding something or that they are telling a lie – so be careful if you find yourself doing that!

Chances are that the person you interviewed with has made it a point to look for ‘signs’ that will help him ‘read’ people more effectively.

Here are some of the signs in greater detail. They will help you to put the right image across to the interviewer



**To come across as open and warm try –**

- Open-lipped smiling
- Open hands with palms visible,
- Unbuttoning coat upon being seated.

**To come across as confident –**

- Maintain eye contact
- Have your head up
- Use hand gestures while talking
- Walk with a purpose and have an upright posture
- Have a “firm” handshake

**To avoid coming across as nervous move away from –**

- Fidgeting
- Waffling with your answers
- Using the same phrases
- Coughing
- Yawning
- Touching your face/hair
- Moving feet or twiddling thumbs

**To avoid coming across as defensive move away from –**

- Folding your arms
- Head looking down
- Closed body language
- Rolling of the eyes
- Touching your face while talking
- Frowning
- Tight-lipped grins

## Relaxation and Affirmation Before the Interview

Relaxation should not be viewed as an “indulgence” but rather as a necessity.

Our bodies are designed to move, and our brains are designed to think, but both function far more effectively when we allow them a little respite and give ourselves time to relax.



What is relaxation?

Well, it's different things to different people.

It can be anything that takes your mind off the worries and stresses of the day and allows you to lose yourself in the “flow”.

It could be anything from reading a book, playing an instrument, writing a letter or doing embroidery, right through to walking, swimming and other forms of keep fit.

It is any activity that allows your conscious mind to switch off, allows your sub-conscious to take over, and enables you to “lose yourself” in your chosen pastime.

We have all had the experience of “losing ourselves” in an activity, suddenly looking at the clock and wondering where all the time went!

A particular way to use relaxation to improve confidence and develop a positive self-image is to combine relaxation with affirmation.

Visualization is a very powerful tool for developing affirmations and creating a positive self-image.

Give yourself a few moments to lie down in a quiet space.

You may like to put on some calming and relaxing music.

Allow your eyes to close and your mind to quieten down.

Create a picture in your mind of how you will look when you have bags of confidence and a positive belief in yourself.

Make the picture as big, bright and bold as you can.

If you can, make it into a movie.

Hear the sounds in the scene, feel the temperature, or maybe even a breeze.

Now imagine how you would feel *inside* with all this confidence and self-belief.

Find the feeling, let it grow and let the feeling flow throughout your body – feel really good.

Now allow an affirmation that captures how you look, sound and feel in the movie, drift into your mind.

It may be something along the lines of:

“I am a strong, beautiful and calm woman.”

“I am a compassionate, decisive, leader.”

“I am a kind and successful person”

“I am articulate and great at answering interview questions”

Say his affirmation over and over to yourself – you may say it out loud or inside you head.

When you feel ready, take a deep breath in, open your eyes, stretch and wake up.

You will feel calm, relaxed and refreshed.

Set aside a few minutes each day to quiet down, relax, and play your movie in your mind’s eye.

As your movie plays, let your affirmation run through your mind and allow the good feelings to spread to every part of you.

Experience the *feelings* of self-confidence and positive self-image in every bone and every muscle in your body.

As you allow your mind and body to relax, play your movie, and recite your affirmation, you are training your mind and body to behave in a more confident way and you are, in turn, enhancing your own self-image.

You will notice yourself doing things slightly differently – you will begin to walk taller, you will begin to speak up a bit more, and these little things will grow and

develop into profound changes as you become a more relaxed and confident person with a positive self-image.

## Popular Questions Asked at Interviews

Here are some of the most popular asked interview questions.

It would be a good idea to go through them and write down what your perfect response would be to each of them.

Just imagine going into an interview armed with the questions and answers beforehand!



Well, by providing answers to the following questions you will cover 95% of the questions that will ever get asked.

Remember Proof By Example and PAR stories to make your answers the ones that the interviewers remember.

This will boost your confidence!

### Questions:

Tell me about yourself?

Why do you want this job?

Why did you apply for this job?

What should we give you this job?

What are your main strengths?

What are your weaknesses?

What are you good at?

What are you not so good at?

What sort of a person are you?

What do you know about us?

How do you manage your day?

What type of a manager are you?

