DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
AND EMPLOYMENT COMPREHENSIVE JOB SEARCH IN SACRAMENTO

A Project

Presented to the faculty of the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation,
School Psychology, and Deaf Studies
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Submitted in partial satisfaction of
the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Counseling
(Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling)

by

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
AND EMPLOYMENT COMPREHENSIVE JOB SEARCH IN SACRAMENTO

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Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation,
School Psychology, and Deaf Studies
ABSTRACT

of

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION AND EMPLOYMENT COMPREHENSIVE JOB SEARCH IN SACRAMENTO

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Statement of Problem

The author encountered job ready veterans who did not know how to conduct a job search in the private sector. The lack of a systematic job-search training program led to the development of this guide. It focuses on skills, informational interviewing and networking with an emphasis on a full-time organized job search campaign.

Sources of Data

The primary sources are peer-reviewed Journal articles, and the writings of various authors who have worked in the career counseling/job search arenas and have decades of experience assisting, coaching, and advising individuals in their job search efforts.

Conclusions Reached

The resulting guide lays the foundational groundwork to improve the job search efforts of veterans with service-connected disabilities in Sacramento, California.
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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

The seeds for this project go back many years when this author initially became interested in career change issues while making the transition from a lifetime in the military, first as an Air Force dependent and then on active duty with the Air Force (with two brothers in the Air Force flying C-130s), to the civilian world. That transition coincided with a Master of Arts degree in Human Relations with a specialization in Career Change from the Universality of Oklahoma, which ultimately led to employment as a Job Developer and then as a Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor for 25 years in the Workers’ Compensation system in Sacramento, California. The experience of assisting injured workers in their efforts to identify a new job/career goal and then obtain suitable gainful employment has been invaluable, and has helped to formulate the foundation on which this project was undertaken.

The current job-search program at the Department of Veterans Affairs, [VA] Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment [(VR&E] office in Sacramento is inadequate according to its director, Norman E. Corson, Ed.D. During a meeting with Dr. Corson and this intern on August 23, 2011, Dr. Corson stated that he was not satisfied with the current job placement arrangement, and would like to see the implementation of a more comprehensive program. This program is designed to meet that need. The SacVETS (Sacramento Veterans) job-search guide was developed to provide a strong proactive step-by-step program for veterans with service connected disabilities in Sacramento to secure the job goal for which they had been trained.

SacVETS will consist of two parts. One part will consist of a comprehensive guide that will cover the major facets of the job-search process. Broad categories will include the traditional headings of job-search methods, skills identification, interviewing skills, resume development and cover letters, and networking. However, the guide will go beyond those general categories.
The guide will also provide forms and materials that the veteran will be able to use throughout the job-search process. The author also envisions a short 1-week intensive training program to ensure that every participant understands the necessity and value of the SacVETS program, and can conduct an effective job-search campaign.

This will not be a simple process of handing out a job-search guide and wishing the veteran well. This program is designed to provide veterans with effective training so they can conduct a comprehensive job-search campaign. This training is designed to be conducted in groups as well as one-to-one settings. It will address aspects of the job search, with the rationale provided for each of the activities associated with it. The veterans’ progress will be monitored and tracked to ensure success, and there will be a support system available to the veterans throughout the entirety of their job-search experience.

**Statement of the Problem**

The problem is that the job-search process in its present form in the Sacramento Department of Veterans Affairs Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment [VR&E] office is inefficient (Corson, personal communication, August 23, 2011). These sentiments were echoed by all the vocational rehabilitation counselors [VRC] in the Sacramento and McClellan VR&E offices in discussions this author had while completing his internship in those offices during the Fall semester 2011.

The VR&E VRCs assist veterans to return to suitable employment, with the vast majority of veterans obtaining training in order to acquire new marketable skills to qualify for entry level jobs. The VRCs are contractually obligated by a Memorandum of Understanding between the Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans Affairs to refer all veterans to the Employment Development Apartment [EDD] for job placement services as soon as they are deemed to be job ready. A veteran is considered job ready upon graduation from his or her
An additional problem is the simple fact that the VRCs do not have enough time to provide job-search assistance to their veterans. The primary reason is that the VRCs carry a caseload that does not allow sufficient time for job-search assistance; most have twice the number of veterans on their caseloads than can be adequately managed (Corson, personal communication, August 23, 2011).

The recently graduated veteran is introduced to the on-site EDD Vocational Rehabilitation Vocational Employment Service Specialist [VR/VESS] as soon as the veteran is job ready. Chuck Carter is a VR/VESS, and he maintains a full-time office in the VR&E office in Sacramento. At the time of the referral, he and the counselor make a determination regarding employment services that will be provided at one of the local EDD offices. These services are: Hardcopy Resume Workshop, Interviewing Skills, Dress for Success, Job-Search Hints and Processes, and/or Use of the Internet for Job Leads (Glenn Rapoza, VRC, personal conversation, October 13, 2011). The veteran is then assigned to the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program/Local Veterans Employment Representative [DVOP/LVER] (referred to as the DeeVOP) at the appropriate EDD office.

According to Carter, EDD does some active job opening solicitation for veterans, but most of the job leads come primarily from the Internet (Carter, personal communication October 13, 2011). Statistically, this is the least efficient job-search method according to Bolles (2011). DVOPs do provide notification to veterans regarding job announcements/openings obtained from employers who contact them directly. DVOPs maintain some statistics regarding job-search efforts and provide the VRC with a monthly report (Chapter 31 Monthly Progress Report for the Month of ____). This report reflects statistical data depicting the efforts and progress of the veteran and EDD. Some of that information is self-reported to EDD by the veteran. The six
categories included in the report are:

- Number of job developer contacts,
- number of EDD employer incentive contacts,
- number of job interviews attended by veteran,
- number of EDD job referrals,
- number of job contacts initiated by veteran, and
- number of job searches conducted by EDD staff.

