

JUMP-STARTING YOUR RÉSUMÉ

As you begin to launch this transition in your career and approach the job market, it is absolutely critical to recognize that this is now a sales and marketing operation. In effect you are the product to be 'sold' while the potential employer is the 'buyer.' You are also the key sales person in this 'transaction.' Any good sales person will tell you that **job #1 is to "know your product!"** What are the key selling points? What makes this product desirable? What sets it apart from the competition? Your ultimate goal is to clearly demonstrate how this new organization will be 'better off' with **you** on the job, rather than someone else with similar generic qualifications.

Let's make sure we can include your 'best stuff,' the information that will compellingly sell your value to that perspective employer, and engineer a much-deserved boost to your career. **Let's make it extremely easy for the employer to *make that buying decision and choose you!!!***

Job Target/Desired Job

- ◆ What specific job titles are you targeting? (Please be specific regarding level, functional role, industry, and any environmental factors that are *important* to you.)
- ◆ How realistic is that goal, do you think?
- ◆ Can you identify 1-3 job postings for the type(s) of position(s) you're interested in?
- ◆ Have you identified alternate job titles for the position(s) you are targeting? Frequently the job you are aiming for will have a different name in other industries.
- ◆ If you had all the money you needed and you didn't need to work, what would you do?
- ◆ On your performance reviews, in what areas did you receive the highest scores or the *most positive feedback*?
- ◆ What do you want to be "when you grow up"?
- ◆ If the "*ideal*" position were to become available, how would you describe it?
- ◆ What type of job are you looking for - and with what type of employer?
- ◆ If you could customize your career and create your own job, what skills would you use and how would you apply them?
- ◆ If you want to make a transition (new industry or job function), how can you make that shift?

Questions to Capture the Essence of your Current Job

If your present {or a *past*} job is relevant to your targeted position, spend some time identifying the key areas of expertise in the position you hold now.

- ◆ When a stranger asks you, "So, what do you do?" ... What is your answer?
- ◆ If an interviewer asks you the same thing, how would your answer be different?
- ◆ What is the most important aspect of your current job?
- ◆ Can you tell me about a typical day in your own words; what is predictable, what is difficult?
- ◆ What was the company's purpose in hiring you? What were you brought in to do? (**And were you *hired, recruited, or promoted into this position*?**)
- ◆ Can you name three critical functions of your job that would impact the company/department if you were not at work one day?
- ◆ What do you enjoy most about your current position? The least?
- ◆ What percentage of time do you spend on the "A," "B," and "C" aspects of your job?
- ◆ How does your current job fit within the context of the organization? Who do you work with? What other areas do you support? What interactions do you have with customers?
- ◆ What are you accountable for?
- ◆ At the end of the day, what makes you feel good about what you've done?

Questions to Identify and SPOTLIGHT your Accomplishments

Accomplishments are the most important part of the résumé. Gathering relevant, quantifiable / qualifiable accomplishments can be a challenge.

- ◆ What have you achieved in your job - have you saved your employer any money or achieved any other quantifiable measure (helped the company make money, save money, save time, become more productive, become more efficient, improve safety, improve customer service, improve students' test scores, etc.)?
- ◆ What do **you** do for the company that someone else **did not, could not, or would not**, do?
- ◆ How was your performance measured in reviews - and what was the outcome (awards, recognition)?
- ◆ What key problems did you identify - and how did you help solve them? Please describe in the {*Problem-Action-Result*}; {*Challenge-Action-Result*} format.
- ◆ Were you selected for any additional assignments? (What were they?)
- ◆ Were you promoted? What was the promotion in recognition of?
- ◆ What would you rate as your top three skills?
- ◆ What have you done that has broadened your responsibilities?
- ◆ Why are you good at what you do?
 - What do others say about you and your work?
 - How would **they** compare your performance to that of your predecessor?
 - If you are in contact with colleagues from your previous job, how would they compare your performance with that of your successor?
- ◆ What have you introduced at your firm that has never existed before ... or what did you improve upon?

Other General Questions

Sometimes there are questions that don't fit neatly into any other category, but can help improve your overall résumé:

- ◆ Do you have a copy of your job description or any performance evaluations?
- ◆ What are your top 3-5 strengths and personality traits?
- ◆ What are you best known for, at work?
- ◆ Are you recognizable as the 'go-to' person for any particular circumstances? (i.e. dealing with difficult clients; developing compelling PowerPoint presentations; designing forms; effectively teaching, training, or coaching, streamlining an operation)
- ◆ How did you find your most recent job?
- ◆ What sets you apart from other candidates for this job? What makes you different? What is that '*special something*' that you have to offer?
- ◆ Why are you a good employee? Why are you better than average? Can you **compare** and **contrast your** performance with that of your peers?
- ◆ Can you compare and contrast **your** performance with that of your predecessor ... or others at your current level?
- ◆ If you were asked to select your replacement, what qualities would you be looking for?
- ◆ What will be different about your next job?
- ◆ Is there anything that you don't want to do in your next job? (Especially something that you might be good at, but that you just **don't enjoy** doing?)
- ◆ Anything else you'd like to add?