

The HeadHunter's Approach



A Step by Step Guide to Headhunt Your Next Position

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The Headhunter's Approach

Content.....	Page
Introduction.....	4
S.M.A.R.T. Process.....	5
Self-Assessment.....	7
Marketplace Research.....	8
Approach.....	10
Resolution of Options.....	16
Transition.....	17
About the Author.....	19
Appendix.....	20
Personal Career Appraisal*.....	21
60 Second Overview*.....	37
Power Words.....	40
Daily Score Worksheets.....	42
Preparation Checklist.....	44
Interview Tips.....	46
Debrief Form.....	52
Closing Techniques.....	54
Counteroffer Articles.....	58
Sample Resignation Letters.....	62

*Adapted from The Right Reserves, Inc.

The Headhunter's Approach

Preface

Over the last twelve months, economic stresses have had a great effect on the United States and many countries around the globe. Unfortunately for many, unemployment and downsizing have been inevitable. There are a number of people that are unsure of their job security, and are beginning to plan for the 'what ifs.' Additionally, recent college graduates are finding job searching increasingly difficult and competitive.

In an effort to provide real, practical techniques that anyone in career transition or thinking about career transition can apply to his or her next job search, and with the help of a number of people, I have written this e-book entitled, "The Headhunter's Approach"

I am a headhunter, not a recruiter. By definition, a headhunter must have the ability to identify and provide the best talent to his or her clients in order to enable them to recruit this talent into their respective organizations. We are very well compensated for our services, and therefore our techniques have to be far superior to those of the average recruiter.

As I look at the excessive number of 'experts' offering advice to people in career transition, it is clear that this e-book could not have been better timed for publication. The techniques that we share with you are highly focused and will provide you with the skills required to headhunt yourself into your next career. We will teach you how we identify an industry, conduct market research, sell a skill set, and close for decisions.

The techniques outlined in this e-book are goal driven, straightforward, metrics-oriented, and focused. Our goal is to teach you the techniques we use as highly successful headhunters, and to teach you how to achieve this goal for yourself.

Tom Johnston
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Thomas K. Johnston, a nationally recognized search consultant who specializes in the human capital, staffing, and employer services industries, is the CEO of Cleveland-based SearchPath HCS. Tom founded SearchPath HCS in September of 2005. SearchPath is a talent acquisition professional services firm with more than 30 offices. The firm redefines the way clients do business with recruiters by combining proven industry best practices with revolutionary concepts. SearchPath's unique ClientCentric approach includes a variety of service options that enable their organization to stand alone against the competition. In partnership with franchise owners, strategic partners, and its franchise support team, SearchPath aims to become the premier, vertically-integrated provider of talent acquisition professional services. SearchPath can be found on the web at www.searchpath.com

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The Headhunter's Approach

Introduction

A successful career life transition involves thought, preparation, and planned actions. This includes reviewing one's life, goals, and experiences. It involves identifying significant accomplishments, styles, values, capabilities, environmental preferences, and lifestyles. It is a process which requires a personal commitment as well as time and patience.

I recognize this is a difficult process, and that many people do not know where to begin the journey. Recognizing that now, more than ever, it is vital to provide individuals like you with the information and resources needed to succeed and thrive during these challenging times, I have created a career management program along with this corresponding guide entitled "The Headhunter's Approach to Career Transition."

My new guide is a step-by-step instruction manual intended to help you headhunt your next position. What better method is there than sharing the advice of a top recruiter and CEO of SearchPath, a guru whom companies pursue when they search for new talent, as your guide to finding the best position for *you*?

Our company is filled with elite professionals who are the 'go to' players in their fields. We will teach you the same methodology that we teach our recruiters/search consultants to perform successfully in the placement business. We will start with the basics of being a headhunter. Your goal is to make just one placement – yourself!

We are THE firm; we are THE resource; we are THE ones best suited to educate you on how to pursue and secure a job for yourself. By utilizing our proven placement process, we can coach and guide you through the S.M.A.R.T. process:

- S: Self-Assessment
- M: Marketplace Research
- A: Approach
- R: Resolution of Options
- T: Transition

What better resource could you find than learning how to be a headhunter from headhunters? Our ability to train and educate you can take several forms. Options could include free, one hour overview sessions for a small group; thorough, fee- based half to full day seminars covering more ground; and one-on-one coaching at an hourly rate.

I am also in the process of developing a content management section of our website where you can find information on career management, as well as fee-based sample forms and documents from well known professionals and trainers in the talent acquisition industry.

As elite providers of career transition advice, headhunters are THE best resource to help guide you in your search for a better, more meaningful work experience.

Come join us and expand your horizons.

The Headhunter's Approach

The S.M.A.R.T. Process

The core of my career management training is to share my firm's proven placement methods, to easily teach and educate individuals seeking a new position on how to employ the mechanics behind acting as their own recruiter/search consultant. This can best be accomplished through the S.M.A.R.T. process:

- S: Self-Assessment
- M: Marketplace Research
- A: Approach
- R: Resolution of Options
- T: Transition

Self-Assessment is the first step we explain to an individual seeking a new job or in career transition. We recommend you complete a personal career appraisal, providing an introspective analysis of your life, goals and professional experiences. This will enrich your self-understanding and ultimately enable you to make better decisions about your career direction.

It could indicate that you are not ready to find or secure a new position and perhaps need to explore owning your own business. Completion of this assessment will also place you in a better position to interview more intelligently and to project a more positive, confident image. Your self -assessment is not complete without crafting a brief introductory script to serve as a foundation for upcoming dialogues. This critical communication tool is called **The 60 Second Overview**.

Marketplace Research is where I can offer a distinct, competitive advantage. My search practice is focused on finding headhunters for other headhunting firms. Other headhunters (retained agencies as well as contingency firms) call upon me to locate successful headhunters/search consultants for them daily. I know how to get this business done effectively. I can assist you in conducting your own desk specialty analysis – which industries *you* should focus on to conduct your job search. Successful headhunters are specialized and experts in their niche; I will show you how to become a market master.

Approach is the basic training to headhunting. Headhunters do not find individuals positions; we find top talent for our clients. I will explain our process with an emphasis on planning, time management, and key performance indicators (metrics) to ensure success. This will also include marketing methodology using a Highly Placeable Candidate (HPC). In this instance, you are the HPC! I will further outline the fundamental steps needed to create a compelling presentation and to deliver advice, guidance, counsel calls, and true HPC calls.

Resolution of Options is the true coaching component of the process. You will learn how to request an interview with a company which you have targeted and approached; get prepared for interviews; and conduct self-debriefs afterward. The best search consultants drive the placement process by using closing skills throughout the entire process, so I will suggest a variety of closing techniques to help you get the decision you want.

The Transition to your new position is the final aspect of the process. You have invested time and energy, experienced emotional trauma, and managed the process. However, an accepted offer is not the end of the process. Although you may not be actively employed, the transition period (which can be as long 90 days after you have started the new job) is an emotional situation that requires coaching and support. Such support revolves around

The Headhunter's Approach

The S.M.A.R.T. Process (Cont.)

counteroffer and resignation discussions as well as formal communications and announcements to your professional network.

The Headhunter's Approach

Self-Assessment

The first step is self-assessment and will require much reflection, honesty, and commitment to lay the foundation necessary for a successful life transition. In order to actively pursue a specific position, you must first analyze your life goals and professional experiences, accomplishments, and preferences.

My firm has created a **Personal Career Appraisal** to assist in this process (refer to the Forms section for a copy). This appraisal will provide an introspective and analysis of your life, goals and professional experiences. This will enrich your self-understanding and ultimately enable you to make better decisions about your career direction, as the inventory will encompass personal interests, career history and accomplishments, education and qualifications, skills, self description, and work environment. The result will be a greater understanding of your functional strengths and the direction you should pursue.

After completing this appraisal, you should have a keen awareness of your power and credibility in the marketplace. You may also come to the realization that you are not ready to find or secure a new position. Questions such as "do I want a traditional job?" or "do I really want to make a move?" should be considered. Perhaps you will discover that you are more interested in owning your own business. In that case, seeking out mentors and professionals you respect to aid you in making that transition would be an effective option.

Presumably, though, you have decided to take the plunge and seek a new position. As you may not have known, headhunters do not find individuals jobs. Instead their mission is to find top talent for their clients. As your own headhunter, you need to transform yourself into top talent and be able to communicate your outstanding qualities to others.

A brief introductory script should be crafted to serve as your foundation for the initial dialogues you will have in your quest. Such a script is called **The 60 Second Overview** (a sample can be found in the Forms sections). This is a critical communication that sets the stage for what any listener might learn about who you are as a person, what you have explicitly done, and what you can therefore implicitly do. This will be your key message as you move to step two in your marketplace research.

The Headhunter's Approach

Marketplace Research

The second stage of the SMART process is conducting Marketplace Research. This is another area in which I can offer distinct, competitive insight since my practice is called upon by other agencies and contingency firms to find them successful headhunters or search consultants!

We know how to find the right-fit people. We know what companies to contact to locate similar professionals. As such, we are able to assist you in conducting your own desk specialty analysis - knowing which industries and companies you should focus on to conduct your job search.

Completing the Personal Career Appraisal hopefully opened your eyes regarding your strengths, skills, and accomplishments. It also prompted you to consider what type of organization, organizational setting and organizational area would be most suitable to you. So, dissecting the background/industry you previously (or continue to) work in is the first, most obvious place to begin.

However, if you are feeling particularly stale and not as motivated in your current space, reconsider a job function you excelled at further back in your career. With a little research and study, you could relearn and hone a previous skill.

Another avenue to take in finding job satisfaction is turning a passion that you have into a career. Conduct research on the viability of your hobby by scouring the Internet. For companies in that discipline, view sample job descriptions and open opportunities and research compensation ranges. It is likely you will have to begin in a ground floor position, or perhaps even complete educational classes to receive a certificate or degree, but at least you can look forward to contentment in the path to come.

The intent is to narrow your focus and not call every person you think could help you, no matter what his background. One of the most distinguishing factors of a successful headhunter is the ability to focus on a particular industry/niche. This is vastly preferred over acting as a generalist (doing everything for everyone). Examples of industry focus could be covering and harnessing financial services, energy, medical, legal, manufacturing, etc. Recruiters often further define their niche by specialty, such as recruiting specifically for commercial lenders.

One way to assist you in tightening your search sphere is to make Advice, Guidance, and Counsel calls. These calls are also explained in the Approach section, and are simply inquiries made to mentors, coaches, and other individuals you respect within your existing network, in order to seek their opinion. An example follows below:

"Good morning, my name is ____; I was reaching out to you because your name was given to me by a colleague (state name, if appropriate). I am an experienced ____ with ____ years specializing in _____. Obviously, over the last 12 months my industry has been experiencing some stress (or I am seeking a new challenge) and I am considering shifting my focus into (or expanding my career options into) _____. I wanted your opinion as to the viability of this choice. Are there companies you would suggest I contact? Are there companies you'd suggest I should avoid? I have been researching the ____ industry and it seems to me that it is growing at an increasing rate. Are you finding this to be true? Is there anyone else you can recommend I speak with? What types of positions do you have open?"

The Headhunter's Approach

Once you have chosen your niche or sphere of work, there are other factors to consider. The following is a handy acronym to remind you of these other points: S.W.I.R.L.

- SW: Sphere of work
- I: Industry
- R: Role
- L: Location

There could be multiple industries that encompass the same sphere of work and niche, so do not rule out other options until you have completed your research in your local library or on the computer. For instance, if you have experience as a cost accountant, you could seek opportunities in public accounting, banking, manufacturing, distribution, etc.