What interests you most at work?

What do you look for in a member of your team?

Why do you want to leave your current job?

What motivates you in life?

Where do you see yourself in the next 5 years?

What are your ambitions?

How do you work in a team?

How would you deal with difficult people?

How do you manage conflict?

When given a piece of work to complete, how do you generally go about it?

What do you think you can bring to this role?

What role do you play in a team?

Where do you see this role in 6 months time?

What salary are you looking for?

What package are you looking for?

Talk me through your work history?

Do you like to work as part of a team or on your own?

What training have you had in the past?

How do you get the best out of people?

Have you got any questions for us?

## Position Matching Analysis

Another outstanding method to prepare for the interview is the Position Matching Analysis. If you have a written job description this method can be extremely valuable. It will help you assess your fit and build your marketing strategy and emphasize the match.

Take a sheet of paper (or computer screen) and divide it into 3 columns.

In the far left column write the job *requirement*.

In the middle column write down your *qualifications*.

In the far right column write down your *fit and/or a PAR or achievement story*.

Do this with each requirement, knowledge, skill or ability the position is asking for. This is labor intensive and the result is that you will be prepared to address almost every question thrown at you.

## Asking Questions

There will come a time during the interview, usually at the end, when the interviewer will ask you whether you have got any questions for them.

You should use this as an opportunity to demonstrate some of your key skills for the role once more.

Instead of just asking a question like:

“How many people will I be working with in my team?”

Bring in a strength statement first of all and then ask the question like:

Q => “Have you got any questions for us?”

A => “Well, being a team player I always stress the importance of working as a team, I’d be interested in finding out how many people I will be working with?”

Do you see how more powerful this response is?

The beauty of this type of response is that you can bring up any additional strengths, skills or experiences that you have not discussed to date with the interviewer.

Use this format:

“Being a .....(highly motivated person)  
I would like to know.....”

or

“I have always done xyz in the past.....  
what will xyz be like in this role.....”

Think about the following questions that you can ask the interviewer and rephrase them in your own words using a benefits statement at the beginning:

**Example:**

**Q =** “How many people will I be working with in my team?”

**Rephrased =** “Well, being a team player I always stress the importance of working as a team, I’d be interested in finding out how many people I will be working with?”

-----

**Q =** “How much responsibility will I get?”

**Rephrased =**

**Q =** “What are the chances of future progression?”

**Rephrased =**

**Q =** “What training and development will I get?”

**Rephrased =**

**Q =** “When are you looking to appoint the role?”

**Rephrased =**

## Additional Questions You Could Ask at an Interview

1. What's the biggest change your company (department, agency, organization) has gone through in the last year?
2. What keeps you up at night? What's your biggest worry?
3. About which competitor are you most worried?
4. One year from now, if I get the job, what will earn me a "gold star"?  
What are the most important accomplishments you'd like to see in this position over the next year?
5. What type of people are successful here? What type of people are not?
6. What's one thing that's key to your success that somebody from outside the company wouldn't know about?
7. How do you (Mr. or Ms. Future Boss) get a gold star / big bonus / your boss' recognition & thanks at the end of the year? How can I best help you do that?
8. What's your (or my future supervisor's) leadership style?
9. How do your sales / marketing / technology / operations work here?
10. How did you get your start in this industry? Why do you stay?
11. What are your best and worst working relationships with other groups in the company?

## What to Do After the Interview

You've had the interview and you can now breathe a sigh of relief! But don't get too comfortable. Before you leave the building get everyone's name on the interview committee—make sure they are spelled correctly. You will need them in a minute.

Learn from each interview – you will only improve with practice. Remember no matter how it went, there are no failures only outcomes.

Answer the following questions:

- What went well from the interview?
- What would I do differently if I could do it again?
- Did I do enough preparation?
- What questions did I struggle on?
- What questions did I answer well?

- Did I sell my benefits?

Now sit down and **write a brief Thank You note** addressed to everyone on the committee (use only the Committee chair on the envelope). Use a professional looking card or stationary. Some people enclose a “business card” that has their personal contact information on it.



Thank them for their time. Reiterate your strengths and why you would make a good fit. If there is anything you neglected to say now is the time to express that.