This report is sent to the VR/VESS who submits it to the VRC. Based on this report, the VRC then makes a determination as to whether or not the veteran is making a "reasonable" effort to find employment. This is a critical determination in the early phases of the job search because the veteran can be provided with up to an additional 2 months of Employment Adjustment Allowance [EAA] pay while looking for work. However, it is contingent upon the determination by the VRC that the veteran is making a "reasonable" effort to find employment. There is no definition for "reasonable," it is a subjective determination made by the counselor. The veteran is required to continue to maintain contact and provide the EDD representative with his or her monthly input with the number of interviews attended and the number of job contacts initiated. The DVOP continues to submit those monthly reports to the VR/VESS.

In addition to the services provided by EDD, some veterans are provided with referrals to outside services to assist in resume development, interviewing and job search, the efficacy of which has been questioned by Corson (personal communication, November 1, 2011), and the other counselors. Currently, there is no standardized job-search program for all veterans, and many are left to their own devices. In fact, some veterans go for several months with no contact from EDD or their counselor, and may end up without any services for as long as 12 months after completing their training (Rapoza, personal communication, November 1, 2011).
**Author's Philosophy**

While waiting in line to pay for soft drinks for the office during the week of April 1, 1985, (first week on the job), this author found a card which stated: "Anyone with Enthusiasm Will Outperform a Genius Who Has None." That is the cornerstone of this authors’ philosophy. It goes hand-in-hand with Bernard Haldane's (1974) determination that, those who enjoy their work, do it better. Jobseekers do better when they know what they are facing and plan for it effectively. They need to understand themselves better, know exactly what they are looking for, why they are looking for it, what they offer, how to convey that they are the best candidate, and all the other nuances associated with effective job search. They must know their abilities and skills--all of them, not just work skills--technical skills, leadership skills, and transferable skills, but motivated abilities and skills as well. They must understand the tremendous significance and importance of informational interviewing and how that is associated with networking. They need a plan that they can follow every single day, not just when it is convenient. They need to understand how difficult their task is, and they need to understand how to develop a support system. Without this understanding and comprehension of how to go about conducting an effective job search, they will face almost certain failure. Developing a support system to complement a structured plan should resolve that issue. (Bolles, 2011; Haldane, 1974; Krannich, 2005)

Ideally, the most effective job-search campaign begins before the job search campaign. What that confusing statement means is that job search begins with research before the decision is made on the job objective. It includes using the phenomenal resources of the internet in addition to other resources. The most significant resource of all is people. They have information that is invaluable to those who are exploring employment options. SacVETS will incorporate all of these concepts to ensure that at whatever stage the veteran is in, he or she will be in a position to
maximize his or her ultimate goal of obtaining an appropriate job in a timely fashion and with confidence that they are proceeding in the right direction.

Definition of Terms

Approach motivation

Approach motivation is that motivation which is directed toward positive stimuli (van Dam & Menting, 2012).

Avoidance motivation

Avoidance motivation represents that motivation which is less positive and exhibits avoiding negative stimuli (van Dam & Menting, 2012).

Chapter 31

The Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment [VR&E] VetSuccess Program is authorized by Congress under Title 38, Code of Federal Regulations, Chapter 31. It is sometimes referred to as the Chapter 31 program. The VetSuccess program assists veterans with service-connected disabilities to prepare for, find, and keep suitable jobs. For veterans with service-connected disabilities so severe that they cannot immediately consider work, VetSuccess offers services to improve their ability to live as independently as possible. (VetSuccess, 2012)

Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program [DVOP]

DVOP specialists provide a case-management approach that individually tailors training and job placement opportunities for veterans with service-connected disabilities or other severe employability barriers. As employees of the state, DVOPs are generally stationed in state employment service offices, but they may be found at regional offices, medical centers, or veterans' outreach centers of the Department of Veterans' Affairs, state or county veterans' service offices, and military installations. (US Department of Veterans
Employment Assistance Allowance (EAA) pay

A veteran who completes a period of rehabilitation and reaches the point of employability will be paid an employment adjustment allowance for a period of two months at the full-time subsistence allowance rate for the type of program the veteran was last pursuing.


Employment Handicap [EH]

An impairment of a veteran's ability to prepare for, obtain or retain employment consistent with his or her abilities, aptitudes and interests. The impairment must result in substantial part from a service-connected disability. For veterans within the 12 year basic period of eligibility and rated at 20 % or more, a finding of employment handicap results in entitlement to VR&E services. (VetSuccess, 2012)

Entitled

Entitlement to services is established if the veteran has an employment handicap and is within his or her 12-year basic period of eligibility and has a 20 % or greater service-connected disability rating. “If the service connected disability rating is less than 20%, or if the Veteran is beyond the 12-year basic period of eligibility, then a serious employment handicap must be found to establish entitlement to VR&E VetSuccess services.

(VetSuccess, 2012)

Hidden job market

Job openings are either advertised or not. Advertised jobs comprise approximately 15% of available jobs at any one time. The hidden job market refers to those jobs which are not advertised, comprising in excess of 80% (Krannich, 2010).

Informational interview
Informational interviews are designed to assist the job seeker to acquire critical information, advice, and referrals so that they are fully informed before actually applying for a position (Krannich, 2005).

*Local Veterans Employment Program [LVER]*

LVERs conduct active outreach programs with employers, community and veterans organizations, unions, and local counseling and social services agencies to ensure that veterans know about and receive the services for which they are eligible. They work with veterans to place them in federally funded employment and training programs. They also assist veterans in developing job interviewing and resume writing skills. They help veterans conduct a productive job search and access job listings through electronic data bases, including Americas Job Bank (DVA, 2012b).

*Motivated abilities and skills [MAS]*

Motivated abilities and skills are identified by analyzing an individuals’ achievements to determine what that individual does well and enjoys doing. By reviewing the achievements and identifying the abilities and skills that are replicated, a pattern develops which clearly illustrates which are in fact the *motivated* abilities and skills (Krannich & Krannich, 2005).

*Networking*

“The exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business” (Merriam-Webster Online, 2012, n.p.).

*Serious Employment Handicapped [SEH]*

A significant impairment of a veteran's ability to prepare for, obtain or retain employment consistent with his or her abilities, aptitudes and interests. The SEH must result in substantial part from a service-connected disability. For veterans rated at 10% and
veterans beyond their 12 year basic period of eligibility, the finding of an SEH is necessary to establish entitlement to VR&E services (VetSuccess, 2012).

