



Smarter Career Decisions: Strategies for Neurodivergent Job Seekers

Presented By:

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- Certified Professional Resume Writer (CPRW)
- Senior Certified Professional – Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM-SCP)

ABOUT ME



Indiana Dunes National Park



2008 Youth
Ambassador Training

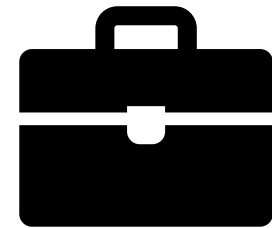


Yale

B.S. Cognitive
Science



NYC



Human Resources



M.S. Human Capital
Management



LEOPOLD TALENT CONSULTING



THE JOB SEARCH PROCESS



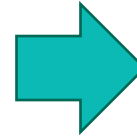
Your Background

- 1:1 deep dive career discussion
- Interests
- Strengths
- Experiences
- Wants & Needs



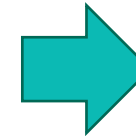
Job Search Strategy

- Resume & LinkedIn optimization
- Job Search Strategy
- Proven templates to save you hours of work



Ongoing Support

- Job Search Assistance
- Interview prep
- Referrals to recruiters
- Group learning

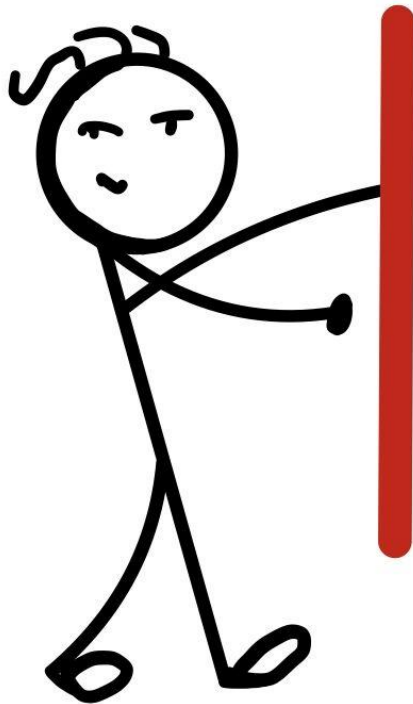


Closing the Deal

- Salary / Offer Negotiation
- Choosing between multiple great offers

CAREER PATHS

It's easier to draw the line through careers looking back.