Your exact role or level should also be ascertained. Using the prior example of having experience as a cost accountant, do you want to remain a cost accountant, or do you have supervisory and management experience? Could you seek to manage a unit or division? Having an abundance of options would certainly provide for more opportunities.

Lastly, the location of a position most certainly needs to be considered. How far are you willing to drive to your place of employment? Are there extra costs you might incur, such as parking or city taxes? Would you consider relocating? Would you require relocation assistance? If so, which cities/states would you avoid? The geography issue is one that must be discussed with members of your family and not taken lightly. There are many resources readily available on the intranet to provide you cost of living information as well as potential moving costs. Consider contacting a local realtor if you currently own a home.

Following your determination of your S.W.I.R.L. factors, you can now control your direction and use the World Wide Web as a resource to determine potential employers. Consider using free sites like Google, Yahoo, Excite, ASK, and LinkedIn.

Social networking sites may also provide you with links and references to employers, so consider viewing Facebook, MySpace, or Fast Pitch. Create a spreadsheet or list of these companies with columns to indicate who you are specifically contacting, when you contacted them, and what the conversation(s) entailed. An extra column would be valuable in tracking who received your resume and/or with whom you interviewed.

You may also choose a one on one, fee-based coaching relationship with a coach or search consultant, which would allow you limited time access to the database our recruiters use to source companies and candidates. For more information, contact me or speak to your search consultant or coach directly.

Your goal is to determine at least 100 companies to contact in your job quest. From each of those companies, you will need at least three to five people to contact. This will give you a list of 300 to 500 people to call. We will be reviewing key performance indicators or metrics for headhunters later, but it is critical for you to understand the fact that headhunters have to contact at least 100 people a day to actually talk to 15 to 20 people. With the advent of technology, most of the calls are transferred directly into a voice mail system, and we cannot control who calls back. Successful headhunters know that the quantity of calls, as well as the quality, is absolutely critical. It is the quality of the call that will be discussed in the next phase of Approach.

The Headhunter's Approach

Approach

The heart of the SMART process comes into action in the marketing approach. "Marketing" is the practice of contacting companies within your niche to uncover and land a new job. Proven techniques for search consultants in identifying which candidates qualify as Highly Placeable Candidates (HPCs) will be just as applicable to you in your job quest, since **you** are the HPC!

Considering yourself a highly placeable candidate will give you access to decision makers with whom you can hold meaningful business conversations and highlight your worth. This technique is also the most effective way to start a dialogue with prospective employers when you have limited headhunting experience.

This approach works well when you recognize the motivations of any decision maker. Decision makers buy when you can make them money, save them time, save them money, make them look good, and help them survive in the marketplace. Your script or pitch will need to highlight at least one of these points.

Defining yourself as an HPC: I define an HPC as someone who is or has the following characteristics:

- Elite performer
- Verifiable achievements
- Desired skill set
 - Common skill in high demand
 - Unique skill that is difficult to find
- Realistic about their career path and compensation
- Checkable/Endorsable references

Completing the Personal Career Appraisal will help you uncover the qualities needed to be your own HPC. You do not want to misrepresent yourself to secure an interview. If the appraisal is very difficult for you to complete, ask a mentor for his or her opinion on how best to represent yourself.

Who to Call

The research you conducted during the Marketplace Research phase should have afforded you an extensive list of companies to contact. This equates to hundreds of contacts, and ideally, you would want to reach out to the managers and directors of the various departments that are relevant to your job search. Do not be afraid to call the President or Executive Vice Presidents of companies, too. Rarely do they receive these types of calls.

However, you may often be transferred to Human Resources. This is not necessarily a dire place to be, as they are aware of openings throughout a company, yet speaking directly with a hiring manager is preferable and more likely than not, more effective. For example, you could contact the President, EVP, District Manager(s) and several Regional Managers all from the same company. You will learn about opportunities throughout a company, the culture, goals, and market intelligence – all incredibly valuable information.

What to Say

In order to deliver a compelling presentation about yourself, you must craft a script in writing and practice it multiple times. You should write or type your script for the following reasons: you will demonstrate a confident attitude; you will reveal you are well prepared; you will be able to maintain control; and you will stay on track.

The Headhunter's Approach

All presentations should be constructed to grab the decision maker's attention. The first few minutes – sometimes seconds – of any dialogue sets the tone and direction and is central to the success of the entire conversation. Therefore, you want to ensure your script has some sizzle or a 'grabber.' Just like in grade school when you learned how to structure a paragraph with an introduction, body and close, your HPC script should contain the same elements. Your introduction should explain who you are, who referred you (if applicable), and the reason for your call.

The body of your script should contain your **features, accomplishments and benefits (FAB)**. The features are factual characteristics, attributes or skills. For example, years of experience, education, work history, title(s), certifications, and type of job and basic duties are features.

The accomplishments are supportive statements based on past performance: in other words, proof of what you have done. They must be quantifiable and measurable. For instance, describing a desirable increase or decrease, percentage, or numbers, as well as timeframes and territories, are ways to illustrate accomplishments.

The benefits are the resultant satisfier. It could be the value you provided to your employer, or a solution you created to solve a problem. Benefits are 'bottom line' and typically personal. To make your presentation persuasive, for every feature you'll need *two* benefits. Yet, in order for the hiring manager to truly listen to you, you'll need to help them understand 'what's in it for him.' You can achieve this by using a linking statement. Examples of linking statements are the following:

- What this means to you is...
- This is important to you because
- You can expect
- As you can imagine
- This will add
- This will improve
- This will solve
- Which would enable me to
- The benefit to you is
- This will meet your needs by
- This will help you accomplish
- The advantage is
- The impact would be
- Bottom line is

To tie this all together, an example of a FAB statement would be: I have 5 years experience and within the past 6 months, I saved my current employer \$325K in labor costs alone. The advantage to you would be my immediate capability of producing outstanding results with little or no training time and expense.

Keep in mind: Features tell; Benefits sell. Be careful not to feature dump!

The final component of your script is the close. After grabbing the decision maker's attention, you must ask an effective closing question, a call to action. Sample closing statements are the following:

- What would be the first step in getting us together?
- Where could you see an individual of my caliber in your organization?
- Have I told you enough to interest you in setting up a meeting now, or would you like to hear more?

Ideally, writing about yourself should be an easier process than writing about something or someone with whom you are not intimately familiar. However, it does take time and most likely will necessitate several attempts in order to develop your best HPC presentation.

The Headhunter's Approach

Powerful words that can help you sell yourself, as well as words to avoid, are listed in the Forms section. Sample scripts have also been provided (see below).

As you can also imagine, there are many approaches to writing an effective presentation. What we've been discussing thus far is a true HPC script containing a FAB. There is another valuable approach called "Advice, Guidance, and Counsel." The purpose of this type of call is to simply ask the individual(s) for their advice, guidance, and counsel. An example follows:

"Good morning, my name is ____; I am reaching out to you because your name was given to me by a colleague (state name, if appropriate). I am an experienced ____ with ____ years specializing in _____. Obviously, over the last 12 months my industry has been experiencing some stress and I am considering shifting my focus into (or expanding my career options into) _____. I wanted your opinion as to the viability of this choice. Are there companies in this arena you would suggest I contact? Are there companies you'd suggest I avoid? I have been researching the ____ industry and it seems to me that it is growing at an increasing rate. Are you finding this to be accurate? Is there anyone else you can recommend I speak to? What types of positions do you have open?"

Another approach is The Opening the Dialogue Approach (also called the 4 I's from the Acclivus organization). This dialogue model is intended to increase the probability and potential for establishing trust and legitimacy early in the conversation. It is one thing to be noticed as a result of a dialogue with a prospective employer, but a different matter altogether to be remembered. The four components to getting yourself remembered are:

- Introduce
- Insight
- Inspire
- Invest

In the **Introduce** segment, you greet the prospective employer by name and then introduce yourself. Keep it short and sweet, answering the questions, "who are you?" and "why are you calling?" You will often begin by saying, "I am -----" or "I do -----."

Example:

"Hello, Mrs. Smith. My name is Jill Small with XYZ. I am responsible for developing business relationships with key clients in the construction industry."

In "**Insight**," the second segment, you seek to demonstrate your insider knowledge about the company. Preparation is the basis for **Insight**. With **Insight**, you answer the questions, "What do you know about me, the prospective employer, my position, my organization, or my industry?" Begin with an "I" statement: "I understand,;" "I've read,;" or "I've noticed that you..."

Example:

"Mrs. Smith, I noticed in Commercial World that your company won a large contract to build five luxury hotels in the next two years."

In the **Inspire** section, elicit a positive response from the prospect in terms of the value or potential value in listening to you or hiring you, by answering the questions, "Why should I listen to you?" and "Why is this of value to me?" Build your insight about the prospect, his/her position, and/or general industry trends. Do this by researching your subject.

The Headhunter's Approach

Example:

"As a former construction project manager, I focused on large scale projects in various locations. Hiring an experienced lineman adept in both state and local regulations will be a critical component in the development of your team."

In the final segment, **Invest**, propose an action which will indicate investment or commitment on the part of the prospect. Answer the questions, "What do you expect from me?" and "How will we spend our time together?" Make it specific: who, what, when, where and how. Also make it mutual, requiring participation by the prospect as well as by you.

Example:

"I am confident that a 30-minute conversation would allow both of us to gain further insight into some of your current challenges and some of the ways I've helped companies with a large scale project overcome similar challenges. Would this be a good use of our time?"

Whichever approach you use, must sure it fits your style and personality. You may need to create several versions of your presentation and make dozens of calls to see what the reaction is to your words and how they actually flow.

Other tips to remember include:

- Listening skills are at least as important as speaking/writing skills.
- After you deliver your presentation, you should talk 30% (mostly by asking good questions), then listen to the decision maker the remaining 70% of the time.
- Develop a vocabulary that creates a vivid picture for the individual on the other end of the phone (see word lists in the Forms section).
- Select adjectives that will help that individual 'see' what is being said.
- Be positive.
- Have the courage of your convictions.
- Never say 'possibly', 'maybe', 'I think that could be'; instead use yes, 'certainly,' 'always,' and 'of course.'
- Smile
- A smile cannot be seen over the phone, but it does change the tone, and enthusiasm of the conversation.
- Enthusiasm is contagious.
- Use a warm tone of voice.
- Avoid jargon --- whether company jargon or general jargon. It can be a prop for self-confidence and the other person may not understand you. Plus you cannot see a puzzled look on the telephone.
- Have fun!
- Be creative

Script Examples

Below are three examples of effective and compelling HPC Introduction Presentations:

"Hi, [first name]. This is [full name]. I wanted to introduce myself to you as a top marketing executive who structured and delivered marketing strategies that significantly lowered customer acquisition costs and increased sales per customer by 28%. I can have an immediate impact on your organization's ability to prevail in the market. How do you see a unique talent such as mine helping you with your company's marketing initiatives?"

The Headhunter's Approach

"Hi, [first name]. This is [full name] and my specialty is helping manufacturing companies maximize efficiency and profit and minimize their expenses. For example, I increased a plant's efficiency 91%, by initiating process standards, preventive maintenance programs, and employee training. I am a person who can implement programs in your company which will enable you to increase your production, employee retention, and profitability, while you focus on other critical objectives. I'm calling to discuss how I may fit into your organization."

"Hi, [first name]. This is [full name], a dynamic and aggressive IT professional. I recently saved my former employer an estimated \$1.3 million dollars annually by integrating new telephone systems, computer networks, and customer tracking applications. Through reducing costs and increasing profits through innovative technology, I could have the same impact on your organization. Would you be interested in meeting with me? "

Below is an example of an effective and compelling Opening the Dialogue Presentation:

"Hello, [first name]. This is [name]. I am an experienced packaging sales professional. I recently read in USA Today that your company is introducing a reinforced tape with a tamper-evident seal which will be especially important to shippers of luxury goods, foods and pharmaceuticals. My experience in selling such products helped increase my former employer's sales by 67%. I'm calling to see how I might help you develop your sales staff for the launch of this product. Is this a good time to discuss your challenges?"