*Service-Connected Disability*

A disabling condition that has resulted from or was aggravated by an injury or illness while the veteran was serving on active duty in the military (VetSuccess, 2012).

*Vocational rehabilitation counselor [VRC]*

A vocational rehabilitation and employment service rehabilitation professional employee or contractor who provides or coordinates a wide range of rehabilitation services which might include counseling, training, rehabilitation, and employment services (VetSuccess, 2012).

**Limitations of the Project**

Time: This program is designed to be effective for the foreseeable future. The shelf life will be determined by the participants, both job seekers and those assisting them. It should be viewed with a critical eye to eliminate or change that which is demonstrated to be ineffective, and replaced with demonstrable improvements. Counselors and employment coordinators should be constantly looking for areas ripe for improvement, and implementing those improvements.

Scope: This program is designed specifically for private sector jobs. However, some of the information is universal, applicable to any job opening, public or private.

Geography: The information contained in this guide is not restricted to the Sacramento region. Nor is it restricted to California. It contains information that can be effectively utilized in any region in the United States. The only issues affecting geography are those relating to urban versus rural settings. It is more applicable in an urban setting, simply because of the greater availability of employers.

Population: The guide is intended to be used by veterans with service-connected
disabilities who are receiving benefits and services through their local VR&E offices, and their counselors and employment coordinators.

SacVETS is designed to expand significantly the effectiveness of job-search efforts undertaken by veterans with disabilities who have completed training programs under Chapter 31. It should reduce stress and the time that it takes the veteran to obtain employment.

This project is designed to assist veterans with disabilities who are serviced by the Sacramento VA office of VR&E to find employment in their field. Job search for those who have finished training programs encompasses two primary sectors: Public employment and private sector employment. Public employment is principally the federal government, but includes state and local government employment. Private sector employment is everything else. SacVETS is limited in scope to private sector jobs. Much of the information in SacVETS is also applicable to government employment jobseekers and can be beneficial to them. However, SacVETS is directed strictly to finding and acquiring employment in the private sector. Future projects could expand the job-search efforts to include and address the government sector.

The program is educational and directive in nature, and will require active engagement by participating veterans of the Sacramento VR&E office. However, one size does not fit all. It cannot be all things to all people, and there will be some veterans who may not wish to participate. Every effort will be made to meet the needs of all veterans engaged in job-search efforts in the private sector.

Author bias emanates from previously working in the Workers’ Compensation arena as a job developer and vocational rehabilitation counselor for 25 years. Because of this author's close connection with the military, there is author bias toward all veterans.

**Organization of the Project**

Chapter 1 consists of an introduction, the background of the problem, a statement of the
problem, definition of terms, limitations of the problem, and organization of the project. This is followed by Chapter 2 which incorporates a review of the literature regarding the historical development of the job development field, and the services provided to veterans with disabilities. It includes textbooks, manuals, workbooks, videos, website materials, PowerPoint presentations, and peer-reviewed journal articles.

Chapter 3 addresses the methodology employed for research. Chapter 4 provides the summary and recommendations. The Appendix is comprised of the Veterans Job Search Guide. All references are contained in the concluding Reference section.
Chapter 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter addresses the literature review for this project which includes: Peer-reviewed journals, books and related materials from the author's personal library on career change and job search; texts from previous courses; websites devoted to job search; websites addressing veterans transition to civilian life; disabilities; and master's projects from Vocational Rehabilitation students at California State University, Sacramento. This project is undertaken with the understanding that the targeted audience and end users are veterans with documented service-connected disabilities receiving services through the Department of Veteran Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment offices in Sacramento, California. As such, these veterans will have completed a training program and are ready to begin their job search. Some veterans may have never had to conduct a job search, and may be unaware of how to do so effectively. The major topics which will be covered are: Organization and planning, time management, maintaining your sanity, self-assessment, job-search methods, informational interviewing, networking, resumes, interviewing, and follow-up.

Stress, Fear and How It Affects Mental Health

Moorhouse and Caltabiano (2007) reported that unemployment ranked as one of the top 10 stress inducers. They further indicated that the accumulated difficulties facing the unemployed can be generated due to poor job-search skills, extended unemployment, financial difficulties, and a poor labor market. Under these circumstances, long-term unemployment increases, and with it depression sets in and has a tendency to increase. Compounding the problem, job-search persistence depends on emotional stability.

Psychological health plays a significant factor during job search. In their mega-analytic
study regarding psychological and physical well-being during employment, McKee-Ryan, et.al. (2005) documented that well-being declines for individuals who find themselves unemployed, but improves as they find new employment. Unemployment raises the stress levels relating to worry and uncertainty, as well as financial, family, and marital difficulties. Structured time use plays a significant factor for those who find themselves unemployed. They tend to evaluate their job loss more negatively which may reduce well-being. Those with a more positive outlook for future reemployment tend to have higher well-being. Their research reflected lower mental health for unemployed workers due to the stressful experience of looking for a job and facing inevitable rejections. Being unemployed for longer lengths of time can cause a decrease in both psychological and physical well-being. The researchers indicate that job clubs or support groups could boost confidence and help reduce anxiety and stress.

Guindon and Smith (2002) reported that for those who identify strongly to what they do for a living, unemployment elevates their stress levels and can lower self-esteem. Skills-building helps to increase a sense of competency which can be effective in raising self-esteem.

In their research, van Dam and Menting (2012) documented that the extent of job-search efforts both in intensity and effort was directly attributable to the individuals’ outlook. Those with a positive expectation of finding appointment have an approach motivation demonstrated by higher job-search effort. Approach motivation is directed toward positive stimuli. Those who are less positive about their job-search prospects exhibit an avoidance motivation, avoiding negative stimuli. If one expects to find employment, the job-search effort will have higher intensity and greater quantity (time devoted to job-search activities). Conversely, a negative outlook results in decreased effort, avoidance of that which is stressful. The authors emphasize the importance of determining the motivational level of job seekers in order to provide appropriate supports and to develop interventions to improve motivation and thus increase the job-search intensity and
activity levels. Assistance in helping to develop or improve competency in the job-search process results in raising self-esteem when that includes resume preparation and interviewing skills. In addition, they emphasize identifying accomplishments as a key ingredient in this process.