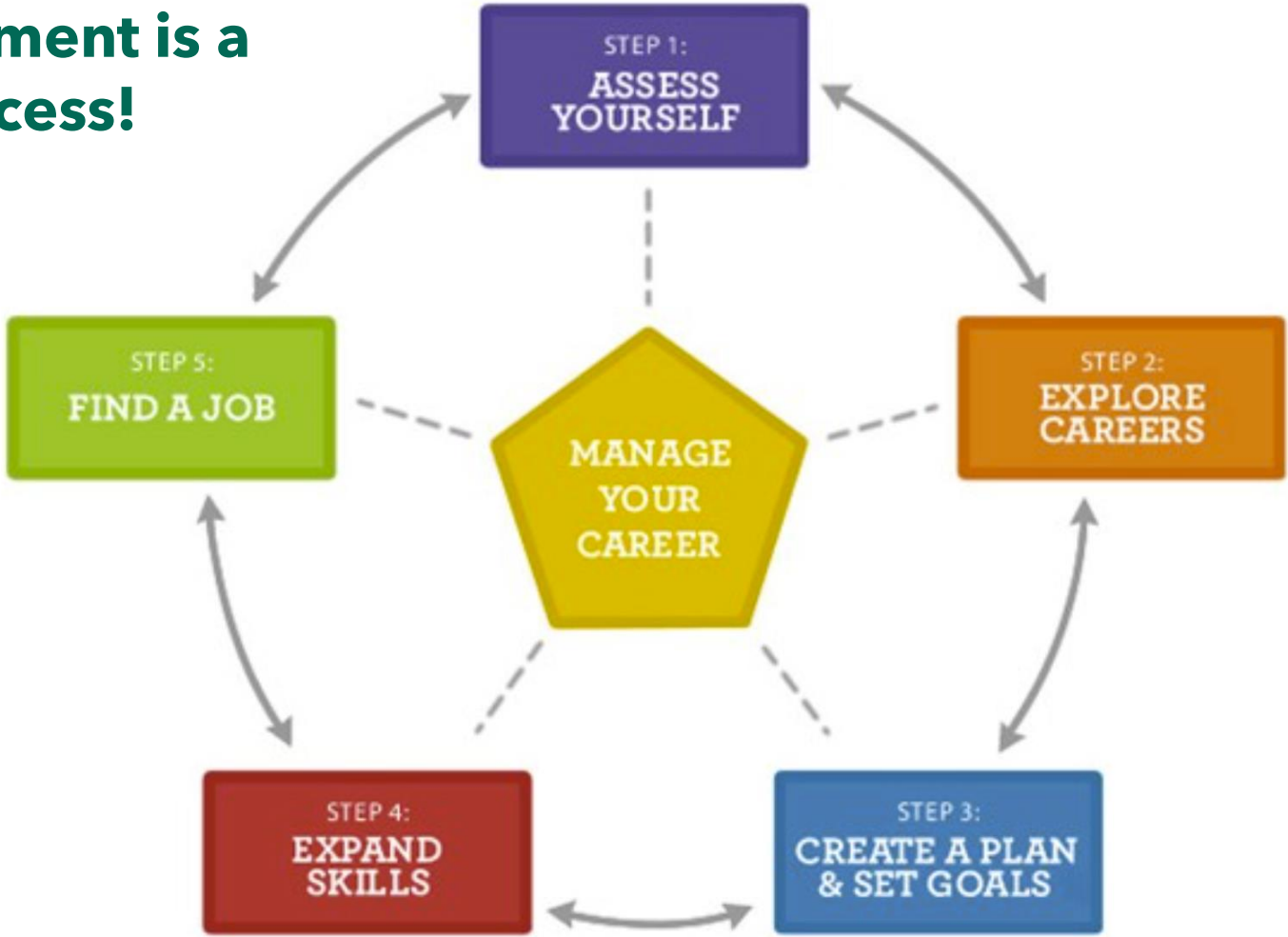
But careers rarely progress in predictable ways!



Steve Safier, PhD - Professor and Director of Human Capital Management Masters Program at Columbia University

CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

Career development is a lifelong process!



Source: www.JobSeekersGuide.org



SELF-REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- What was your favorite class in school?
- If you could spend all day in one class, what class would it be?
- What are some of the most interesting or enjoyable projects you have done? (Think school or volunteering assignments, papers, projects, presentations, extracurricular activities, etc.)
- When do I get so absorbed in an activity that I lose track of time?
- What compliments have you received that make you proud?
- What activities come easier to you compared to other people?
- Do you enjoy working with people? Things? Ideas? Technology? A combination of these?



THE MPS PROCESS

What gives me *Meaning*?

- What provides me with a sense of purpose?

What gives me *Pleasure*?

- What do I enjoy doing?

What are my *Strengths*?

- What am I good at?