Send this off within 1-2 hours of completing the interview. Not everyone sends a Thank You note—this makes you stand out and demonstrates good manners.

### **Feedback is the breakfast of champions!**

If you were turned down for the job make sure that you call the employer and get feedback as to the reasons why.

You can use the information for next time – it will be most valuable for you.

## Interview Planning and Preparation



Got an interview lined up?

Use our planning and preparation pro-forma and ensure that you give yourself the best possible chance for success:

**Why have I applied for this position?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**What do I know about the company?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**What do I know about the role?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**What are my key strengths?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**What is my career statement?**

**What are my Unique Selling Propositions?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**What have been my 5 key achievements in previous roles?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**What questions do I have for the interviewer?**

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

**What are my 2 main weaknesses – how will I answer this question?**

Weakness 1:

Weakness 2:

**In Summary: During The Interview**

1. Arrive early to give yourself time to get centered before the interview.
2. Always go to the interview alone.
3. Bring along your presentation packet and share when appropriate.
4. Greet the interviewer and introduce yourself; say their name and be ready to shake an offered hand.
5. Be open and friendly.
6. Be enthusiastic! Maintain a positive attitude.
7. Listen. Stay on topic.
8. Emphasize your strengths.

9. Paint a picture!
10. Be truthful.
11. Sell yourself-the interview is an emotional beauty contest!
12. Avoid "no" answers, expand on "yes" answers.
13. Ask for clarification if you don't understand a question.
14. Speak positively of former employers and co-workers.
15. Answer questions in a clear and positive manner.
16. Express your interest in the job and the company, using information from the research you did.
17. Let the interviewer direct the conversation. It's their show.
18. Ask appropriate questions that show interest.
19. Watch your body language: use appropriate eye contact and erect posture.
20. Don't initiate discussion of wage & benefits until you're offered the job.
21. Confirm the time they have said they will notify you of their decision or ask when you will hear from them. If indefinite, arrange to call them.
22. Thank the interviewer/so Shake hands if appropriate and say good-bye.

## How to Negotiate for the Best Deal

Unless there is a fixed package for the role in which you are applying for that cannot change, the terms and conditions may be discussed once an offer is made.



Most people feel uncomfortable when talking money and what they want.

This need not be the case!

If you have had a good interviewer and you can see that the company is keen then you do have a considerable amount of power!

Here are some tips and pointers on how to get what you think you are worth!

- **Only ever talk about pay and conditions from a position of strength**

This usually means that you only ask for what you want when the company want you and are interested in employing you—i.e. they have offered you the position.

Putting that you want \$90,000 and a car in your cover letter is not going to get you very far!

Try to avoid talking about pay and conditions until as late as possible. Diffuse the request for previous salary history with something like,

*“I understand that you’ve requested my salary history. I am paid the market value (or industry standard) of job Title with X years experience. I’m not comfortable putting this information in a public document. However, I am happy to discuss this further in an interview.”*

Or

*“I don’t want to seem difficult. I understand that the company wants to be sure that it can afford me. I don’t require a salary that is out of line with the position, industry or current market. It’s important to me to not discuss salary yet because it could throw us off track about what we need to agree on first—if I am the right fit for the job and this company.”*

That means:

- Do not bring it up on your resume
- Do not bring it up in your cover letter
- Try to avoid it at your first interview

Try to leave it as late as possible until you are in the room with a decision maker who has the authority and power to grant your wishes! It's also said that, "Whoever mentions money first loses". Let them mention the range first if possible.

Other possible ways to defer the salary question:

*"Can we discuss some of the job responsibilities first. I'm sure we will be able to come to an agreement about salary when the time comes."*

*"I am very interested in discussing how my skills and experience are a fit for this position and how I can contribute to your company. While salary is important, it's not the most important consideration. I am sure you will offer a fair compensation package and we'll be able to agree on that if I am the right person for the job. Can you tell me more about my role in X?"*

*"I'm sure we'll be able to agree on a fair salary if I am the right person for this position so let's come to an agreement on that first"*

- **Do your homework and prepare beforehand**

Just as you would prepare to answer interview questions you need to do some pre-work in order to discuss your terms and conditions as well.

You should enter the room with a "Minimum Amount" that you would accept and an ideal "Maximum Amount".

So, how do you determine these figures?