Vinokur and Schul (2002) demonstrated that elevated depressive symptomatology had a negative impact on the unemployed. Peck and Kirkbride (2001) postulated in their article, Why Businesses Don't Employ People with Disabilities, that the underlying reason is fear. They identified four separate fear factors: Cost associated with hiring, additional supervision and loss of productivity, inability to fire for low productivity, and the perception of taking on damaged goods. In their study regarding whether or not to conceal a disabling condition, Allen and Carson (2003) also identified reluctance to hire based on fears of increased costs, lower production, or decreased workplace morale. Most of their subjects indicated a preference for concealing a disability. There were four sub-themes regarding concealment which included preserving self-esteem, avoiding emotionally hurtful responses, circumventing negative employer attitudes, and a cultural norm not to complain (p. 28). They concluded by indicating the decision to disclose or not disclose is ultimately left to the individual. However, the rehabilitation counselor has the responsibility to address this issue directly with each client to discuss the pros and cons as well as the ramifications.

Allen and Carlson (2003) submitted a paper based on qualitative research regarding whether or not to disclose a disabling condition. Some disabilities are not self-evident. Due to the fear of possible discrimination, many chose to conceal the disability from potential employers. "Disclosure was perceived as jeopardizing access to and retention of employment" (p. 20). However, the decision regarding disclosure must be made by the individual. Vocational rehabilitation counselors should assist their clients to understand the ramifications regarding disclosure, and to work through the process which includes the ability to market one's self and to
be able to communicate effectively with supervisors and customers. Even though legislation is in place to protect workers with disabilities, discrimination is still a reality. Therefore, the decision to disclose should be undertaken with caution.

Cheek (2003) stated, “I can't stress enough to my clients--if employers cannot see the disability--AND if there is no need for accommodation--DON'T TELL!!!” (p. 1). Cheek goes on to state that if the disability is visible, it is imperative to bring it up early in the interview, discuss it, invite questions, and dispense with it as a hindrance regarding one's ability to perform the essential functions of the job. Otherwise, not addressing it can cause it to be the primary factor on whether or not to hire.

The economy has made the job-hunt more difficult with high unemployment. Career coach Christine Bolzan stated, “The hardest part of the job is keeping clients motivated. It's a daunting and often depressing task to find a job in this economy” (as cited in Powell, 2009, p. 1).

Krannich (2010) states, “The number one problem most job seekers encounter and have difficulty dealing with is rejections” (p. 40). He further states, "One of the most important ways to minimize rejections is to develop an active networking campaign involving informational interviews - interviews you conduct to get information, advice, and referrals" (p. 50). Rejection is also one of the main reasons job seekers give up. Bolles (2011), Krannich & Krannich (2005), and Ireland (2012) recommend joining or forming a support group or job club. McKee-Ryan et al. (2005) reported that membership in a job club or support group would probably boost individual confidence and help reduce anxiety. Krannich (2005) stated that some career counselors report that active membership in a job club has the potential of cutting the job search by 50%, and Bolles (2011) reports a high success rate for job club participants. In her article on networking and support, Hansen (2012) stated, “A job club...also serves as a support group. The empathy and encouragement provided by supportive peers can be particularly uplifting in times
of economic recession” (p. 1). She goes on to report that the mutual support and encouragement found in a job club are what tend to tie people together. “Those who are shy, insecure, or ashamed of having lost a job can get help from other job club members in overcoming these mental roadblocks” (p. 1). Procrastinators would benefit from the structure and peer pressure.

**Job Search Methods**

So, what is a job club and how is it different from a support group? Nathan H. Azrin and Victoria A. Besalel developed the concept of the Job Club and published their *Job Club Counselor's Manual, A Behavioral Approach to Vocational Counseling* in 1980. It is the seminal work upon which all job clubs derive some guidance. The job club is utilized worldwide in variations. It is a method for aiding the unemployed to obtain direction, assistance and support in their job search. Bolles (2011) stated job club participants reported a success rate of 84%.

Many formal job clubs are usually supported by organizations such as the 40-Plus Club whose members are 40 years old or older. Job clubs are usually more formal in their structure and are often led by trainers. In his research report titled Benefits of Job Clubs for Executive Job Seekers: A Tale of Hares and Tortoises published in the *Journal of Employment Counseling*, Christopher T. Kondo (2009) reported:

> Job club members benefited from group learning, increased accountability, networking opportunities, emotional support, helping other members, and enhanced understanding of the context of their experiences. Job club members also enjoyed lower levels of frustration with the search process . . . and devoted more time on average to job-search activities (p. 27).

They invested significantly more time in job-search efforts (25-40 hours per week) when compared to their counterparts who were searching on their own (10-15 hours per week), and they maintained a brighter outlook. Their networking increased not only by their own efforts, but
also through the efforts of other members of the club who gave them referrals for networking as well as job leads. Additionally, they reported a greater sense of responsibility to follow through on goals expressed in the meetings which was a positive motivator to be more effective.

According to Krannich (2005), support groups function in a similar fashion to job clubs but are less structured. And they provide psychological support because "After all, job hunting can be a lonely, frustrating, and exasperating experience” (p. 240).

What are the other methods of job hunting? In addition to job clubs and support groups, there are many distinctive methods for conducting a job search. Bolles (2011) has identified 14 ways people search for work, and has indicated the effectiveness of each method from least effective to most effective. The percentages reflect the effectiveness of each method if that were the only method employed. He advocates using more than one method, but cautions against using more than four methods at the same time. In item number one, using the internet, he is referring to looking for job postings on line and applying on line. That is significantly different from using the internet to conduct research, of which he is a strong advocate.

1. 4-10% looking for employers’ job postings on the internet
2. 7% mass mailing resumes to employers
3. 7% answering ads in professional or trade journals
4. 24% answering local newspaper ads
5. 5-28% going to private employment agencies
6. 8% going to places where employers pick out workers
7. 12% taking a civil service examination
8. 12% asking former teacher or professor for job leads
9. 14% going to the state or federal employment service office
10. 47% cold call in person
11. 59% Yellow Pages

12. 80% asking for job leads from: family members, friends, and people in the community, school from which you graduated, social networks

13. 84% form or join a job club

14. 86% doing a life-changing job hunt

The "life-changing job hunt" is an extensive, intensive and in-depth process developed by the late John C. Crystal. He teamed up with Bolles to produce the 253-page book/manual Where Do I Go from Here with My Life? published in 1974. Because it would take several months to complete, it will not be considered here. However, we will address the other four effective job-search methods.