How Many Times to Say It

One of the most important concepts to grasp in your new role as a headhunter is that recruiting is a numbers game. When you break down the basics of our business, success is about picking up the phone and having conversations with people. The evidence of this activity, the metrics, is the main way headhunters judge their results.

Metrics are also the ultimate early warning device to help redirect activity when off course. The challenge for headhunters (and you) is that you will not see the results of your efforts until at least 30 days out. So how do you know that your activity today will generate the right results to get the position you want tomorrow? Can you actually plan to ensure optimal results?

The answer lies in your ability to track and diagnose your metrics. Surprisingly, recruiting is a statistically sound business. With great confidence, I can present you with the minimum standards needed to capture your new position.

First, you will need to make at least 100 calls a day. With technology advancements, most of your calls will be transferred directly into a voice mail system, so it is very likely that you will only connect with handful of people a day. Your goal should be at least 15 to 20 connections a day. This does not include speaking with a secretary. This does not include attending a networking meeting with 45 people (networking meetings are helpful to make connections and learn new names, but you need to be on the phone pitching yourself to decision markers). Hitting a minimum of 15 connections a day will be tough. If you are not meeting this expectation, someone else looking for a job is – remember, you have competition!

In the current economy, your connections should also equate to at least four hours per day of phone time. If your call time is less than four hours, you are not having meaningful

The Headhunter's Approach

conversations or talking with the right people. My firm has created activity sheets for you to use on a daily, weekly and monthly basis to track your progress.

By making at least 100 calls a day, resulting in 15 connections, you should be able to secure two to three interviews or meetings a week. If you continue this pace for four to six weeks, you should be able to land a job. However, if you are tracking only ten calls a day, it will take you ten times as long or almost a year to find a job. These results are proven. This is how we know our business is statistically sound.

Unfortunately, most of your calls will not be positive. You will encounter resistance and your ability to overcome that resistance will be crucial. This is covered in the Resolution of Options section.

When to Say It

A thriving headhunter knows how to plan her time accordingly. Simply defined, planning is the act you perform daily to organize the current day's work and prepare for the following day. Preparation is the key to the kingdom in headhunting. Yet, in the course of a busy day with pressing, urgent matters to address, planning is typically the first necessity to be abandoned. Unfortunately, a very common and altogether apt expression in our business is, "failing to plan is planning to fail."

Planning is a daily activity that requires time, thought, and discipline. Unfocused planning results in a lack of production. Efficient plans are structured, written out, and committed to in your schedule or daily planner. Success comes to those who organize, plan and prioritize their calls each day. This means taking time each day to type or write the list of who you are planning to call tomorrow, and preparing your scripts ahead of time.

Headhunters also have earmarks known as 'prime time' or 'golden hours.' These are the times when you are more likely to reach decision makers. Decision makers are typically in their offices early in the morning and late in the afternoons. They even work weekends! If you want a job, you need to be working the same hours as the decision makers. This is not the time to be spending on the internet conducting personal research. It probably goes without saying that if you are currently employed, you should not be participating in such activities at your current place of employment.

As you can now appreciate, the Approach is the heart of the S.M.A.R.T. process, and requires much deliberation and patience. It can also be heaps of fun.

The Headhunter's Approach

Resolution of Options

Resolution of Options is the true coaching component of the S.M.A.R.T. process. You will learn how to ask a company which you have targeted and approached for an interview; prepare for the interview; and conduct a self- debrief after the interview. A variety of closing techniques will also be provided to get a decision for an interview, second interview or a new position. It is vital to recognize that 'closing' occurs all the time.

How to Ask for an Interview

During the Approach phase of the S.M.A.R.T. process, you learned how to effectively market yourself to the people and/or companies with which you desire to work. Asking for a meeting is the next logical step. Mentioning the word 'interview' may alarm some people, so perhaps use the terms 'meeting' or 'conversation' to share your experiences about how you can benefit the company.

Use the alternate choice close like, "Would Tuesday or Wednesday morning be best?" to secure a date and time. If the hiring authority directs the meeting toward human resources, continue to make the appointment. Having a strong and impressive dialogue with human resources can keep you better informed of the company structure and dynamics, as well as potential positions throughout the company.

Preparing for an Interview

Mentally and physically preparing for an interview is a critical step in securing a job. My firm has designed a preparation checklist to assist you with reminders of activities to conduct prior to the actual interview, in addition to discussions that are important to have during the interview. Everyone should take time preparing for an interview, no matter how many interviews one has been through previously, or your seniority or level. Each meeting is unique and should be treated as such to succeed. Review the interview tips as they detail the behavioral based interviewing method and offer sample questions and appropriate responses.

Debriefing after an Interview

Once an interview has been completed, it is important for you to spend time reflecting on your meeting and determining how you want to proceed. Questions such as "What went well?"; "Where could improvements be made?"; "Do I want the job?" and "Can I handle the job?" should be occupying your thoughts. To simplify the process, my firm has also fashioned a debriefing form for you.

Closing Tips

The best search consultants drive the placement process by using closing skills throughout the entire process. Once you get to the final interview stage, closing should be simple if you have done everything right to this point. I have summarized 15 effective and constructive closing techniques to assist you.

Hopefully, you have performed well during your interviews and have closed successfully to land the job you were seeking. Setbacks and delays can occur and maintaining a positive attitude and outlook are vital. Having a mentor or significant other as support can eliminate some stress in the process.

The Headhunter's Approach

Transition

Congratulations! You have secured a new job and/or career. Your transition to the new position is almost as important as the preceding steps you've followed. You have invested time and energy, experienced emotional trauma, and managed the process. However, an accepted offer is not the end of the process. Although you may not have been actively employed, the transition period (which can be as long 90 days after starting a new job) is an emotional situation that requires coaching and support. Such support revolves around counteroffer and resignation discussions as well as formal communications and announcements to your professional network.

Counteroffer

A counteroffer is an inducement from a current employer to entice the current employee (you) to stay in his/her current position, typically given after the individual has announced his/her intention to leave. There are two main forms of counteroffers, financial and emotional. Examples of financial counteroffers are a salary increase, one-time bonus, promotion or added responsibility, promise of future raise, creation of new, more appealing reporting structure or company organization. It even could be something fanatical like a new office or parking spot. Emotional counters, on the other hand, do not cost the employer anything yet are quite calculated. They are comments which cause guilt; evoke memories of social, business and personal encounters; expressions of personal feelings of loss or even demeaning or disparaging remarks about new employer or job.

Counteroffers are given for a variety of reasons, the main reason being that it is cheaper to keep someone than incurring the expense and aggravation of finding a replacement. Losing an employee is a reflection on the boss and s/he does not want to look bad in the eyes of management. So, offering more money or making promises (which may never be fulfilled) is an easy "fix" while s/he is finding your replacement anyway but on his/her own time.

There are several articles written by Paul Hawkinson, publisher of The Fordyce Letter, which explain very clearly why one should not accept a counteroffer. The articles are titled *Counteroffer Acceptance: Road to Career Ruin* and *Accepting a Counteroffer Can Be the Road to Ruin*.

Resignation

Resignations should be handled with class, regardless of the circumstances prompting the resignation. The (professional) world can be quite small and you never know when or how your paths will cross with your soon to be ex- coworkers and bosses again. You are a professional and as such, the resignation should be given verbally as well as in writing. Having it in writing helps with the delivery of a tough and oftentimes emotional situation. Resignation letters should thank your prior company and boss for the opportunity and knowledge you've gained while working there. They should also contain language that you are not in a position to take a counteroffer. It is suggested that a two week notice window be offered. Sample resignation letters are provided to guide you through this stage.

Announcements/Formal Communications

It is possible that a new employer will publicize your joining the company and the role you are filling through internal memos or in external newspapers or trade journals. While that is a nice gesture, such attention behooves you to acknowledge the support and guidance you've been given by your mentors and coaches. These people have perhaps assisted you in obtaining interviews, directed you to their close friends or colleagues to secure interviews or even served as references for you. A formal written acknowledgment is a nice and appropriate touch. Thank them for what they have done and relay your new opportunity.

The Headhunter's Approach

Transition (Cont.)

Perhaps one day you can repay the favor. It is also recommended that you maintain ongoing communication with your network, sharing successes or items of interest.

The Headhunter's Approach

About the Author

Tom Johnston Founder & CEO, SearchPath

Tom Johnston, President and Founder of SearchPath, has been heavily involved in the Search and Recruitment industry since 1988, as an individual contributor, manager and owner. He is a nationally recognized search consultant, specializing in the Staffing, Employer Services and Healthcare Industries.

Tom has successfully completed many senior level searches including CEOs, CFOs, Senior Vice Presidents and Directors. In addition, his team has successfully completed large, multiple opening projects that required recruitment of up to 300 people in just 8 months.

Tom has leveraged his in-depth study, knowledge, expertise and contacts to attract top talent for his clients in these increasingly competitive industries. His office has averaged over a \$1 million dollars a year since inception, and his personal production has exceeded \$5 million. This accomplishment ranks both Tom and his staff as one of top search firms in the country.

Prior to entering the executive search profession, Tom was the Director of Interim Executive Staffing for Management Recruiters International (MRI), the world's largest search and recruitment organization. He introduced interim staffing to MRI, which generated \$40 million dollars in revenue in less than three years. Tom was a member of the management team that transitioned MRI into a full-service human resource solutions organization. He was also responsible for creating and launching Worldbridge Partners, a unique partnership within the MRI network.

Tom was a senior executive with both United Parcel Service and Roadway Services. As a senior management consultant with the Reliance Consulting Group, he worked as a consultant in the staffing industry, helping firms expand their client service offerings.

Tom earned his BA in Management Science at St. Bonaventure University. He was the Chairman of the Strategic Committee of MRI's national Next Step Council and has served on the National Steering Committee of the American Association of Franchisees and Dealers.

The Headhunter's Approach

Appendix

I am pleased to provide you with a slate of documents to assist you in your career transition.

Personal Career Appraisal*	21
60 Second Overview*	37
Power Words	40
Daily Score Worksheets	42
Preparation Checklist	44
Interview Tips	46
Debrief Form	52
Closing Techniques	54
Counteroffer Articles	58
Sample Resignation Letters	62

The Headhunter's Approach

- List activities, functions, or responsibilities you would not like in your next position/career.

- Give a description of an 'ideal' position for yourself. What would you like to be doing?

- Is there anything you know of which would hinder your obtaining such a position or performing it well? Give details.

- Are you satisfied with your career to date? __yes __no. State two or three more things which may have interfered with your advancement or satisfaction, or which have been repetitive problems.

- Money and Lifestyle Goals:
 - What were your earnings last year?
 - What is the maximum income you have earned in one year?
 - What are your income objectives for the next five years?

- Describe in as much detail as possible what you would like to be doing five or ten years from now.

- Have you ever thought of going into business for yourself? What type? When? For what reason?

- If you had a business, what were the reasons you got out of it?

The Headhunter's Approach

- Do your family commitments influence your objectives? If so, how?
- If you never had to work for money, what would you be doing?
- Motivators: Without going into detail (use one liners), write at least five things that you can think of that would bounce you out of bed tomorrow morning. Things that you would find very enjoyable and make it difficult to sleep just with the anticipation of getting to do them.