Often you would have some sort of idea as to the salary range and benefits package before you applied for the job.

If the salary said around \$80,000 DOE (depending on experience) for example you know that it needs to be around this figure.

What happens is that this figure would probably be median point of a salary scale so the range could go from \$70,000 through to \$90,000.

Ask yourself “Would I be happy with \$70,000?” and “Am I worth \$90,000?”

Go in with a figure that you are happy with.

If no salary information was made available you will need to do your homework.

Check out these sites to determine a salary range:

Salary Wizard: <http://www.salary.com>

Salary Expert: <http://www.salaryexpert.com>

America’s Career Infonet: <http://www.acinet.org>.

The Bureau of Labor Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/ocs>

**Occupational specific salary surveys may be found at:**

JobStar: <http://www.jobsmart.org/tools/salary>

American Federation of Teachers Salary Surveys: <http://www.aft.org/research>

Biotech, Pharmaceutical, Science, Medical:

<http://www.medzilla.com/survey.html>

Engineering Salary Surveys: <http://www.eetimes.com/salariesurvey>

IT jobs as reported by workers: <http://www.computerjobs.com>

Executive salaries: <http://www.ecomponline.com>

Remember that salaries can vary widely depending on geographic location and company size.

Make sure the information is less than a year old.

The information will be more accurate when a site breaks out the information based on location, company size and job description (rather than job title).



Double check whatever range you come up with from your research with actual job openings, professional or trade journals or industry sites.

• **How to respond to the salary question**

The time has come!

It is time to discuss your salary requirements.

Do not mention the figure that you already have in your mind just yet, you need to feel out the interviewer to see what you are really playing with.

Here is a great response to the question:

*“What are your salary requirements?”*

Response:

*“This is the first time we have mentioned money, could you tell me what the salary range is for someone with my experience and qualifications?”*

Or

*“What has been budgeted for the position?”*

Or

*“I’ve done some research on the market for this area with someone of my skill level but I imagine you have a range in mind. What is that range?”*

What you are doing here is trying to reveal the salary range what the company has to play with.

Your first objective is to get a salary range out on the table so that you can compare it to what you wanted.

- **Poker Face Time**

When the salary range is revealed it is very important that you do not show any emotion whatsoever – whether you are delighted with the offer or not maintain a poker face!

Pay close attention to your body language signals.

- Don’t look happy or disappointed
- Maintain eye contact
- Do not fidget or move your legs
- Do not touch your face or hair

Just keep exactly the same posture and body position as you had before the salary range was revealed to you.

- **What to Do With the Salary Range**

Now that the salary range has been revealed you have a number of options.

Let's assume that the salary range is \$70,000 - \$100,000

- *Accept*

You can say "*The upper end of the salary range is what I had in mind*"

If you are happy with the range and it is what you want, then there is nothing stopping you from agreeing there and then to it.

Bear in mind however that the range that the employer gives you is normally always open for negotiation at the top end.

- *Counter bid*

You can say "What I had in mind was \$95,000 - \$115,000"

You would put this counter offer in if the salary that you wanted was \$95,000+

You will need to go over your USP's again to remind the employer why you are worth that little bit extra and what you will bring to their company.

- *Sit on the fence*

You can say "*Thanks for the figure. Could I have some time to think it over?*"

This is a better option than rejecting the figures as in our last example below.

If the salary range is below what you expected it is better to take some time out to think through what it means for you and your family rather than express your dissatisfaction.

It will also give the employer time to weigh up whether they are running the risk of losing you at this late stage.

- *Reject the salary range*

You can of course reject the range completely but we do not recommend this!

It is difficult to find a win-win situation for yourself and the company if you come flat out with that you do not want this position because of the salary alone.

It is better to take time out and “Sit on the fence” for a couple of days.

- **Cost/Benefit**

Always be aware that it is your job to stand up for your talents, experience and the skills that you bring to the role.

It will not be enough just to say:

“I am worth \$95,000”

Instead you need to justify the reasons why you are worth what you say you are.

For example, if you are vastly experienced in the subject and will not take long to “hit the ground running” then explain this to your employer.

If you can start to make an impact in month 2 for example when there is a 6 month “honeymoon” period you are giving the company 4 months of additional value than if they recruited someone else and they took 6 months to get up to speed.