The job club discussed above is rated at 84% effective. Coming in at 80% effectiveness is asking for job leads from family members, friends, people in the community, schools from which you graduated, social networks, and others constitutes utilizing informational interviews and networking. Both are covered in this guide.

Utilizing the Yellow Pages is rated at 59%: Bolles states that this works particularly well with small companies of 50 or fewer employees. It is an effective tool because it is updated annually.

Cold calling in person is rated at 47%: Cold calling entails knocking on doors of any employer, factory, or office regardless of whether or not a job opportunity is known.

**Self Assessment of Abilities and Skills**

There are numerous methods and instruments for identifying abilities and skills. This author prefers the Motivated Abilities & Skills [MAS] exercise below. (This activity is utilized with the permission of its originator, Ron Krannich, Ph.D. Dr. Krannich acknowledges that it is based on the original work of Dr. Bernard Haldane, the father of modern career counseling.)
Haldane (1974) believed that people do a better job when they enjoy their work. That was the underlying philosophy which he used to develop his System for Identifying Motivated Skills [SIMS] which provided the foundational basis for MAS. Both the SIMS and MAS exercises are predicated on the identification of accomplishments. Haldane defined accomplishments as “An experience when you yourself feel you did something well, that you also enjoyed doing, and of which you were proud” (p. 36).

Completing the MAS exercise yields excellent information pertaining to motivated abilities and skills. It aids in the identification of those skills which are most enjoyable. Why is this important? The old adage--past performance is the best predictor of future performance--is shared by employers. By identifying motivated abilities and skills and having concrete examples of achievements, MAS provides the job seeker with an advantage to convince employers of the strengths they possess and why they should be hired. This comprises the six steps below, and is expanded in the Appendix.

1. Identify 15-20 achievements.
2. Prioritize your seven most significant achievements.
3. Write a full page on each of your prioritized achievements.
4. Elaborate on your achievements.
5. Identify patterns by examining the interviewer’s notes.
6. Synthesize the information by clustering similar skills into categories.

From an historical prospective, Haldane (1974) originally developed a checklist for use with the top achievements. The advantage of using the MAS exercise is that it identifies those skills that people tend to utilize regardless of the job title because it is part of their make-up. For example, if an individual is a meticulously organized person, there is a good probability that person will carry over that trait to all other tasks. Someone who is project oriented, constantly on
the lookout for ways to improve things, will incorporate that view in other settings. Without identifying MAS, these innate skills can be overlooked in a self-assessment, thereby robbing the person of the ability to demonstrate some of his or her greatest strengths.

In addition to Motivated Abilities and Skills, other skills need to be evaluated and understood. Krannich (2005) classifies these as work-content skills and functional skills (p. 122). Work-content skills are the type of skills that are generally attributed to or used in specific jobs. Some examples of these jobs are heavy equipment operator, airline pilot, chiropractor, pharmacist, computer technician, and webpage designer.

Bolles (2011) indicated that functional skills are also referred to as "soft skills" or transferable skills. These skills are utilized in many different occupations and job settings, and are usually acquired through experience. Examples of transferable skills are counseling, directing, investigating, managing, researching, and training. He also had this to say about the skills employers value the most:

Be aware of the skills all employers are looking for, these days, regardless of the position you are seeking. They are looking for employees: who are punctual, arriving at work on time or early; who stay until quitting time, or even leave late; who are dependable; who have a good attitude; who have drive, energy, and enthusiasm; who want more than a paycheck; who are self-disciplined, well-organized, highly motivated, and good at managing their time; who can handle people well; who can use language effectively; who can work on a computer; who are committed to teamwork; who are flexible, and can respond to novel situations, or adapt when circumstances at work change; who are trainable, and love to learn; who are project-oriented, or goal-oriented; who have creativity and are good at problem solving; who have integrity; are loyal to the organization; who are able to identify opportunities, markets, and coming trends. Above
all they want to hire people who can bring in more money than they are paid. So, plan on claiming all of these that you legitimately can, during the hiring-interview, with evidence (short stories). (p. 98)

Bolles (2011), Krannich (2005, 2010), and Troutman (2011), have provided ample information to assist in identifying achievements. Bolles (2011) suggests, “. . . complete this EASY task for each role, starting with your current position and working backward.

E. Experiences (What experiences have I had in this role?)

A. Achievements (What achievements have I had in this role?)

S. Skills (What skills have I learned in this role?)

Y. You link to the relevant aspects of the job you are applying for!

(You may wish to start with "skills" to help you in drawing out these achievements.)” (pp. 82-83).

Both Bolles (2011) and Troutman (2011) recommend that job seekers keep a notebook to record their achievements and accomplishments. Bolles advocates doing this weekly--without fail. He cites the following two reasons: First, it will provide concrete verifiable proof supporting contentions for a pay raise at the annual review. Second, it will provide ample documentation already prepared should a job change become a reality. Troutman states, "Here is a suggested basic outline for your project or accomplishment list:

1. Title of project/budget
2. Budget (if relevant)
3. Role you played
4. Mission, objectives, purpose of project
5. Customer/vendor
6. Who you communicated or worked with to complete project
7. Major challenge(s) or problem(s) during project
8. Results (i.e., cost savings, increased efficiency, improved service to customers)” (p. 47).

In her on-line guide to writing a resume, Ireland (2012) admonishes her readers to write about achievements. Employers want more than job descriptions. Accomplishments spark interest in your strengths and they demonstrate what you have done, what you're good at it, and what you like.

Krannich (2010) emphasizes that whether preparing a resume, drafting a letter, or interviewing, “Always stress your major accomplishments. Better still, try to quantify your accomplishments” (p. 61). This is why it is so important to diligently identify and specify in great detail all of your accomplishments. Only in this way will you be able to pick and choose those accomplishments which best highlight your strengths as they relate to the job goal for which you are applying.