THE MPS PROCESS: AN EXAMPLE

Meaning

- Writing
- Music
- Problem solving
- Working with kids
- Political engagement

Pleasure

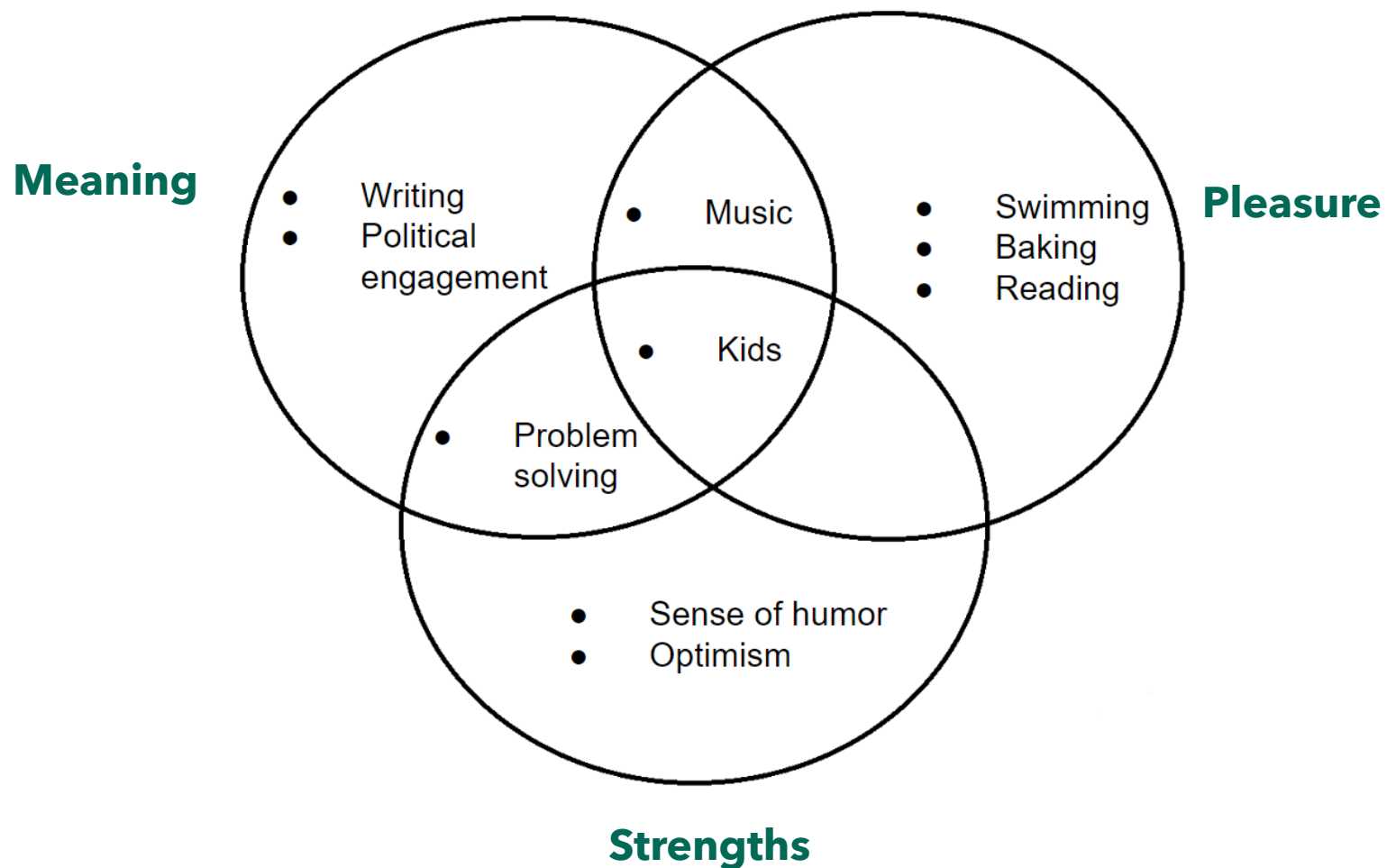
- Swimming
- Baking
- Reading
- Music
- Being around kids

Strengths

- Optimism
- Sense of humor
- Empathy with kids
- Problem solving

- From the book, *Happier*, by Tal Ben-Shahar, PhD

THE MPS PROCESS: AN EXAMPLE



CAREER PLANNING TIPS

- Don't let other peoples' opinions of jobs overly influence you
- Talk with family, friends, and people working in your field of interest
- Think about your likes / dislikes and research careers around them
- Your interests, strengths, and needs may evolve as you go through life - embrace it! 😊
 - Job / career hopping is becoming more common, and expected to continue
- You are taking a BIG step just by being here today!

Mentra.com is a great tool to explore career opportunities, built for neurodivergent professionals!



FINDING OUR CALLING

“The most beautiful fate, the most wonderful good fortune that can happen to any human being, is to be paid for doing that which he passionately loves loves to do”

- Abraham Maslow



WHAT MAKES US HAPPY AT WORK?

1. When our work utilizes a variety of talents and skills
2. When we complete a whole task, from start to finish, rather than play a minor role in the big picture



Richard Hackman, Social and Organizational Psychologist at Harvard University

3. When we feel our work has a significant impact on others



Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Pioneer in Early Research on "Flow"



PSYCHOLOGICAL FLOW

“**Flow**” is the positive mental state of being completely absorbed, focused, and involved in your activities at a certain point in time, as well as deriving enjoyment from being engaged in that activity.