CAREER HISTORY

This next section is to be used to capture as much detailed information as possible about your work history. Please break down long-term employment with one sheet for each position. Use one page per position and detail all work experience. Please do not refer to an existing resume. This task is intended to provide you with an opportunity to gain a current and fresh perspective of your life and career. It is also intended to provide you with the foundation in the preparation of your job search including the development of your resume(s).

All details regarding positions or jobs – full or part time – including volunteer activities are important in this exercise.

All descriptive accomplishment statements should begin with an action verb/past tense and are to be quantified, specific and important to you, regardless of what the outside world views as important. Be sure to make note of the outcome or result(s) of your efforts. Use the Action Verb List at the end of the appraisal to help you.

Example: Directed the management of six lead engineers, 20 technicians, and three administrative staff in the development of automotive prototypes.

The Headhunter's Approach

CAREER HISTORY WORKSHEET – One position or Business per sheet

Organization/Company:

Title: Date: To

Duties and Responsibilities included:

Accomplishments:

The Headhunter's Approach

CAREER HISTORY WORKSHEET – One position or Business per sheet

Organization/Company:

Title: Date: To

Duties and Responsibilities included:

Accomplishments:

The Headhunter's Approach

CAREER HISTORY WORKSHEET – One position or Business per sheet

Organization/Company:

Title: Date: To

Duties and Responsibilities included:

Accomplishments:

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EDUCATION/TRAINING/QUALIFICATIONS

- Educational Attainments
 - Degree School/University/College Major(s) Year(s)

- Additional Education and Training. Please list any seminars or special training workshops or courses you have attended.
 - Name of Course/Workshop Sponsor Dates

- Licensure/Certification
 - License/Certification Title Type/State Year(s)

- Military Service
 - Branch Rank Year Special Training

- Formal, informal, self-study efforts, corporate seminars, and/or related levels of activity or experience.

- Civic, professional organizations or memberships you formerly or currently belong to. Give dates and mention offices held, if any.

- Applicable published/unpublished materials, presentations, patents, and/or honors/awards.

The Headhunter's Approach

YOUR SKILLS INVENTORY

Skills represent a wide array of attributes that reflect your abilities, strengths, and individual characteristics and give you your greatest power. Skills are the ways you tend to be most successful when dealing with tasks, activities, problems, and life experiences. You do some things better than others, are more comfortable in certain environments (situations), and probably prefer particular tasks. Your skills represent your strengths and through their use, exhibit what makes you unique: a person possessing his/her own special set of qualities different from any other individual.

Below is a sample listing of skills found in a variety of career fields. First, check all that you feel represent a true picture of your best skills. (If your skills are not listed, add them in the spaces provided.) Second, rank your top four (4) choices by putting them in numerical order with Number 1 as your strongest skill. Needless to say, your selections should be those skills which you both enjoy and have experienced some level of achievement/accomplishment.

- Administering programs
- Analyzing data
- Appraising services
- Arranging social functions
- Assembling apparatus
- Assessing situations
- Auditing financial records
- Calculating number data
- Checking for accuracy
- Classifying records
- Coaching individuals
- Comparing statistics
- Compiling statistics
- Conceptualizing futures
- Constructing environments
- Controlling operations
- Coordinating events/tasks
- Corresponding with others
- Counseling people
- Creating new formats
- Creating new ideas
- Creating policies
- Deciding uses of money
- Delegating responsibility
- Establishing goals
- Estimating physical space/cost
- Formulating solutions
- Generating budgets
- Handling detail work
- Handling materials
- Implementing materials
- Inspecting physical objects
- Integrating procedures
- Interpersonally relating
- Interpreting languages/data
- Interviewing people
- Investigating problems
- Locating problems
- Making recommendations
- Managing people/organizations
- Measuring results
- Mediating between people
- Meeting the public
- Monitoring progress
- Motivating others
- Operating equipment
- Organizing people and tasks
- Recruiting people
- Repairing mechanical/electronic
- Researching for information
- Running meetings
- Scheduling projects
- Selling products/ideas
- Servicing individuals
- Setting up demonstrations
- Sketching charts/diagrams
- Solving problems
- Speaking in public
- Supervising approaches
- Synthesizing approaches
- Teaching classes
- Training/retaining people
- Visualizing new formats
- Writing reports/publications

The Headhunter's Approach

SKILL AREA ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In Section IV, you selected (and rank ordered) your major strength Skill Areas. Now, you are asked to construct 1 – 5 accomplishments/achievements for your top four (4) selections. Be specific and quantify (where possible) each of your statements.

Example: Initiated and implemented ongoing cost awareness program through Quality Control Circles, with first year cost reduction of \$40,000 for a major automotive company.

Skill Area I Skill Area II

Skill Area III Skill Area IV

YOUR MOST SIGNIFICANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

On the previous pages, you have listed your accomplishments as they related to jobs you have held and the skills you have successfully used. Accomplishments give you a sense of pride, fulfillment, and competence. They are the result of your ideas, your efforts, and your persistence whether done alone or in combination with others.

Select ten (10) of your most important accomplishments from those you have represented on previous pages. Write them in the spaces below. Order or sequence is not important for this task.

Accomplishment 1:

Accomplishment 2:

Accomplishment 3:

Accomplishment 4:

Accomplishment 5:

Accomplishment 6:

Accomplishment 7:

Accomplishment 8:

Accomplishment 9:

Accomplishment 10:

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KEY QUESTIONS

For insights into your strengths, weaknesses, triggers and learning style, answer the following questions below sincerely and thoughtfully.

- Strengths:
 - What was the best day at work you have had in the last three months?
 - What were you doing?
 - Why did you enjoy it so much?

- Weaknesses:
 - What was your worst day at work in the last three months?
 - What were you doing?
 - Why did it grate on you so much?

- Triggers:
 - Describe the best relationship you ever had with a manager.
 - What made it work so well?

- Recognition:
 - What was the best praise or recognition you ever received?
 - What made it so good?

- Learning:
 - When in your career do you think you were learning the most?
 - Why did you learn so much?
 - What is the best way for you to learn?

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RELATED EXPERIENCE

Often we are expert and/or experienced in non-work related activities that could easily be transferred to the work place. This could include a civic activity, hobby, or particular interest. It might also include a skill, such as foreign language fluency or being an expert on a particular subject. List all that you believe are work related.

Example:

Area Activity: Skills/Experience/Knowledge

Foreign Language: Fluent in Spanish and French

Act as interpreter for 2 government agencies

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

SELF-DESCRIPTION

Examine the list of self-description terms shown below. Circle those terms which you feel best describe you in the workplace. Make your selections, and/or additions with a view toward using them in your career objective, information meetings, and interviews. Rank in order your top five only.

- Achievement-oriented
- Adaptable
- Aggressive
- Alert
- Ambitious
- Analytical
- Articulate
- Assertive
- Broad-minded
- Compassionate
- Competent
- Conscientious
- Consistent
- Constructive
- Detailed
- Determined
- Diplomatic
- Disciplined
- Economical
- Efficient
- Energetic
- Enterprising
- Enthusiastic
- Forward-thinking
- Goal-oriented
- Good-natured
- Hardworking
- Honest
- Imaginative/Creative
- Independent
- Initiating
- Intelligent
- Intelligent
- Intuitive
- Logical
- Loyal/Reliable
- Mature
- Objective
- Optimistic
- Organized
- Perceptive
- Preserving
- Personable
- Persuasive
- Positive
- Problem solving
- Productive
- Profit-oriented
- Realistic
- Resourceful
- Responsible
- Self-confident
- Self-motivated
- Self-reliant
- Self-starting
- Successful

The Headhunter's Approach

- Systematic
- Stable
- Tactful
- Thorough
- Truthful
- Understanding
- Versatile

YOUR NEXT POSITION

Most people find it difficult to really define their ideal job. It is usually easier to think about the activities that they would like in their ideal position. Listed below are 28 different activity groups that combine to make up most jobs. How many of these 28 groups should be in the job that you would really like?

First, go through the entire list and underline each verb that represents an activity you like and feel you do well. Then go back and place checks beside those groups that interest you most. Group 29 has been left open for any additional activities that you think have been overlooked and would also be important in an ideal position for you.

1. Observe, sense, perceive, test, measure, investigate, study, inspect
2. Analyze, compare, extract, correlate, derive, evaluate, differentiate, identify
3. Interpret, explain, attribute, understand, portray, represent
4. Solve, troubleshoot, improve, critique, redirect, design, redesign
5. Systematize, coordinate, organize, develop procedures
6. Plan, forecast, strategies, set goals, develop schedules
7. Administer, control, supervise, direct, manage, delegate, budget
8. Lead, show, advise, manipulate, assess, judge, govern, decide
9. Innovate, invest, adapt, develop, devise, create
10. Imagine, visualize, conceptualize, fantasize, theorize
11. Synthesize, bring together with originality
12. Create, draw, sketch, sculpt, write, perform with originality
13. Console, help others, inform, be friendly and attentive
14. Empathize, listen and counsel constructively, rehabilitate
15. Write, speak, publicize, communicate clearly and effectively
16. Persuade, convince, teach, inspire, influence, motivate
17. Arbitrate, mediate, negotiate, intervene, resolve
18. Order, allocate, count, record, file, compile
19. Make, build, fabricate, prepare, fashion, assemble
20. Install, fit, tailor, finish, adapt, test
21. Operate, run, tend, control utilize
22. Maintain, repair, fix, tinker, rebuild
23. Serve, care for, assist, provide, treat
24. Perform, play, act, dance, swim
25. Explore, learn, discover, travel, seek, find
26. Be challenged, compete, take risks, achieve, surpass
27. Be recognized, gain status, acceptance, acknowledgment
28. Be rewarded materially, receive money or equivalent
29. , , ,

Of the groups that you checked, which do you feel are most important? Rank your selections from 1 to 5 in Column A, in order of their importance to you, at this time. In Column B, place the words from your selected group of terms which interest you most.

The Headhunter's Approach

Example:

Column A
1. 21

Column B
Run, control, utilize

Column A

Column B

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

CAREER ENVIRONMENT

Each of us perceives our work environment differently. Having considered your experiences, your strengths, and your areas of expertise, it is now worthwhile to focus some attention on the work setting best suited to you.

The following outline will help you put into perspective the essential organizational elements which need to be addressed, when considering your next position.