**Informational Interviewing**

What is informational interviewing? Krannich (2005) stated that informational interviews are designed to assist the job seeker to acquire critical information, advice, and referrals so that he or she is informed before actually applying for a position. As Crosby (2010) stated, "Ask someone with first-hand experience" (p. 22). An informational interview is simply a meeting between two people, one who wants/needs information about a career, and another person who is working in that career.

A very important distinction must be made regarding the informational interview as opposed to a job interview. It is critical to clarify that the informational interview is not a request for a job--it is about information. Bolles (2011), Krannich (2010), Crosby (2010), and others are adamant that this point must be clearly understood and adhered to, and always conveyed to the
targeted interviewee.

Why is informational interviewing important? Crosby further stated: “These interviews aid in polishing communication skills, helping jobseekers gain confidence and poise before the high-pressure situation of a job interview” (p. 23). Belim (2007) stated, “Informational interviewing is one of the most powerful of all job-search tools” (p. 1). Krannich (2010) opined that informational interviewing is important for three reasons. Number one: Acquire critical information. The more information you have, the easier it is to evaluate and make important decisions. Number two: Obtain advice. By talking with those who are already working in the field, the job seeker has the opportunity to obtain expert advice. Number three: Garner referrals. These sources have their own networks of contacts, and most will be willing to provide referrals.

In addition to these three reasons, informational interviews are an excellent method to help develop and expand a network (see next section entitled Networking). Bolles (2011), van Dam & Menting (2012), and Krannick (2010) report that looking for work is difficult. Krannich said, “Finding a job may be the hardest, most frustrating, and ego-bruising work you ever do. . .” (p. 1). Part of that has to do with the rejection experienced by jobseekers. He further stated, "The number one problem most job seekers encounter and have difficulty dealing with is rejections" (p. 40). Interviewing can be stressful, and the subsequent non-selection or rejection is precisely what he is referring to. As Martin (2004) stated, "Most people hate interviewing" (p. 3). However, Krannich reports that informational interviews help to eliminate rejection. "One of the most important ways to minimize rejections is to develop an active networking campaign involving informational interviews" (p. 50).

Why would anyone agree to an informational interview? Crosby (2010) stated, “Asking strangers for career help can be daunting, and some people wonder why anyone would agree to be interviewed. But, in fact, many people are willing to help students and career changers explore
occupations. People like to talk about themselves and their careers” (p. 24). Banjo (2008) stated, "But keep in mind that most people actually enjoy talking about themselves and their industry" (p. 2).

How do you “get” an informational interview? According to Bolles (2011) and Crosby (2010), getting an informational interview starts with research which includes identifying people who could assist in providing referrals. It also includes researching companies. While discussing research, Crosby stated, “Company literature and websites are good sources of background information, as are company’s annual reports and industry’s trade magazines” (p. 26).

The next step is to establish contact to request a meeting. There are several ways to accomplish this: Telephone the contact, send a letter, or send an e-mail. Troutman (2011) stated, "The new online informational interview is simply an email to introduce yourself and ask one or two questions" (p. 39). In every case it is imperative to clarify and emphasize that the interview is about information, not a job.

What should be done after scheduling an informational interview? Now that the informational interview has been scheduled, what is the next step? More preparation in order to be thoroughly prepared prior to the interview. This admonition is universally preached by every source this author encountered. Bolles (2011) states the contact is a potential hiring source in the future, and someone you want to include in your network. Making a good impression is critical. Therefore, it is important to know as much as possible about the individual, the company, and the career field. Once again, the issue is research. That preparation and research should provide ample material from which to develop specific in-depth questions for the interview. Krannich (2010) states that a smart job seeker completes thorough research and has “...a list of questions prepared to ask the interviewer. These questions indicate they are interested in the job because they are well informed about the company” (p. 65). Having prepared questions does two things:
It helps to ensure that critical questions are not overlooked, and it demonstrates conscientious preparation for the interview.

What is accomplished in an informational interview? Mathison and Finney (2010) stated that the informational interview is scheduled by the job seeker, which puts you in charge of the agenda for the meeting. Therefore, you should arrive at least 5 minutes early, and greet everyone courteously and with a smile. The initial part of the meeting should be devoted to pleasantries to put the host at ease. After a few minutes of getting acquainted, you should take charge of the meeting to outline not only the purpose of the meeting and the time parameters that have been agreed upon, but also to clarify the fact that while you may be in the job market, this meeting is not about applying for a position. The sole purpose is to acquire information. The next phase of the meeting should be a brief overview of your background. The remainder of the meeting is to ask questions and expand upon issues that are important to your decision-making process.

Keep track of the time and do not exceed the time that had been agreed upon. Wrap up the meeting by quickly reviewing any action items that the two of you have agreed upon. Close the meeting with two major points. First, thank the host for his or her time and information, and ask if it is okay to maintain periodic contact (see section on Follow Up below). Second, ask for referrals to other people in the industry who might provide additional information and a different perspective, and if it is all right to use the hosts’ name when contacting these referrals. Finally, do not forget to ask for a business card. These guidelines are universally recommended by Bolles (2011), Krannich (2010), Mathison & Finney (2010), Belim (2007), and others.

What are the first steps to take following the informational interview? First, immediately fill out an after interview worksheet. Keep these in your car so you can fill out one as soon as possible. Second, send a thank you letter/e-mail – the same day. Third, contact the new referrals as soon as possible and schedule an informational interview with each one. (Belim (2012), Bolles
Networking

What is networking and why is it important? As seen in the previous section, informational interviewing is an important aspect of the job search. It not only provides valuable information, but it also helps in the development of a network. Much has been written about networking, with varying degrees of importance placed on different aspects of it. The following definition of networking is from Merriam-Webster Online: “The exchange of information or services among individuals, groups, or institutions; specifically: the cultivation of productive relationships for employment or business.” Networking is critical to an effective job search.

Bolles (2011), Krannich (2010), Mathison & Finney (2010), and Owens and Young (2008) all reported 75% to 80% of the job market is unpublished: The hidden job market. And, this is not new data. It is consistent with the findings as far back as Djeddah (1978), Jackson (1978), Lathrop (1989), and others. Owens and Young (2008), state, “Networking is the most important aspect in job development” (p. 23). Krannich (2010) further reports that even many employers favor informal and personal methods (networking) because it reduces recruiting costs and hiring risks.