“My mind isn’t wandering. I am not thinking of something else. I am totally involved in what I am doing...The world seems to be cut off from me. I am less aware of myself and my problems.”



“...being completely involved in an activity for its own sake. The ego falls away. Time flies. Every action, movement, and thought follows inevitably from the previous one, like playing jazz. Your whole being is involved, and you’re using your skills to the utmost.”

FINDING “FLOW” AT WORK

- Set clear goals and challenge yourself, even when your job does not require it
- Assume more responsibility and seek higher levels of involvement in work you find interesting
- Take initiative and look for areas where you can contribute more to organizations

- From the book, *Happier*, by Tal Ben-Shahar, PhD



MAXIMIZING OUR STRENGTHS

People who use their strengths every day are...

- More than 3X as likely to report having an excellent quality of life
- 6X more likely to be engaged at work



- Gallup Research Insights

<https://www.gallup.com/workplace/236561/employees-strengths-outperform-don.aspx>

THE HIRING PROCESS

A High Level Overview



Candidate Submits Application

1



Recruiter Reviews Application

2



**First Interview:
Phone Screen
(with Recruiter)**

3



More Interviews

4

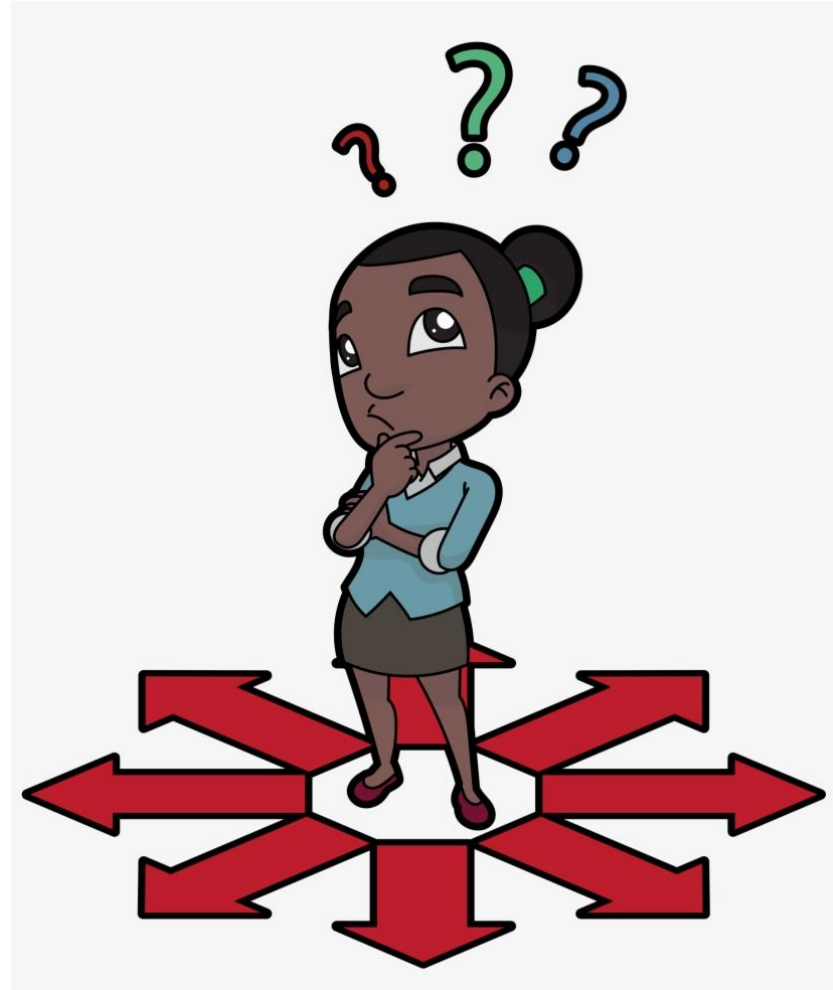


Offer

5

DISCLOSURE

- Varies by person and situation
- Disclosure is YOUR choice - not required
- Practice your disclosure (if needed, write it down)
- “No big deal” attitude
- When to disclose (options):
 - Before interview
 - Right after you tic visibly / audibly
 - When you get hired