- **The Overall Package**

It is not just the salary you can negotiate on.

There is a whole list of additional benefits that can come as part of the package.

These can include:

- Profit share
- Salary Review Schedule
- Sign on bonus
- Commission
- Deferred Compensation
- Company Car
- Stock options
- Equity plans
- Retirement or pension plans
- Vacations
- Health care

- Pre-tax/Section 125 plan
- Life Insurance
- Disability Insurance
- Internal Training
- Tuition Waiver
- Professional Development
- Personal Hours/Leave
- Flexible Work Schedule
- Comp Time
- Counseling/EAP, Career, Financial
- Outplacement Service
- Severance Package
- Retirement Health Benefits
- Frequent Flier Miles
- Office Size and Location
- Child care
- Performance related pay
- Gym membership
- Relocation allowance
- Sick pay
- Cars
- Expense accounts
- Maternity/Paternity leave
- Tuition reimbursement
- Position Title

If there is no movement in salary for example, they might be willing to grant you an additional 5 days paid vacation or they might be willing to pay for that degree that you have always wanted to take. Or one of my favorites when there is no wiggle room on the salary is the salary review could happen in 6 months instead of one year, which could bump you up to your desired salary just 6 months later.

If you don't ask, you don't get!

### **Some Dos and DON'Ts of Negotiation**

#### **DOs**

- Do let the employer know that you are very interested in the position, are flexible and assure them that an agreement can be reached
- Do focus on your needs and the needs of the employer.
- Be creative and open to listening to the entire package.

- Do make a list of benefits you need and want before the negotiation.
- Do decide which items are most important.
- Do your homework. Learn about the organization and the negotiator.
- Do use silence to your advantage
- Do know the salary you can reasonably accept and expect for the position in this location.
- Do have a discussion outlined before the negotiation and practice it with another individual.
- Do emphasize your accomplishments to promote your worth to the company.
- Do know when to stop negotiating by accurately assessing the situation and the negotiator.
- Do thank the negotiator for any offer, even if it does not meet your requirements.
- Do leave a negotiation on amicable terms. New opportunities may arise in the future at this company, even if no agreement is reached for the current position.
- Do request the agreement in writing.
- Do send a follow-up confirmation letter once you have accepted an offer.

#### DON'T'S

- Don't accept an offer on the spot. Ask for time to consider it.
- Don't assume the first offer is fixed even if the person says it is.
- Don't ever back the negotiation into a win/lose situation. Work to create a win/win outcome.
- Don't let the negotiation become hostile or emotional.
- Don't let the negotiator know you "need" the job.
- Don't lie during a negotiation. It could result in termination of the offer or the job.
- Don't ever state your desire for more money as a reason to increase an offer. Develop reasons that are of value to the company and are quantitative.
- Don't forget that fairness plays a powerful role in negotiation. The person with whom you negotiate wants to believe you were well treated.

#### Some Questions to Help You Prepare for Negotiating

How would you reply to the following responses when negotiating for your salary?

Interviewer response:

“Your requirements exceed the pay range for this role”

Your response:

Interviewer response:

“We do not have the budget for what you are asking”

Your response:

Interviewer response:

“Your qualifications and experience do not warrant \$95,000 a year”

Your response:

Interviewer response:

“We cannot simply offer you any more than \$86,000”

Your response:



## Other Negotiating Resources

### Relocation

Compare the cost of living in hundreds of U.S. cities on The Salary Calculator: <http://www2.homefair.com/calc/salcalc.html>

Compare an international cost of living at <http://www2.homefair.com/calc/salcalc.html> and click on "International."

A worldwide cost of living survey will be found at: <http://www.finfacts.com/costofliving.htm>

It is also possible to evaluate a salary offer for an international move by accessing The Universal Currency Converter at <http://www.xe.net> At this site you can perform interactive foreign exchange rate calculations using up-to-the minute currency rates.