The traditional concept of networking is to list all of one's contacts: Friends, relatives, classmates, coworkers, teachers and professors, anyone and everyone with whom you do business or have ever known. Bolles (2011) includes an extensive list to help the job seeker identify these potential contacts to be included in networking efforts. Mathison and Finney (2010) take networking a step further and advocate expanding the networking process by prospecting for potential contacts beyond those the job seeker already knows or has a connection to through friends, relatives, and others. They advocate seeking out those they have no connection to and contact them directly. These include leaders in their respective fields such as professors, subject
matter experts, and consultants. Hansen (2012) states, “It’s a well-known fact that the best way to find a job is through networking” (p. 1).

Savino and Krannich (2009) wrote, “Networking is the process of purposefully developing relations with others. Networking in the job search involves connecting and interacting with other individuals who can be helpful to you” (p. 111). Krannich & Krannich (2005) stated, “The process of networking involves connecting, building, and nurturing networks of relationships that generate three critical components in an effective job search--information, advice, and referrals” (p. 176). Owens and Young (2008) stated, "Networking is an arrangement of people crossed at regular intervals by other people, all of whom are cultivating mutually beneficial, give-and-take, win-win relationships.’ The key to effective networking is not who you know but who knows YOU!” (p. 23). Clearly, networking is vital to any well run job search.

How is a network built? Mathison and Finney (2010) reported that building a network is not collecting business cards. It starts with contacts, and follows with the building of the relationship. It is initially a three-step process. First is the initial meeting, followed by an immediate thank you note and/or e-mail. This is not just a note to express your appreciation for acquiescing to meet with you, but also to ask permission to maintain contact and to keep them up to date on your progress. The third and final step is to send them follow-up correspondence thanking them for their referrals, and commenting on how those contacts/meetings went.

Networking incorporates developing professional relationships that could bear fruit throughout your professional career. And it is not a one-way relationship. It builds over time and provides you with the opportunity to repay those who aided and assisted you.

According to Owens and Young (2008), maintaining timely and consistent follow-up is the key to building a successful network. Once is not enough. “There are three approaches to follow up with people you have met: By phone, by mail, or in person” (p. 25). In a July 12, 2009
article for the *Boston Herald*, career coach Christine Bolzan stated that while technology may have changed with the advent of social networking, the basic techniques remain the same. It’s all about networking.

Kolowich (2009) stated, “Networking... has become the watchword of recession-era career counseling” (n.p.). Korth (2009) stated, "The best way even now to find employment is through networking--making connections, person to person” (p. 1). He went on to say this is accomplished through informational interviews. He cited studies which show that about one out of every 12 informational interviews leads to a job, but when only a resume is submitted, the number drops to one in 200 or fewer.

**Follow Up**

Belim (2007), and Mathison and Finney (2010) advocate sending a thank you note/letter/e-mail following meetings with those who provide assistance. Throughout the past 4 decades, Bolles (2011) has been a strong proponent of sending thank you notes to anyone who has provided assistance. He reports a research finding without citation that, "You are much more likely to get hired, if right after the interview you send two thank-you notes, one e-mailed and one hand written by ‘snail-mail,’ as techies now call the U.S. Postal Service. E-mailed for promptness, handwritten for the personal touch” (p. 35). He stated that a human resources expert told him:

> A prompt, brief, faxed business letter thanking me for my time along with a (brief!) synopsis of his/her unique qualities communicates to me that this person is an assertive, motivated, customer-service-oriented salesperson who utilizes technology and knows the rules of the “game.” These are qualities I am looking for. At the moment I receive approximately one such letter... for every fifteen candidates interviewed. (p. 111)

Krannich (2005) also advocates sending a thank you letter following your interview,
preferably by mail. It should be typed, not handwritten. “Never underestimate the power of a simple thank you letter. It may be the single most important action you take” (p. 283). He also recommended sending a thank you letter to your new employer, AND, to all who provided assistance to you in your job search to let them know you are now employed, and where.

Every source this author has seen advocates sending a thank you note to those who provide assistance in the job-search process, principally following informational interviews, networking meetings, and job interviews. However, Mathison and Finney (2010) are the only authors who also recommend sending additional thank you notes to original contacts after meeting with referrals. They stated:

You're not just networking; you're building a network. A well-constructed network is like a fishing net, which is only as good as it's knots, which you are tying one at a time. Each knot takes these steps:

1. A well-run meeting.
2. An immediate thank you note or email, asking permission for you to keep them current with your progress.
3. Thank you emails that you send to their referrals upon meeting with them, as well as another note back to your original contacts to let them know how the referral meeting went. (p. 91)

**Time Management and Planning**

What should be the first step in a job search? Mathison and Finney (2010) stated, "The first thing you should do: Create an action plan. Update it every weekend for the coming week. Remember that you are in control of the search" (p. 27). Krannich, (2010) too advises, “If you are serious about finding a good job, you simply must make your job-search top priority activity” (p. 7). He advises using a scheduling calendar, setting work targets. He states that identifying
abilities and skills, and setting objectives should be the first two primary activities. Scheduling is established early on and followed throughout the campaign. He advocates preparing a resume, with the remainder of the job search composed of conducting research, prospecting referrals, networking, and interviewing. He suggests “... Committing yourself in writing by completing the Job Search Contract and Weekly Job Performance and Planning Report” (p. 13). The Job Search Contract serves as a continuous reminder of the job-seeker’s commitment. The Weekly Job Performance and Planning Report is the blueprint to accomplish the goals stated in the Job Search Contract.

Bolles (2011) and Krannich (2010) have incorporated the concept first elucidated by Tom Jackson in his 1978 book *Guerrilla Tactics in the Job Market*. In it he states:

“Every job campaign looks like this:

NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO
NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO
NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO  NO

YES” (p. 118).

This presents an interesting question. If each successful job search is similar to the three lines above, and if all job seekers could look into the future to see when a job would be offered, then those job seekers would know how many NO’s they would have to go through to get to the final YES. Those NO’s would be welcomed because each one brings the job seeker closer to that final YES.