ACCOMMODATIONS AT WORK

- You can request accommodations at any time
- Typically requires a doctors note
- You can request many of the same accommodations you got in school (if needed)
- You can also request accommodations in the hiring process, such as
 - Interview questions in writing
 - Additional time
 - Work samples or work assignments

The best part? Requesting accommodations at work is often easier than in school! 😊



JOB SEARCHING

- Job searching can be a tiring, tedious process!
- We can't eliminate the need to apply directly to jobs, BUT some tools can help:
 - Simplify.jobs - free browser extension that will auto-fill many job applications
 - Loopcv.pro - Free version gets you 20 applications per month; auto generates emails to recruiters
 - Lazyapply.com - Basic plan costs \$99; sends 150 job apps daily

JOB SEARCHING SITES

[Linkedin.com](https://www.linkedin.com)

[Indeed.com](https://www.indeed.com)

[Glassdoor.com](https://www.glassdoor.com)

[Google job search engine](https://www.google.com/search?q=job+search+engine) - good for job filters and finding jobs, but check that the job post is still active before adding it to the list

<http://simplify.jobs/>

[BuiltIn.com](https://www.builtin.com) - good for product, tech and startup jobs

[Otta.com](https://www.otta.com) - good for finding jobs not posted elsewhere. You can create an account / fill out the filter questions with candidate's info

[Otta.com](https://www.otta.com) - good for finding jobs not posted elsewhere. You can create an account / fill out the filter questions with candidate's info

[Wayup.com/](https://www.wayup.com/) - good for early to mid career professionals

[Themuse.com](https://www.themuse.com)

[Trylander.com](https://www.trylander.com)

[Wellfound.com](https://www.wellfound.com) - good for startups, tech

[Remoteworksource.com](https://www.remoteworksource.com)

[Idealist.org](https://www.idealists.org) - Great for finding jobs in public interest, social justice, and nonprofit work

[Internships.com](https://www.internships.com)



JOB TRACKING

- No one-size-fits-all method (I personally use Microsoft OneNote and Excel)
- You don't need to track *every* job you apply to unless you choose to; many people just track interviews
- When you get an interview, document this info:
 - Organization Name
 - Date & Time of Interview (add it to your calendar asap)
 - Contacts / Interviewer Name and Email
 - Link to Job Description (also save it externally in case it gets taken down)
 - What you like about the job / organization
- You can download a free job tracker spreadsheet here: <https://www.tealhq.com/tools/job-tracker>
- Other free tools for staying organized are JibberJobber and Huntr