Kinds of positions you want to pursue

Identify four (i.e. sales representative, design engineer, senior auditor)

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

Geographic preferences

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

Kinds of Organizations

- Consumer Products
- Consulting
- Service Oriented
- Human Services
- One Location Government
- Conglomerate
- Multinational
- Own Business
- Natural Resources
- Healthcare Organizational Setting
- Academia
- Centralized
- Decentralized

Decentralized

- Manufacturing/Processing
- Industrial
- Retail/Wholesale
- Distribution
- Large Company
- Medium Company
- Small Company
- Nonprofit
- Financial
- Administration
- Corporate Office
- Human Resources
- Manufacturing
- Research
- Public

Organizational Area

Relations

- Marketing
- Engineering

The Headhunter's Approach

Communications

- ☐ Sales
- ☐ Services
- ☐ Operations

- ☐ Financial
- ☐ Legal

ACTION VERB LIST

- Accomplished
- Achieved
- Acquired
- Acted
- Activated
- Adapted
- Addressed
- Adjusted
- Administered
- Adopted
- Advertised
- Advised
- Aided
- Analyzed
- Appointed
- Appraised
- Approved
- Arbitrated
- Arranged
- Ascertained
- Assembled
- Assessed
- Assisted
- Attained
- Audited
- Authorized
- Authored
- Averted
- Awarded
- Balanced
- Budgeted
- Built
- Calculated
- Centralized
- Changed
- Charted
- Checked
- Classified
- Closed
- Coached
- Collaborated
- Collected
- Combined
- Communicated
- Compiled
- Completed
- Composed
- Computed
- Conceived
- Conceptualized
- Condensed
- Conducted
- Conferred
- Connected
- Conserved
- Consolidated
- Constructed
- Consulted
- Controlled
- Converted
- Coordinated
- Corrected
- Correlated
- Counseled
- Created
- Decided
- Decreased
- Defined
- Delivered
- Demonstrated
- Designed
- Detailed
- Detected
- Determined
- Developed
- Devised
- Diagnosed
- Dictated
- Directed
- Discovered
- Dispensed
- Displayed
- Distributed
- Diverted
- Documented
- Doubled
- Drafted
- Dramatized
- Earned
- Edited
- Educated
- Elected
- Eliminated
- Employed
- Enforced
- Engineered
- Enlarged
- Enlisted
- Ensured
- Established
- Estimated
- Evaluated
- Examined
- Expanded
- Expedited
- Experimented
- Explained
- Extended
- Facilitated
- Finalized
- Financed
- Forecasted
- Formed
- Formulated
- Fostered
- Found
- Formulated
- Fostered
- Found
- Founded
- Furnished
- Generated
- Governed
- Grouped
- Guided
- Handled
- Headed
- Helped
- Hired
- Hypothesized
- Identified
- Illustrated
- Implemented
- Improved
- Improvised
- Increased
- Influenced
- Informed

The Headhunter's Approach

- Initiated
- Innovated
- Inspected
- Installed
- Instituted
- Instructed
- Integrated
- Interpreted
- Interviewed
- Introduced
- Invented
- Inventoried
- Invested
- Investigated
- Issued
- Judged
- Launched
- Learned
- Lectured
- Led
- Liquidated
- Logged
- Made
- Maintained
- Manipulated
- Marketed
- Matched
- Mediated
- Mentored
- Merchandised
- Met
- Modeled
- Modernized
- Modified
- Monitored
- Motivated
- Navigated
- Negotiated
- Nominated
- Observed
- Obtained
- Offered
- Opened
- Operated
- Ordered
- Organized
- Originated
- Painted
- Participated
- Perceived
- Performed
- Persuaded
- Photographed
- Piloted
- Pinpointed
- Pioneered
- Planned
- Positioned
- Predicted
- Prepared
- Prescribed
- Presented
- Prevented
- Priced
- Processed
- Procured
- Produced
- Programmed
- Projected
- Promoted
- Proposed
- Protected
- Proved
- Provided
- Publicized
- Published
- Purchased
- Qualified
- Quantified
- Questioned
- Raised
- Realized
- Reasoned
- Received
- Recommended
- Reconciled
- Rectified
- Redesigned
- Reduced
- Referred
- Refined
- Regulated
- Rehabilitated
- Reinforced
- Related
- Rendered
- Reorganized
- Reported
- Represented
- Researched
- Resolved
- Responded
- Resorted
- Restructured
- Retrieved
- Reviewed
- Revised
- Revitalized
- Routed
- Salvaged
- Satisfied
- Scheduled
- Screened
- Secured
- Selected
- Separated
- Served
- Serviced
- Set-up
- Shaped
- Shared
- Shipped
- Showed
- Simplified
- Sketched
- Sold
- Sorted
- Spearheaded
- Staffed
- Standardized
- Started up
- Streamlined
- Structured
- Studied
- Submitted
- Summarized
- Supervised
- Supplemented
- Supplied
- Surveyed
- Symbolized
- Synergized
- Synthesized
- Systematized
- Tabulated
- Tailored
- Taught
- Team-built
- Tended
- Tested & Proved
- Trained
- Transacted
- Transcribed
- Translated
- Traveled
- Treated
- Troubleshoot
- Tutored
- Uncovered

The Headhunter's Approach

- Undertook
- Unified
- United
- Updated

- Used
- Utilized
- Verbalized
- Verified

- Weighed
- Withstood
- Wrote

The Headhunter's Approach

60 Second Overview

This introductory script may well become the foundation of any dialogue you have in your career transition. It is a critical communication as it sets the stage for what any listener might learn about "who" you are as a person, what you have explicitly done and implicitly what you "can do." If formulated correctly, it can provide you with your opening communications about yourself during informational meetings, interviews, or in general conversations with anyone, anywhere. You can make it formal or informal by using this same outline.

INTRODUCTION

Relay how you know this person, through what connection. Also provide disclaimer that you are not asking this person for a job.

Suggested structure and example:

"Hello _____, thank you for taking my call, etc... _____ referred me to you or I know _____ through _____. He/She thought you could provide me with some insight and opinions of a new field/direction as I am considering a career transition.

Please be assured that I do not expect you to have or to know of a position. I thought I would provide you with a brief overview of my background and then ask some questions. Is that okay with you?"

OPENING LINE

Present a Statement of Functional Strengths:

Suggested structure:

"Over the course of my career, I have developed skills, abilities, and expertise in _____ (name your top functional skill areas)."

Example:

"Over the course of my career, I have developed skills, abilities and expertise in relationship management, account development and retention, and development and execution of communication programs."

EXAMPLES OF EXPERIENCE IN ENVIRONMENTS and/or ROLES

Demonstrate by providing examples (at least 3) of the depth and breadth of what you have accomplished and in what environments or circumstances you developed your functional strengths and skills.

Suggested Structure:

"I have done everything from _____ to _____."

Example:

"I have done everything from guiding the recruitment process at a controller level for a community bank to ----- multiple level sales executives within Fortune 100 companies. That involved developing relationships to understand organizations, the organization's needs, the role of the person hired and providing consultation in the selection process."

The Headhunter's Approach

I have developed all aspects of the executive search practice that represented billings in the top 20% in the nation while also managing a team of up to eight search consultants.

I have also developed and delivered best practices to 300 rookies and tenured account executives, as well as running sales meetings and evolving training programs for new employees."

EXAMPLES OF LESSONS LEARNED FROM THOSE EXPERIENCES

Relay what you learned from these experiences in broad terms

Suggested Structure:

"What I have learned out of _____ is that I am really strong in _____."

Example:

"What I have learned out of developing two practices is that I am really strong in being able to develop and manage long term profitable relationships --- going beyond business development and keeping connections well maintained with a variety of account and account types."

STATE EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND and CERTIFICATIONS

Highlight your educational background and any certifications

Suggested Structure and Example:

"I have a Bachelors of Science in _____ from the University of _____ and am a certified _____ from _____."

LEARN THROUGH QUESTIONING

Remind contact why you are calling him/her and what you'd like to learn from him/her through asking a series of questions.

Suggested Structure:

"As I mentioned, I am currently exploring opportunities where I can best contribute my skills in _____, _____, and _____ (those functions skills from Part II.) What I'd like to learn from you....."

Example:

"As I mentioned, I am currently exploring opportunities where I can best contribute my skills in relationship management, account development and retention."

What I'd like to learn from you is:

What are the most exciting aspects of your field?

What do you see are the main problems?

The Headhunter's Approach

What do you see are the solutions to these problems?

What would you do if you were me and wanted to work in this field?

Who would you talk to?

What is the best way to contact them?

Who are the main players to consider?

What professional journals, publications, or websites would you be reading if you were me?"

THANK YOU

Thank the individual for his/her time and insight. Reference the interesting areas or direction your call navigated.

Suggested Structure and Example:

"Thank you very much for your time. I understand why _____ would have referred me to you. I think _____ (person or industry) would be very helpful to me. I certainly appreciated your time and insight. I will be in touch..."

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Power Words

Word that "sell"

- Abundant
- Achiever
- Adaptable
- Adroit
- Advance
- Advantage
- Aggressive
- Alert
- Ambitious
- Analytical
- Approve
- Articulate
- Assertive
- Astute
- Benefit
- Challenging
- Chief
- Comfort
- Conceptual
- Conscientious
- Conservative
- Cool-headed
- Cutting Edge
- Dependable
- Deserve
- Diplomatic
- Discovery
- Discuss
- Ego Drive
- Empower
- Energetic
- Enjoyable
- Enrapture
- Enthusiastic
- Ethic
- Exceptional
- Excellent
- Facilitator
- Faithful
- Fresh
- Fun
- Goal-oriented
- Guarantee
- Happiness
- High Degree
- High Level/Standard
- Highly Regarded
- Independent
- Innovative
- Insight

- Inspiring
- Integrity
- Intelligence
- Keen
- Manner
- Money
- Negotiation Skills
- On-track
- Opportunity
- Optimum
- Overwhelming
- Persuasive
- Planning Ability
- Polish
- Political Savvy
- Positive Pragmatism
- Proactive
- Promotable
- Proud
- Proven
- Recommendable
- Refreshing
- Reliable
- Resilient
- Resourceful
- Responsible
- Results
- Results-oriented
- Security
- Self Awareness
- Self Directed
- Self Reliant
- Self Starter
- Sensible
- Sociable
- Solution
- Speech
- Stable
- Strategic
- Strategic Thinker
- Strong
- Style
- Substantial
- Successful
- Superlative
- Surmount
- Team Builder
- Team Leader
- Team Player
- Tenacity
- Tough-minded

- Trusted
- Understanding
- Value
- Vision
- Vital

Words that "Un-Sell"

- Bad
- But
- Buy
- Cannot
- Cost
- Deal
- Death
- Difficult
- Fail
- Failure
- Hard
- Hurt
- Liability
- Liable
- Lose/Loss
- Manipulate
- Maybe
- Might
- Might be
- Obligation
- Perhaps
- Probability
- Price
- Sharp
- Should
- Sign
- Sold
- Super
- Try
- Will not
- Worry
- Ya know

Words That Describe Importance

- Critical
- Crucial
- Countless
- Enormous
- Essential
- Generous
- Invaluable
- Massive
- Prodigious

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- Significant
- Stupendous
- Substantial
- Towering
- Tremendous
- Vast
- Vital

Words That Describe Reliability

- Plentiful
- Ample
- No-nonsense
- Strong
- Limitless
- Great
- Practical
- Rugged

Words That Describe a Thorough Person

- Analytical
- Comprehensive
- Detailed
- Durable
- Exhaustive
- Faithful
- Firm
- Heavyweight
- In-depth
- Methodical
- Panoramic
- Sound
- Stable Sweeping
- Tough
- Trusted
- Unswerving

Words That Describe Someone's Personality

- Arresting
- Candid
- Compelling
- Creative
- Explosive
- Fascinating
- Hard Working

- Heady
- Incisive
- Innovative
- Intriguing
- Lively
- Professional
- Striking
- Vibrant
- Vivid

Words That Describe Results

- Corrects
- Creates
- Cuts Through
- Builds Motivation
- Dramatic
- Effective
- Fixes
- Lowers
- Overwhelming
- Pays off
- Provides
- Protects
- Raises
- Reduces
- Restores
- Revitalized
- Stops

Words That Describe Excelling

- Astonishing
- Bold
- Brilliant
- Engrossing
- Distinguished
- Dynamic
- Electrifying
- Elite
- Excellent
- Exhilarating
- First Class
- Imaginative
- Matchless
- Mesmerizing

- Rousing
- Sensational
- Top of the line
- Unbeatable
- Unrivaled

Words That Describe Experience

- Ace
- Authoritative
- Accomplished
- Excels
- Incomparable
- Impeccable
- Ingenious
- Outclasses
- Perfect
- Professional
- Second to none
- Skilled
- Talented
- Top-notch
- Virtuoso

Words That Describe Unusual Skills

- Competent
- Distinctive
- Gifted
- Hard to find
- Proficient
- Rare
- Solid
- Unusual
- Unique

Words That Describe Performance

- Awesome
- Dazzling
- Elegant
- Fantastic
- Magnificent
- Spectacular
- Splendid
- Terrific

The Headhunter's Approach

Daily Score Worksheet

The purpose of this form is to assist you in tracking your call activity as it happens. Add the totals to your Daily Actual Results Worksheet.