## Online Portfolios: Ideas and Resources

### Why Do Portfolios Work?



Portfolios can bring a number of advantages to the job seeker willing to invest a little extra time into their marketing materials. Some of these advantages include:

- Reduces perception of ageism
  - Increases perception of being tech-savvy
- Demonstrates organization
  - Demonstrates communications skills
  - Demonstrates expertise, rather than just claiming expertise
  - Gives hiring manager a product sample of you
  - Focuses attention on work product, instead of longevity, industry, age, function, or other limiting factors
  - Few of your competitors use one (outside of design/media fields) allowing you to stand out
  - Demonstrates experience in new or non-work related skills for career changers
  - Increases exposure and "findability" on Google

### How To Build An Online Portfolio:

There are countless ways to build a portfolio. I'll list a few basic ways to give readers a starting point and some ideas about how to build portfolios and what to include in them.

1. What to include?
  - **Accounting/Finance:** Include spreadsheets, dashboard reports, variance analysis, written reports, reports you've designed, presentations, PowerPoints, special projects, ROI proposals, cost saving proposals. Black out words selectively if current employer privacy is a concern.
  - **IT:** Programs, applications, code, flow charts, diagrams. Make sure to leave enough information to not violate propriety concerns of current employer.

- **Engineering:** Plans, designs, pictures of completed projects, reports, proposals, marketing brochures, specs. Again, take care not to include proprietary details or trade secrets.
  - **Production:** Production/inventory reports, dashboards, charts demonstrating cost savings, analysis, project proposals.
  - **Marketing:** Graphics, marketing sheets, websites, advertisements, video, photos, online marketing, reports, project proposals, charts demonstrating sales/margin gains, design.
  - **Media/Design:** Video, logos, artwork, photos, drawings, work samples, websites.
2. What platform?
- **Website:** There are a number of good free options available, with templates website builders designed to make the process easy for non-web designers. Google Sites (<http://google.com/sites>) and Webs.com (<http://webs.com>) are two of the best free choices. There are a huge number of options for paid sites with the option of a customized URL - one of the most popular are GoDaddy (<http://godaddy.com>) and Yahoo Sitebuilder (<http://webhosting.yahoo.com/ps/sb/index.php>). A Website will allow you total customization, but may take a little more technical knowledge to build.
  - **Facebook:** Set up a Facebook business page to post your portfolio. It's free and easy to use, but has limitations on the layout an look/feel of how your portfolio will look.
  - **MySpace:** MySpace's easy ability to integrate pictures, video, and audio into profiles make it a natural for portfolios. Also free, takes a little more technical knowledge than Facebook, but not as locked in as Facebook. Many designers/media professionals have been using MySpace as a portfolio for years.
  - **Blogs:** Blogs can also be free (recommended <http://blogger.com> or <http://wordpress.com>), straightforward to set up (a basic blog), and can easily integrate all types of content. Blogs have the ability to customize more flexible design, but you'll need technical knowledge or a designer if you want to get fancy.
  - **Paper:** Paper portfolios can be helpful to bring into an interview. You can print out the pages of your online portfolio, so you can discuss with your interviewer. Or, bring a laptop with a wireless connection and point them to your site (tip: bring paper as a backup, in case you can't get a wireless signal).
3. What else to include?
- Resume
  - Video resume or related videos
  - Articles or mentions
  - Tweets
  - Facebook stream

- LinkedIn profile
- Blog posts and comments
- Links to other profiles of you on the web
- Pictures

Whether you are an artist, accountant, lawyer, teacher, or librarian, online portfolios can help you show your employer why they should pick you, bringing the words on your resume to life. What projects or content could you use to highlight your candidacy using an online portfolio?

**Remember: Sites change regularly. If these options below aren't suitable, please Google other options.**

<http://jobrary.com>

<http://designrelated.com>

<http://coroflot.com>

<http://figdig.com>

<http://glossom.com>

<http://flickr.com>

<http://www.skillchart.com/bio.htm>

<http://behance.net>

[www.crowdspring.com](http://www.crowdspring.com)

[www.google.com](http://www.google.com)

<http://cargocollective.com>

<http://viewbook.com>

<http://krop.com>

<http://shownd.com>

<http://carbonmade.com>

<http://creativeshake.com>

I hope you feel more confident and prepared on managing your next career move.

Do you have:

- Questions?
- Comments?

Would you like help with your:

<http://www.ExceptionalLivingCoach.com>

- Career development and direction?
- Application package?
- Resume?
- Upcoming interview?
- Negotiating the offer?



Contact me:

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I look forward to hearing from you,  
Lisa