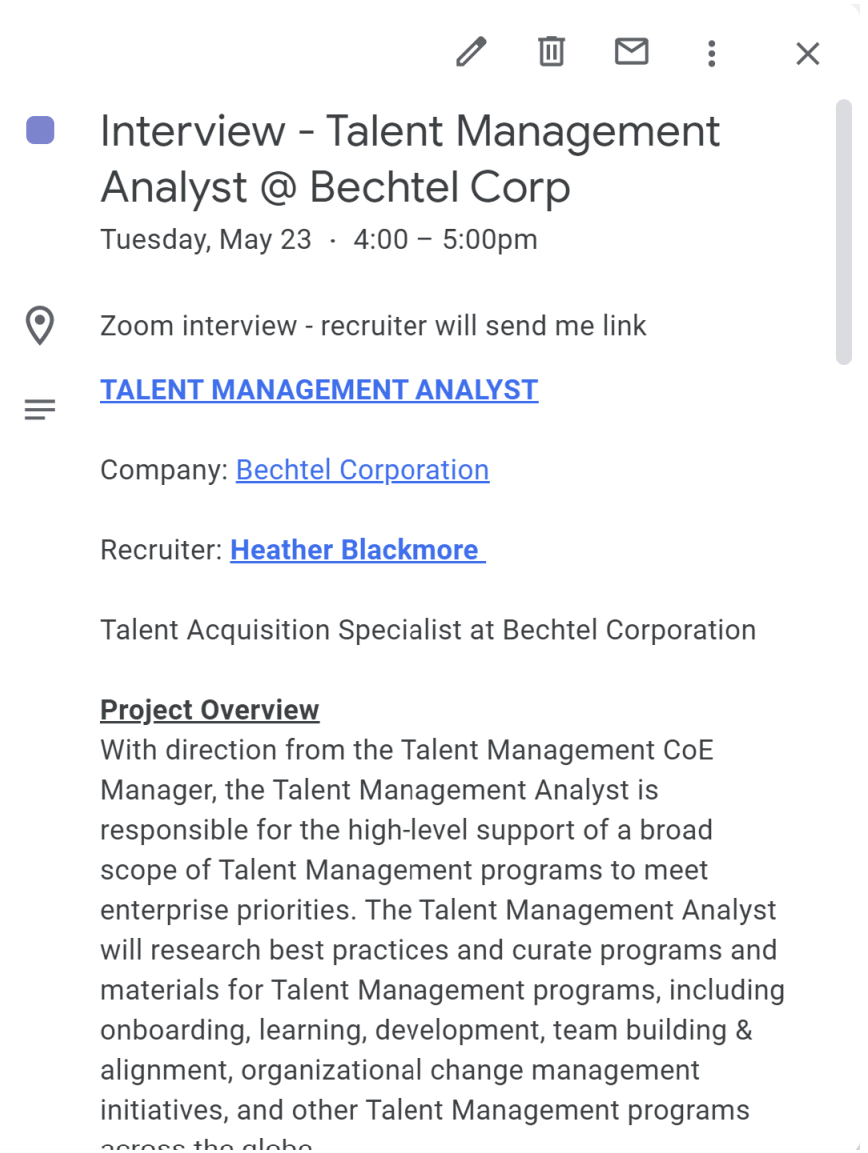


JOB TRACKING

I try to add interviews to my Google calendar right away to block off the time

I use the description section to document:

- Job title
- Company / organization name
- Recruiter's name recruiter's name
- Job description
- Any questions I have about the job



The screenshot shows a Google Calendar event titled "Interview - Talent Management Analyst @ Bechtel Corp" scheduled for Tuesday, May 23, from 4:00 to 5:00pm. The location is "Zoom interview - recruiter will send me link". The job title is "TALENT MANAGEMENT ANALYST" at "Bechtel Corporation", with the recruiter being "Heather Blackmore". The job description is titled "Project Overview" and describes the role of a Talent Management Analyst, including responsibilities like researching best practices, curating programs, and managing onboarding, learning, and organizational change.



RESUME TIPS

- Be careful with fancy templates (e.g., no images, graphs, fancy formatting)
- Black/white or use colors minimally and thoughtfully
- To save space, you can remove words like: the, their, a, an
- Don't say I / he / she (it is implied)
- Use STRONG action verbs!
- List your City, State...not full address
- Include a Skills section (good for keywords)
- One page for college students and recent grads

YOUR NAME
TITLE 1 | TITLE 2

City, ST | Email Address | Phone Number | LinkedIn URL

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY
Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines of professional summary here. Three to four lines here.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here
✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here
✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here	✓ Add Skill Here

CAREER HIGHLIGHTS
Highlight Title: One line of detail about the skill or experience we are highlighting here. Just enough detail for one line here.
Highlight Title: One line of detail about the skill or experience we are highlighting here. Just enough detail for one line here.
Highlight Title: One line of detail about the skill or experience we are highlighting here. Just enough detail for one line here.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Job Title, Company Name, City, ST | Start Date – End Date
One line of context about the job here. One line of context about the job here. One line of context about the job here.

- Two-line bullet point here. Two-line bullet point here. Two-line bullet point here. Two-line bullet point here. Two-line bullet point here. Two-line bullet point here. Two-line bullet point here. Two-line bullet point here.
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TAILORING YOUR RESUME TO A JOB

Robin Banks

Learning & Development Specialist

New York City Area | (212) 212-1212 | RobinBanks1@gmail.com | linkedin.com/in/robin-banks1

Dedicated L&D Specialist FP&A Leader with 6 years of experience creating and executing training programs for sales professionals. Demonstrated ability to collaborate across diverse cultures to drive results. Proven experience leading cross-functional teams in design and facilitation of targeted learning programs.