Date:

Activity	Score					Total
Attempts	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
Marketing Presentations	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
Job Opportunities	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
Connect Time	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	
1st Time Send Outs	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	○○○○○	

Key:

- **Attempts:** Calling someone and leaving a message.
- **Marketing Presentation:** Number of connections you had with decision maker
- **Job Opportunities:** Positions that appeal to you, are open, and for which you are trying to secure an interview
- **Connect Time:** Total amount of minutes/hours on the phone in a day
- **1st Time Interview:** Number of telephone or face to face interviews with a decision maker

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Actual Results – Daily for the Week Of:

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>MON</u>	<u>TUE</u>	<u>WED</u>	<u>THUR</u>	<u>FRI</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Attempts						
Total Connect Time						
Marketing Presentations						
New Job Opportunities						
1st Time Interviews						
Total # of Interviews						

Actual Results – Weekly for the Month of:

<u>ACTIVITY</u>						<u>TOTAL</u>
Attempts						
Total Connect Time						
Marketing Presentations						
New Job Opportunities						
1st Time Send Outs						
Total # of Interviews						

Key:

- **Attempts:** Calling someone and leaving a message.
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- **Connect Time:** Total amount of minutes/hours on the phone in a day
- **1st Time Interview:** Number of telephone or face to face interviews with a decision maker

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CANDIDATE PREPARATION CHECKLIST

Interview Date: Time: Title:
Client Company: Hiring Manager:

1. Review the interview date, time, location, directions and walk-in instructions.
2. Assess the hiring process and research the people whom you are meeting via the web or personal contacts.
3. Review the basics:
 - a. What to bring:
 - i. Copies of resumes for each interviewer
 - ii. List of references
 - iii. Copies of 'Smile' file (impressive data)
 - iv. Notepad and Pens in a Portfolio
 - b. What to wear:
 - i. Business attire – pressed, polished and subdued
 - ii. Check body hair, jewelry, perfume
 - iii. Remember importance of body language
 - c. What to do:
 - i. Arrive 10 minutes early (or perhaps pre-trip day before especially if relocation or new area)
 - ii. Acknowledge assistant or anyone else present before interview and treat with respect
 - iii. Turn off and store cell phone
 - iv. Transmit energy – let your personality show
 - v. Send thank you note after interview
 - d. What NOT to do:
 - i. Eat, drink, smoke before interview
 - ii. Drink alcohol during lunch/dinner interview
 - iii. Speak negatively about prior employers
 - iv. Discuss compensation, benefits, vacation
 - e. When meeting the Hiring Authority or Interviewers:
 - i. Firm handshake
 - ii. Solid eye contact
 - iii. Thank him/her for the meeting
 - iv. SMILE
4. Reconfirm your motivation for making a career change and verify that nothing has changed since your last conversation.
5. Reconfirm your hot buttons, build enthusiasm and resell the match.
6. Review how your experience meets and/or exceeds the specifications of the position to:
 - a. Duties and Responsibilities
 - b. Skills, Abilities and Experience
 - c. Industry, Product and Network Knowledge
 - d. Educational Qualifications
 - e. Organizational Structure
 - f. Working Environment
 - g. Opportunity for Challenge/Advancement
7. Seek mentor/contact if they know the interviewers. Ask what to expect from each interviewer, the types of questions to expect, or any areas of common interest.
8. Create mini-stories that present your background, skills, & achievements as benefits to the employer (behavioral based questions).

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9. Ask why the position is open and information about the last person who held the position.
10. Review how you will respond to "tell me about yourself" question.
11. Review your response to tough questions or problem areas like:
 - a. Not having enough/right experience
 - b. Job hopping
 - c. Not meeting goals
12. Review the company's goals in relation to your expectations.
13. Review your concerns about the company and opportunity.
14. Prepare a list of questions to ask the interviewer about the company, responsibilities, expectations, culture, and the manager.
15. Prepare response to compensation and benefit issues.
 - a. Verify your current compensation package.
16. Organize a closing statement asking for the next step/decision.
17. Do not linger after the interview nor discuss the job while walking around the client's building.
18. Reflect on counteroffers:
 - a. Why they happen
 - b. What to expect
 - c. How current company/new employer would react
19. Pre-Close thoughts:
 - a. Think "Can I see myself in this opportunity?"
 - b. Think "If all goes well today, is there anything that would stand in my way of accepting the offer?"
 - c. Think "If this interview meets my expectations am I prepared to accept an offer at XXX today?"
20. For Final interview:
 - a. Review your compensation expectations.
 - b. Identify potential start date.
 - c. Role play with mentor/other if offer is made during interview.

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Interviewing Tips

The primary purpose of an interview is to determine a person's qualifications and employment. Interviews must be professional conversations during which both parties willingly exchange information that allows them to arrive at a sound, mutual commitment and decision.

Remember all the right skill sets, achievements, realistic expectations, cooperation and respect are irrelevant if the person is not truly motivated to make a change!

In order to uncover the motivators and attributes of an individual, an interviewer will often engage in the questioning phase – aka an interview with the potential hire. During the interview, s/he may use four (4) types of questions:

- Fact-finding questions to verify stated information such as what is on a person's resume.
- Technical questions to assess a person's job-related expertise.
- Hypothetical questions to seek to predict performance by asking the person to imagine how s/he might respond to 'what if' questions that relate to a possible future situation.
- Behavioral-based questions to evaluate a person's potential effectiveness in a new position by asking him/her to share past experiences that are relevant to the new opportunity.

Proponents of the behavioral approach contend that past performance is the best predictor of future performance (can do, will do again). In fact, behavioral interviewing is said to be 55% predictive of future on the job behavior, while factual interviewing is only 10% predictive.

More and more companies are using this approach for the above reason. You may even have had interviews that have been behavioral based. If not, or you welcome a refresher, continue reading.

Behaviors are actions or reactions to a situation. To function effectively in the work environment, an individual must demonstrate appropriate behaviors in three areas – skills, motivation and 'fit' or emotional quotient – all of which must be considered during the interview process. Companies can discuss skills and specifically test for skills, but it is much more difficult to test for motivation and fit.

Behavioral questions are a means to evaluate motivation and fit by linking past or current work based behaviors to required behavior in an organization. This type of questioning generally begins with "Tell me a time when..." or "Describe a situation..."

Examples are as follows:

- Give me an example of a time when you set a goal and were able to meet or achieve it.
- Tell me about a time when you were satisfied with your own performance.
- Give me a situation where your persistence paid off.
- Tell me about a time when you had too many things to do and you were required to prioritize your tasks.
- Describe a situation when you failed to reach a goal. How did that affect you?
- Tell me about a time when you had to go above and beyond the call of duty in order to get a job done.

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- Give me an example of a time when you showed initiative and took the lead.

These questions are a means to seek further insight regarding your relationship with superiors and subordinates, projects and tasks (both positive and negative), and other relevant work experience.

However, there are no right or wrong answers. The best way to respond to behavioral based questions is with the STAR approach – a tool that's been used for years by psychologists and criminal/legal specialists to uncover motives.

This approach allows interviewers to begin to understand why an action was taken, how the person dealt with the action and what resulted from it. The elements of the STAR approach and how a person should address each element follow.

Situation or Task leading to an action.

- Give an example of a situation in which you were involved that resulted in a positive or negative outcome.
- Describe the tasks involved in that situation.

Actions or behaviors demonstrated, specifics, and how it was accomplished. This is where behavioral traits are uncovered.

- Talk about the various actions involved in the situation's tasks.
- Describe specific actions taken or not taken.
- Use "I" or "we."

Result – specific, tangible conclusion that complete the picture.

- What results followed due to your actions?
- Conclude each story.
- Use specific, measurable terms.

To illustrate how the STAR process might be followed, assume that a hiring authority asked an individual to provide an example that demonstrates why he feels he is a good manager.

Situation:

"Relocation expenses in the company were out of control and quickly exceeding the budget..."

Task:

"...when I took on this responsibility."

Action:

"I focused on reviewing the reports and working with tenured staff to determine key entry points to maximize efforts and contain specific expenses. The staff assisted me by making a series of cost effective recommendations and together we drafted a plan."

Result:

"We then jointly developed a work flow system to maximize the effectiveness of the new procedure that became the company standard and is still in place and maintained."

Such pre-interview preparation is time well spent as it offers you an opportunity to view your experience from a different aspect, one that you probably have not previously considered.

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Below are key reminders of what occurs while in a behavioral based interview.

Employers predetermine the skills necessary of the job and then ask focused questions to assess whether or not the person possesses those skills. Make it a point to read company literature or websites carefully and listen closely during the company's information session to determine which skills an employer is seeking.

In the interview, responses need to be specific and detailed. Frame them with the STAR process in mind.

- Always listen carefully to each question, ask for clarification if necessary and make sure you answer the question completely.
- Prepare to give examples of situations in which you have demonstrated the behaviors you have determined to be important to the employer. Do not ramble.
- Use your resume as a guide when answering questions. Use examples from past internships, classes, activities, work experience, team participation, etc. to further illustrate achievements.
- Identify six to eight examples from your past experience in which you demonstrated top behaviors and skills that employers typically seek. Think in terms that will showcase your top selling points.
- Half of the examples should be totally positive, such as accomplishments or obtaining goals.
- The other half should be situations that started out negatively but ended either positively or in which you were able to minimize the negative outcome.
- Vary your examples. Don't take them all from one area of your past experience. Use fairly recent examples, from the last one to two years.
- If you worked in a team setting, describe not only the team's situation/actions/results, but also your specific role in that team effort.

The majority of employers seek employees who:

- Display enthusiasm for your company, its business, its people.
- Believe that s/he can do the job and has well matched skills.
- Are coachable and strive to make an immediate contribution.

Employers also factor in chemistry, personality match, experience, relocation, salary expectations, solid references, etc. Yet, there is more that they seek. The 'more' consists of 13 predictive skills and behaviors that employers evaluate through behavioral-based interviewing techniques in order to make solid hiring decisions. The 13 skills and behaviors and sample behavioral-based questions for each are listed below:

1. Focus and dedication to the industry

- a. Does the person's resume reflect enough experience, knowledge and growth in a chosen field?
 - i. Specifically, what attracts you to this industry as a career?
 - ii. Why did you choose your major and career?
 - iii. At what point did you make this decision?

2. Technical and professional knowledge

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- a. Does the person have an appropriate level of understanding of technical skills and professional knowledge and the ability to apply both?
 - i. Tell me about a time when you had a customer say 'no' to you when selling (a product).
- 3. Teamwork**
 - a. Does the person work effectively with others in the organization and outside the formal lines of authority (i.e. peers, other departments, senior management) to accomplish organizational goals and to identify and resolve problems? Does s/he consider the impact of his/her decision on others?
 - i. Describe for me a situation where others you were working with on a project disagreed with your ideas. What did you do?
- 4. Analysis**
 - a. Is the person able to relate and compare data from different sources, identify issues, secure relevant information and determine relationships?
 - i. Describe a situation when you had to determine the most pertinent content for your sales presentation.
- 5. Adaptability**
 - a. Does the person maintain effectiveness in varying environments, tasks and responsibilities, and with various types of people?
 - i. Tell me about a situation when you had to work with other departments to solve a common problem.
- 6. Work Standards**
 - a. Has the person set high goals or performance standards for him/herself, subordinates, others, and the organization? Is s/he dissatisfied with average performance?
 - i. Tell me how you measure your performance. How do you set goals for yourself in your current role?
 - ii. How have you differed from your manager in evaluating your performance? How did you handle the situation?
- 7. Job motivation**
 - a. To what extent do activities and responsibilities available in the job overlap with activities and responsibilities that result in personal satisfaction?
 - i. Give examples of what causes you to feel dissatisfied in your job and why.
 - ii. Give examples of what provide you with job satisfaction and why?
 - iii. Describe the type of manager with which you do your best work. Why?
- 8. Initiative**
 - a. Does the person make active attempts to influence events and achieve goals? Is s/he self-starting rather than passively accepting? Does s/he go beyond what is necessary?
 - i. Describe a situation that required a number of tasks to be done at the same time. How did you handle it? What was the result?
 - ii. Describe a project or ideas (not necessarily your own) that were implemented or successfully carried out primarily due to your efforts.
 - iii. Have you found any ways to make your job easier or more rewarding? Describe them.
- 9. Ability to learn**
 - a. Does the person assimilate and apply new job-related information promptly?
 - i. What techniques have you learned to make your job easier or more effective? How did you learn them?
 - ii. Tell me about a time when you had to quickly assimilate new information to solve a problem or perform well in your current role.