RELEVANT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Improved sales efficiency by 31% for new hires through revamped onboarding training
- Trained and mentored 40+ new and existing account executives on sales strategies
- Spearheaded and led rollout of new LMS resulting in 20% higher efficiency

PROFESSIONAL SKILLS & COMPETENCIES

Project Management	Competency Modeling	Change Management	Taleo
Tableau / Data Visualization	Needs Assessments	Training Design	eLearning Software
Design Methodologies	Event Planning	Organizational Development	Training Assessments

Paste the job title you are applying to

Use keywords from the job description

Add skills from the job description



Spend 2-4 minutes tailoring your resume to the job;
longer if you really like the job

COVER LETTERS

Your Name

Title

Address

XXX-XXX-XXXX – email@email.com

Date

Company Name
Department Name
Department Address
City, PR., Postal Code

Dear Hiring Manager,

I am excited to submit my application for this **[JOB TITLE]** position at **[COMPANY NAME]**. I found this job posting online and after comparing the responsibilities to my own skills and interests, I jumped at the chance to apply. I believe my **[#]** years' experience in **[INDUSTRY]** have allowed me to develop the critical skills needed to excel in this role.

In my resume, as well as the page below, I have taken the time to highlight some of my specific experiences that have prepared me to be a strong contributor to your team in this **[JOB TITLE]** position.

- | | |
|------------------|---|
| Key Skill | ✓ Two line bullet point here. Two line bullet point here. Two line bullet point here. Two line bullet point here. Two line bullet point here. |
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| Key Skill | ✓ Two line bullet point here. Two line bullet point here. Two line bullet point here. Two line bullet point here. Two line bullet point here. |

Finally, I am thrilled at the prospect of joining such an impressive organization. **[COMPANY NAME]** has a great reputation and strong values that closely align with my own. I would be grateful for the chance to contribute to your future success. Thank you very much for reviewing my application and I look forward to further communication.

Sincerely,

Your Name

FIRST LAST

Job Title

City, State | (777) 222-3333 | EmailAddress@gmail.com | [LinkedIn.com/in/Profile/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/Profile/)

(note: you can match this heading to your resume for personal branding)

First Last Name
Title
Company
Address 1
Address 2

Dear Mr./Ms. First Last:

{Capture the attention of your reader. What about your research or experience with the company makes you interested in their mission, brand, products, services, values, culture? What recent press release shows something positive you're excited about or aligned with? Make this section about the company first. Again, it's not what do you want, but what excites you about this company?} For this/these reasons, I would be delighted to be considered for **[Company's]** **[Title]** opening.

{Now talk about you. What are your overall background/skills/strengths/talents that align with the job description? Be sure you highlight why you would be a great match based on the job description.}

Below is an analysis of a few requirements that match my background: {Down below you will want to pull 3-4 bullets from the job requirements that aren't so obvious from the job description. On the left, you will copy what they requested verbatim, on the right, give an example. Remember. Show, don't tell.}

You Want:

- **[Requirement 1 you feel strong in: Strong analytical skills.]**
- **[Requirement 2 you feel strong in: Three years experience in managing remedial investigation and/or remedial action project]**
- **[Requirement 3 you feel strong in: Strong communication and leadership skills]**

I Bring:

- **In every annual department report, I am tasked with using advanced Excel skills to mine through extensive data. I calculate percentages and use my analytical skills to check for accuracy and build recommendations from findings. These reports have been distributed to the leadership team.**
- **I have 7+ years in the planning division and was tasked with identifying flooding issues and areas of need for flood protection improvement through drainage investigations, studies, and research.**
- **I have 7+ years in the planning division and was tasked with identifying flooding issues and areas of need for flood protection improvement through drainage investigations, studies, and research.**

I am excited about **[Company]** and would appreciate the opportunity to discuss my experience and value that I can offer you as your next **[Title]**. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

[First Last]

PROACTIVE OUTREACH TO RECRUITERS



When you apply to a job, it can be helpful to send a message to the recruiter or hiring manager

INTERVIEW PREP

Before your interview, gather some basic information about the job and the organization

- How many people work there?
- What are the main products / services?
- Where is it located? Headquartered? Office locations?
- Who are its customers / clients?
- What challenges does it face?
- How could you excel in this role?