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10.Planning and organizing

- a. Does the person establish a course of action to accomplish specific goals? Does s/he plan proper assignments for personnel and allocate resources appropriately?
 - i. How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time?
 - ii. Describe a time when numerous projects were due at the same time. What steps did you take to complete your tasks?

11.Communication

- a. Does the person clearly express idea in speaking and writing, via his/her grammar, organization and structure?
 - i. What has been your experience in giving presentations to small or large groups? What has been your most successful experience in either situation?
 - ii. Tell me of a time when your listening skills really paid off...perhaps a time when other people missed the key idea being expressed by the speaker.
 - iii. Describe for me the way in which you know you've presented information effectively.

12.Customer service orientation

- a. Does the person make efforts to listen to and understand the customer (both internal and external), anticipate customer needs and give high priority to customer satisfaction?
 - i. Tell me about the most difficult customer service experience you have handled, perhaps with an angry or irate customer. Be specific, discuss what you did, and explain the outcome.

13.Sensitivity

- a. Does the person act out of consideration for the feelings and needs of others?
 - i. Describe a situation in which you found yourself dealing with someone who didn't like you. How did you handle that?
 - ii. Give an example of when you had to work with someone who was difficult to get along with. How did you handle that?

14.Additional behavioral questions

- a. Give me an example of a time in which you felt you were able to build motivation in your co-workers or subordinates at work.
- b. Has anyone ever asked you to do something unethical? What did you do?
- c. Tell me about your role in a project team. What did you do to contribute toward a team environment? Be specific.
- d. Describe the most creative work related project that you have carried out.
- e. Describe a work situation in which you had to take a risk. What was the outcome?
- f. Tell me about a time when you delegated a project effectively.
- g. Give me an example of a time when you motivated others.
- h. Describe a situation when you needed to get an understanding of another's viewpoint before you could get your job done. What problems did you encounter and how did you handle them?
- i. Describe a situation when you had a personal commitment that conflicted with an emergency business meeting. What did you do?
- j. Have you ever had to make an unpopular decision/announcement? Describe it and tell me how you handled it.
- k. Tell me about a time when you had to work with someone with whom you found difficult. What made that person difficult? How did you handle it?

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- l.** Describe a time when you set your sights too high (or too low).
- m.** Describe a time when you anticipated potential problems and developed preventive measures.
- n.** Tell me about a time when you missed an obvious solution to a problem.
- o.** Give me an example of a time when you tried to accomplish something and failed.
- p.** Tell me about a difficult decision you've made in the last year.
- q.** What is your typical way of dealing with conflict? Give me an example.
- r.** Give me an example of a time when you had to make a split second decision.
- s.** Give me a specific example of a time when you had to conform to a policy with which you did not agree.
- t.** Tell me about a time when you had to use your presentation skills to influence someone's opinion.
- u.** Give me a specific example of a time when you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- v.** Describe a time when you were faced with a stressful situation that demonstrated your coping skills.

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Debrief Form

Client Company:

Interviewer:

Interview Number:

1. How did my interview go? How long was I there?
2. Who did I meet with? How did I relate to the people I met? Can I see myself working for/with these people?
3. Was I introduced to anyone else? Who? Title?
4. How did they describe the position to me?
5. What are the positive points I recognized about the position?
6. Were there any differences in what was described and what I thought the position included?
7. Can I do the job? Do I WANT the job?
8. What do I think about the company?
9. What do I think about the career growth potential for this position and company?
10. What are the negatives that concern me about the position or company?
11. What is my interest level on a 1 to 10 scale with 10 being the greatest level of interest? What would make it a 10?
12. Did I discuss compensation?
13. Did I discuss any benefits?
14. How does this position compare with any other positions for which I am interviewing?
15. How did the interview end? Did I ask for the next step/another interview?

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16. If an offer came through tomorrow, what would I need to know in order to accept an offer?

17. Is there anything preventing me from resigning/accepting position tomorrow?

18. How would I handle the situation if my current (or ex) boss offers to match the offer or entice me back with more money? What would I do?

19. Are there any personal considerations that need to be taken into account? (family, home, bonus, benefits, etc.)

Remember: Send a thank you note and get references

NOTES: _____

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Closing Techniques

Assumptive:

Any question/statement that assumes that the individual has bought, agreed, accepted, etc.

Example:

"My background is an ideal match for your position; when would you like to see me?"

Alternate Close/Alternative Choice:

This close gives the individual a choice between two positives. Choosing either one confirms a decision.

Example:

"Let's compare calendars. Is Wednesday the 7th or Thursday the 8th a good time to meet with me?"

Ben Franklin/Balance Sheet:

The Balance Sheet close creates a visual. List all the positive reasons why you are a good fit for the position. Simply listen as the person lists or tries to come up with negatives or explain that there aren't any negatives.

Example:

"Let me explain why I believe I am a fit for your company/position. Please take out a blank piece of paper and draw a line down the center – like a T account. On the left, I'm going to describe all the reasons how I fit the opportunity and on the right identify the reasons how I do not fit."

Puppy Dog/Trial Close:

Drop off the 'puppy' and let them keep him for a short period without making an up front payment/commitment.

Example:

"I understand you do not have a fulltime position available now. What if I was to work on an interim basis where you would only pay for the hours I worked; where you could take a sample, in other words? If I perform well, you would consider converting my role to a fulltime position. You really can't lose. Is that reasonable?"

Reduce to Ridiculous:

This close allows you to reduce a money concern to its lowest amount.

Example:

"I was hoping would present an offer \$2000 higher. If you take a look at how that \$2,000 difference would impact your company, you are talking about \$5.47 a day. If you figure in taxes, the difference is really under \$3 a day. However, I have bills that have to be met and need the \$2,000. Are you willing to walk away from the perfect candidate for \$3 a day?"

Take away Close:

Withdraw your candidacy, interview, etc. You are guaranteed a 'yes' or 'no' 100% of the time.

Example:

"It is obvious by your inability to make a timely decision that you do not want to move forward with my candidacy. Is that correct?"

Reverse Close:

Turns the buyers' reasons why they shouldn't buy into why they should.

When you are faced with an objection, think of a benefit to that objection and add the phrase: "That's the very reason you should buy!"

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Example:

"That's the very reason that you should want to hire me! I would have tremendous opportunities to use my experience, organizational skills and creativity to go in, evaluate what you are doing right or wrong, turn it around and add probably one of the greatest highlights to my achievement list ever!"

Elimination/Positive No Close:

Ask a battery of questions to uncover unstated concerns that are inhibiting the person from making a decision. Systematically eliminate all the reasons to continue stalling.

Example:

(You): *"Well, (hiring authority) you've got to be comfortable with your decision so let's see if we can look at it logically, ok? Tell me, are you hesitating because you do not think I can handle the duties?"*

(Hiring Authority): *"No, you could handle the duties just fine; in fact you could handle them better than the other candidates."*

(You): *"Ok, then what about the people, do you think I would not fit in with the culture?"*

(HA): *"No"*

(You): *[Continue asking all the questions that have been determined to be positive and make your last question...] "Well, that's all there is! We have covered it all! I would confidently say that you are holding back because of the universal ailment – fear of change/making a decision. It is very common. Is it fair to say that it is absolutely essential to make a logical decision and not end up getting caught up in an emotional one? We have just talked about all the logical reasons why I am the best candidate for the role. Let me recommend that we go ahead with a logical and intelligent decision and move ahead. Does that make sense?"*

Similar Situation/Feel, Felt, Found:

This close uses your past experience in making life changing decisions to help the person arrive at a decision. Do not lie.

Example:

"I know how you feel. Just last week I was interviewing with another client who felt the same way. However the client found that by meeting me in person, he was able to see how well I could handle the role..."

Walking down the street:

This close involves using an analogy. Have the person compare their current situation with an opening to the opportunity you presented by filling it.

Example:

"Imagine that you were walking down the street and you had an open position. On one side is your present company with a job not being handled. On the other side is the opportunity to hire me to fill the gap. Which side of the street would you want?"

Sharp Angle/Right Angle/Condition:

When using this close, you are responding to a statement with a question. This question isolates a given situation and tests if it is preventing the individual from making a decision.

Example:

(HA): *"I like your experience, but I wish you had a CFA designation."*

(Your response): *"So if I did have a CFA, you would be ready to move forward?"*

College Professor:

Helps the person to think objectively about the situation based on how a non- biased, non-emotional outsider would judge the situation.

The Headhunter's Approach

Example:

"You are intimately and emotionally involved in this decision. Long range employment decisions should be made, not on the basis of emotion, but on intelligent, logical reasoning. Let's say you were to ask the opinion of someone you respect, someone that has been successful, maybe a businessman, or college professor. Let's say you were to lay out all the facts about all your options and detail the experiences of the candidates, the positives and negatives, reasons for needing the position filled, all the implications, and so on. This would be someone who would take an objective view, holding nothing back. Now if you were to ask that person what their advice would be to maximize the return on investment in your hiring decisions, tell me, what advice do you think s/he would convey to you? What do you think the recommendation would be?"

Summary Close:

Simply reiterate their needs and wants, and how you satisfy those needs and wants.

Example:

"From what you said before, you were looking for ten plus years experience, a business degree, project management skills, Symix implementation experience, and utilizing multi-platform architecture. Is that right? I am on target in all categories. Don't you agree?"

Fear of Change:

Point out that fear is not a good basis for making decisions. Fear is perfectly normal but should not let it rule over someone making rational decision.

Example:

"I understand that there is a fear in adding to staff in this type of economic climate. What is the alternative? Continue with sluggish sales performers or gaps in your territories? Is that what you want to do? There is nothing wrong with having the natural desire to stay with the things that you are comfortable with, but never let that kind of fear, the fear of leaving the comfort zone, rule your decision to improve your company and your department. I know I could make a difference."

Switch Place:

When all else fails, ask the hiring manager to tell you what s/he would do to get the job.

Example:

"Mrs. Smith, if you were trying to get this job and you didn't know why all efforts just didn't get anywhere, what would you do?"

Choices

If the company asks you to 'Send your Resume', you could use:

- Assumptive
- Alternate Choice

If you get sent over to Human Resources, you could use:

- Reverse
- Take Away

After you present your case for employment, you could use:

- Assumptive Close
- Alternate Choice
- Puppy Dog
- Sharp Angle/Right Angle

The Headhunter's Approach

If the company is uncooperative, you could use:

- College Professor
- Switch Place
- Take Away

If the company is hesitating on interviewing you, you could use:

- Assumptive Close
- Alternate Choice
- Puppy Dog
- Elimination Close
- Ben Franklin
- College Professor
- Summary
- Take Away
- Similar Situation
- Sharp Angle/Right Angle

If you believe the company is uncertain and has a Fear of Change, you could use:

- Elimination
- Ben Franklin
- College Professor
- Summary
- Walking down the Street

The Headhunter's Approach

Counteroffer Acceptance Road to Career Ruin

A raise won't permanently cushion thorns in the nest

By Paul Hawkinson

Matthew Henry, the 17th century writer said, "Many a dangerous temptation comes to us in fine gay colours that are but skin deep." The same can be said for counteroffers, those magnetic enticements designed to lure you back into the nest after you've decided it's time to fly away.

The litany of horror stories I have come across in my years as an executive recruiter, consultant and publisher, provides a Litmus test that clearly indicates counteroffers should never be accepted...EVER!

I define a counteroffer simply as an inducement from your current employer to get you to stay after you've announced your intention to take another job. We're not talking about those instances when you receive an offer but don't tell your boss. Nor are we discussing offers that you never intended to take, yet tell your employer about anyway as a "they-want-me-but-I'm-staying-with-you" ploy. These are merely astute positioning tactics you may choose to use to reinforce your worth by letting your boss know you have other options. Mention of a true counteroffer, however, carries an actual threat to quit. Interviews with employers who make counteroffers, and employees who accept them, have shown that as tempting as they may be, acceptance may cause career suicide. During the past 20 years, I have seen only isolated incidents in which an accepted counteroffer has benefited the employee. Consider the problem in its proper perspective.

What really goes through a boss's mind when someone quits?

- "This couldn't be happening at a worse time."
- "This is one of my best people. If I let him quit now, it'll wreak havoc on the morale of the department."
- "I've already got one opening in my department. I don't need another right now."
- "This will probably screw up the entire vacation schedule."
- "I'm working as hard as I can, and I don't need to do his work, too."
- "If I lose another good employee, the company might decide to 'lose' me too."
- "My review is coming up and this will make me look bad. Maybe I can keep him on until I find a suitable replacement."

What will the boss say to keep you in the nest? Some of these comments are common.

- "I'm really shocked. I thought you were as happy with us as we are with you. Let's discuss it before you make your final decision."
- "Aw gee, I've been meaning to tell you about the great plans we have for you, but it's been confidential until now."
- "The V.P. has you in mind for some exciting and expanding responsibilities."
- "You're going to work for who?"
- "Your raise was scheduled to go in effect next quarter, but we'll make it retroactive to the beginning of this quarter."

Let's face it. When someone quits, it's a direct reflection on the boss. Unless you're really incompetent or a destructive thorn in his side, the boss might look bad by "allowing" you to go. His gut reaction is to do what has to be done to keep you from leaving until he's ready. That's human nature.

The Headhunter's Approach

Unfortunately, it's also human nature to want to stay unless your work life is abject misery. Career changes, like all ventures into the unknown, are tough. That's why bosses know they can usually keep you around by pressing the right buttons.

Before you succumb to a tempting counteroffer, consider these universal truths:

- Any situation in which an employee is forced to get an outside offer before the present employer will suggest a raise, promotion or better working conditions, is suspect.
- No matter what the company says when making its counteroffer, you will always be considered a fidelity risk. Having once demonstrated your lack of loyalty (for whatever reason) you will lose your status as a "team player" and your place in the inner circle.
- Counteroffers are usually nothing more than stall devices to give your employer time to replace you.
- Your reasons for wanting to a leave still exist. Conditions are just made a bit more tolerable in the short term because of the raise, promotion or promises made to keep you.
- Counteroffers are only made in response to a threat to quit. Will you have to solicit an offer and threaten to quit every time you deserve better working conditions?
- Decent and well-managed companies don't make counteroffers...EVER! Their policies are fair and equitable. They will not be subject to "counteroffer coercion" or what they perceive as blackmail. If the urge to accept a counteroffer hits you, keep on cleaning out your desk as you count your blessings.

Accepting a Counteroffer Can Be the Road to Ruin

By Paul Hawkinson

As the economy rebounds, companies are focused on retaining their best employees. This may be because they sense that top performers, exhausted from being overworked and underpaid during the recession, have new options.

Counteroffers are one talent-preservation tool companies use to prevent being "left in the lurch" by an employee who leaves. In making such an offer, your employer might appear to be doing you a big favor. Don't be deceived, though. You aren't the main beneficiary of an accepted counteroffer.

During my 40 years monitoring the hiring scene, primarily from the standpoint of the executive recruiting industry, it's been clear that the company reaps the benefits when employees take counteroffers.

Industry pundits may argue that this is no longer true now that the employment paradigm has changed and the loyalty contract between employers and employees has been irrevocably broken. Employees control their destinies more now than a decade or two ago and it's sensible for them to use counteroffers to improve their earnings or careers.

But human nature is unalterable -- even as the workplace changes around it. Employers aren't charities. They want to avoid the transition turmoil generated when a key player leaves. They also know that for employees, changing jobs ranks as a major stressor with death, divorce, moving and other of life's undesirable speed bumps. They make counteroffers knowing that employees would rather avoid leaving the familiar and starting new someplace else.

The Headhunter's Approach

As one human-resource executive told me, "My core belief is 'Better the devil you know than the devil you don't.' We understand that matching the salary, changing the job title, creating a new project or promises of any kind can tip the balance between going and staying. It is a lot cheaper to keep someone than the expense and aggravation of finding a replacement."

The Boss Saves Face

Accepting a counteroffer also makes bosses look good. They feel somewhat like jilted lovers or spouses when someone they need resigns. They think to themselves:

- What did I do wrong?
- Why didn't I recognize the problem earlier?
- This couldn't happen at a worse time.
- My own boss will be furious.
- This is one of my best people and his leaving could cause serious morale problems.
- I've already got one opening in my department. I don't need another
- right now.
- What if this resignation starts a mass exodus?

Let's face it. When someone quits, it's a direct reflection on the boss. Unless you're really incompetent or a disrupting thorn in the boss's side, he or she might look bad by "allowing" you to go. The gut reaction is to do what's necessary to keep you from leaving until it's convenient. That's human nature, too.

If you accept the counteroffer and stay, you'll always be viewed differently. In essence, by agreeing to stay, you've "blackmailed" your boss. From now on, he or she will consider you a "fidelity risk." You lose your status as a team player. You're no longer viewed as an insider.

Nothing Changes, Really.

Meanwhile, your reasons for wanting to leave still exist. In almost every case, a counteroffer is a temporary fix -- a stall technique to keep you in your seat until the organization can find a suitable replacement. Ask yourself: If and when I feel underpaid, overworked or otherwise mistreated again, will I have to solicit another offer to correct it?

What about the prospective employer, which spent long hours and considerable expense to get you to the offer point? Presumably, you negotiated in good faith and arrived at a mutually acceptable offer. If you renege on your commitment, you taint your reputation. It's a smaller world than you may think. Word of your lack of integrity can poison your career for decades.

Not only can your reputation for untrustworthiness hinder your career progress among executives in your sector, but search professionals will also consider you untouchable for the openings they handle. If you think recruiters don't talk among themselves, you're dead wrong. Being blackballed by the search community can be career suicide.

In my four decades in the hiring community, only a small percentage of counteroffer acceptors I've known haven't regretted their choice. If in your naïveté you believe that your current company loves you despite how it's treated you, you deserve the ho-hum career it may offer.

But my advice is to refuse the guilt and the sweet talk any counter-offer seeks to lay on you. The momentary flattery just isn't worth it. Decent and well-managed companies don't make counteroffers. Their policies are fair and equitable, and they won't bow to coercion.

The Headhunter's Approach

When you say, "I quit," mean it. It's really your only honorable option.

Reasons NOT to accept "The Counteroffer"

Examine your initial reasons for wanting to make a change; the most common reasons people make career moves are for issues other than money.

1. What type of company do you work for if you have to threaten to resign before they give you what you are worth?
2. It is likely you will return to those same issues if you accept a counteroffer. The same circumstances that now cause you to consider a change will repeat themselves in the future, even if you accept a counteroffer. Short term counteroffers do not address long term concerns and your initial reasons for looking elsewhere for employment.
3. Accepting a counteroffer could change how you are viewed by managers and your peers. Your loyalty will always be in question.
 - a. You will have made your employer aware that you are unhappy.
 - b. You could be targeted for future replacement, passed over for promotion, or be prime target in times of downsizing.
 - c. Your employer may start looking to replace you the day you accept a counteroffer.
 - d. Where is the money for the counter offer coming from? Is it your next raise? All companies have strict wage and salary guidelines that must be followed.
4. Statistics show that if you accept a counteroffer, the probability of voluntarily leaving within six months or being let go within one year is extremely high.
5. You will no longer be considered a team player. Once the word gets out, the relationship that you now enjoy with your co-workers will never be the same. You could lose the personal satisfaction of peer group acceptance.
6. Your present position did not compensate or advance you as you desired before you secured an outside offer, you will mostly likely face the same issue when you're ready for your next advancement.
7. Working for an organization that was not pro-active in keeping and retaining you before you received another offer is not an organization that puts a premium on its employees.
8. Decent and well-managed companies don't make counter offers. Their policies are fair and always equitable.
9. Accepting a counteroffer is an insult to your intelligence and a blow to your personal pride. You did your due diligence, now trust your research, your judgment and the time you put into interviewing; don't be swayed by your manager's talk of change or his downplaying of your new position. It's his job to keep you working for him.
10. Don't be bought with money or future promises of change.

If your boss had to fire you do you think he'd accept your counteroffer? He would say "I'm sorry but you're fired" and that would be it, conversation over. Your resignation should be the same way; you are an "at will" employee. Your employment contract reads you or they can leave the other at any time for any reason; you are firing them. Be to the point, polite, professional and stern.

The Headhunter's Approach

Sample Resignation Letter

Date:

Name:

Title:

Dear _____,

Please accept this letter as my formal resignation as "POSITION" for "COMPANY" to become effective in two weeks, as of _____.

I believe my new position will offer me more challenges and opportunity for advancement as well as allow me to broaden my own experience and knowledge.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and efforts in my training and advancement during the past _____ years. The support and concern shown by you and the rest of the management team has been deeply appreciated.

This decision was not an easy one, and involved many days and hours of thoughtful consideration, particularly with respect to my own plans for my future. Nevertheless, the decision is final.

I leave _____ with no animosity or ill will and wish you and your company continued success. Please do not make this process more difficult than it need be by discussions of the reasons for my decision or whether it can be changed. My main thoughts now are to work as hard as possible to wrap up my affairs here and turn over my responsibilities as you direct.

With sincere thanks and best wishes for the future,

Name

CC: President, Direct Supervisor, Personnel, VP

Enclosures

The Headhunter's Approach

Sample Resignation Letter – waive 2 weeks

Date:

Name:

Title:

Dear _____,

Please accept this letter as my formal resignation as "POSITION" for "COMPANY" to become effective as of _____.

I believe my new position will offer me more challenges and opportunity for advancement as well as allow me to broaden my own experience and knowledge.

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your time and efforts in my training and advancement during the past _____ years. The support and concern shown by you and the rest of the management team has been deeply appreciated.

This decision was not an easy one, and involved many days and hours of thoughtful consideration, particularly with respect to my own plans for my future. Nevertheless, the decision is final.

I leave _____ with no animosity or ill will and wish you and your company continued success. Please do not make this process more difficult than it need be by discussions of the reasons for my decision or whether it can be changed.

My main thoughts now are to work as hard as possible to wrap up my affairs here and turn over my responsibilities as you direct. However, I would like to start my new opportunity as soon as possible. Therefore, I request that you waive my termination notice, if convenient.

With sincere thanks and best wishes for the future,

Name

CC: President, Direct Supervisor, Personnel, VP

Enclosures