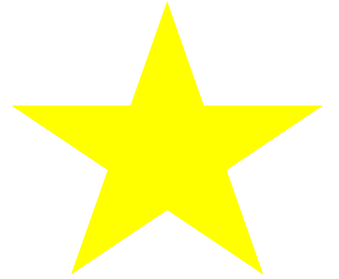
INTERVIEW TIPS

- Don't disparage former colleagues or employers; avoid negativity and cynicism in general
- If discussing challenges, emphasize how you learned / benefitted from the situation
- Confidence is great. Arrogance is not
- A little enthusiasm goes a long way
- If you are nervous, tell the interviewer! It's ok 😊
- Pause for 2-3 seconds before answering. Reflect on the question before answering
- Focus on the interviewer and carefully listen to questions
- Maintain eye contact where possible
- Come prepared with questions to ask the interviewer



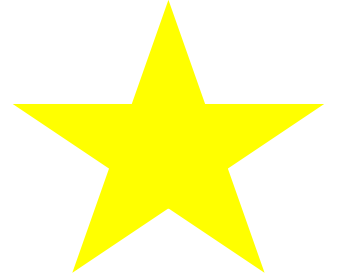
THE STAR INTERVIEW METHOD

“Tell me about a time when...”



- 1. Situation:** Set the scene by briefly describing the situation, challenge, or event you faced
- 2. Task:** Explain what your responsibilities were in that situation. What role did you play?
- 3. Action:** Describe what steps you took to overcome the challenge or address the situation
- 4. Result:** Share what you achieved through your actions

STAR INTERVIEW METHOD: EXAMPLE



“Describe a time you successfully persuaded someone to see things your way.”

Situation: I recently led a brainstorming session. The purpose of this session was to create a brand awareness campaign for a product my company was launching.

Task: One of my teammates and I disagreed on what direction we should take for the campaign. I wanted to focus more on maximizing social media presence, and he wanted to go the brand partnership route.

Action: I asked my colleague to have a one-on-one meeting with me. I asked him to share his ideas and perspective. After listening and offering constructive criticism and feedback, I shared my ideas.

Result: The conversation helped me see blind spots in my strategy and improve it. I also persuaded my coworker to get on board with my strategy by explaining its rationale. As a result, I merged our ideas and created a successful brand awareness campaign. Our social media engagement and website traffic both saw an increase of over 40%.

INTERVIEW THANK YOU

Hello (NAME),

Thank you again for taking the time to meet with me today. I thoroughly enjoyed our conversation about the (JOB NAME) role and appreciated learning more about working with you and your team. In particular, I love that (INSERT SOMETHING UNIQUE, WHAT YOU LIKE ABOUT THE JOB, A COMMONALITY YOU HAVE WITH THE INTERVIEWER, ETC.)

It sounds like a rewarding role, especially given the opportunities for collaboration and advancement. I think my master's in marketing and marketing experience would make me an excellent candidate for the role.

I look forward to discussing this opportunity with you more. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need additional information.

Thank you,
YOUR NAME



GHOSTED AFTER INTERVIEW? SEND THIS AFTER 1 WEEK

Hello (NAME),

Thank you again for taking the time to speak with me about (JOB TITLE). I just want to re-iterate my excitement for the role. It's a great match of my strengths and background, and I'd love to bring value to your team any way I can.

When you have a moment, would you mind sharing the next steps in the process?

If you'd like any additional information to support my candidacy, please don't hesitate to ask.

Thank you and all the best,
YOUR NAME



INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEW REQUESTS

Hi (NAME),

I hope you are fantastic.

I am a rising senior at (XYZ University majoring in ABC). I came across your profile while searching for professionals in (CAREER FIELD) in (CITY). The work you do looks similar to my ideal career path after college.

Would you be open to a quick chat? I'd love to learn more about your job and how you got started. Any advice you can offer for a rising professional in (CAREER FIELD) would be highly appreciated!

Thank you and all the best,
YOUR NAME



THANK YOU!



You can reach me at:

Michael@leopoldtalent.com
LeopoldTalent.com