Krannich (2010) addresses the concept of time in terms of how long an effective job search takes. He states, "Finding a job can take as little as a few days or as long six months to one year, depending upon how you organize and implement your job search" (p. 11). For example, he states that if an individual devotes only 10 hours per week to finding a job, it will take that person considerably longer than if he or she is spending 40 to 80 hours per week.
engaged in various job-search activities.

Summary

This chapter began with a discussion pertaining to the stresses associated with the job search. It then addressed a variety of job-search methods and their efficacy, followed by self-assessment, a critical complement to any successful job-search effort. The next three sections are closely interrelated, but vital nonetheless: Informational interviewing, networking, and follow-up. They make up the central issues and activities of the effective job search. The chapter closed out with time management, essential to a well-run job-search campaign.
Chapter 3

METHODOLOGY

The process for completing this project was derived from a previous project completed by Pattie Ortman. She authored the 2009 *Vocational Rehabilitation Counseling Master’s Project Handbook*, an invaluable guide which has been utilized throughout this project.

The concept for the development of this project began with this student’s first in-depth meeting with Dr. Corson on August 23, 2011, at the Sacramento Department of Veterans Affairs [VA], Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment [VR&E] office. During our meeting, we discussed the inadequacies of their job placement. He stated that it was out-sourced to EDD, and was in need of improvement. Having some experience and expertise in job search, a passion to assist job seekers to improve their job search, and an interest in helping veterans and veterans with disabilities, this seemed to be an excellent fit for this author. Dr. Corson stated that about 40% of their veterans desired employment in the federal government, and that there was no one who knew how to adequately assist the veterans in the federal job-search/application process. However, the federal system is an entity unto itself, is extremely complicated, and will be a project for another day. This job-search program has implications for any job goal, government or private sector.

There is a considerable amount of information and guidance available in books, manuals, and the Internet regarding job search. Type in the words “job search” on Google, and you will get 2,660,000,000 hits, which is reduced to only 958,000,000 hits when you restrict that job search to “job-search books.”

**Review of Sources**

This author reviewed a wide variety sources to include peer-reviewed journals, books from his personal library, textbooks and notes from previous courses, additional books from the
library, a few recently purchased books addressing various aspects of the job search, numerous websites devoted to job-search issues, unpublished master's projects, and websites specifically addressing veterans transitioning to civilian life. Additionally, discussions were conducted during an internship this author completed during the fall semester of 2011, with a variety of vocational rehabilitation professionals associated with the Sacramento VR&E office.

**Methods**

*Actions:* Specific topics were reviewed for potential inclusion in the guide.

During this author's internship in the fall 2011 semester, some of these methods were introduced to veterans with service connected disabilities at the VR&E office in Sacramento who were already in the process of looking for work. The veterans provided positive feedback based on this information.

*Achievements:* The initial steps taken to develop the guide encompassed the traditional topics associated with job search. These included typical job-search topics such as, skills identification, resume/cover letters, contacting employers, networking, interviewing, and follow-up. However, there will be increased emphasis on identifying motivated abilities and skills; informational interviewing; and the development of a full-time systematic, organized, job-search plan targeting the effective methods of job seeking.

*Application:* The job-search guide will be customized and utilized on a daily basis by the veteran to serve as a guide to help ensure success.

*The Result:* The product is an action oriented job-search guide for veterans proceeding through the VR&E section of the Sacramento VA office.

**Design of the Guide:**

This guide incorporates many standard issues relating to the job search, but will introduce them in a unique way. For example, skills identification is generally associated with learned and
acquired transferable skills. This program will introduce motivated abilities and skills, it will implement methods of support, it will utilize and implement some sales techniques, it will introduce some subtle methods to get the interview, and it will provide for an action oriented full-time job-search program.

The guide will be an efficient, results oriented, daily job-search regimen designed to provide the veteran with the confidence that he or she has the necessary tools to conduct an effective and successful job-search campaign. It addresses the issue of individuality. Each person has a unique make-up of personality, ability, tolerance, drive, motivation, knowledge, and skills. Each veteran will have his or her own plan for success in the job hunt. However, each veteran will also incorporate all components of that process. And, there will be ample opportunity for individual variations of how to successfully implement the many components of this program.
Chapter 4

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this project was to develop a job-search guide that could be utilized by veterans with service-connected disabilities who are receiving services through the Department of Veterans Affairs [DVA], Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment [VR&E], Sacramento, California. It was developed to provide guidance and instruction to veterans who are too often left to their own devices to navigate the uncharted waters of the job search.

Research for this project included peer-reviewed journal articles, books, instruction manuals, internet resources, texts and class notes, and discussions with VRCs with the Sacramento VR&E office. This research was conducted to sift through the volumes of material in an effort to synthesize the data into a useful product. In his unpublished master’s project, A Power Point Presentation: Presenting Pre Employment Job Search Instructions to Veterans with Disabilities at the Sacramento Veterans Resource Center (2011), LeMarcus Malone stated: "A search for a comprehensive pre employment job-search workbook, manual or power point presentation created specifically for veterans with disabilities was unsuccessful" (p. 49). The material presented here addresses that issue.

Being in the right frame of mind is critical to any undertaking, and the job search is no exception. Research was conducted to investigate the pitfalls and how to maintain a positive outlook throughout what could be a lengthy and that sometimes mentally brutal campaign. This segued nicely into incorporating other aspects of the job search. Job-search methods and their effectiveness was a prime research topic, with sources both academic and anecdotal. Self-assessment also revealed academic antecedents as well as historical input. Informational interviewing and networking are closely related but decidedly different, and dramatically impact
the job search. The importance of properly and efficiently finishing each step is documented. Understanding the importance of planning and effectively managing time address how the previous sections are interrelated and interdependent. The resulting guidelines were designed to help answer the underlying question: "How do I find MY job?"

**Recommendations**

Bolles (2011) laments the fact that “. . .the job-hunt has been researched in exquisite detail. . .” (p. 35), but is not taught anywhere. While the information provided here is valuable and useful, it should be taught to provide further explanation, clarification and support. The appropriate venue should be incorporated to ensure full understanding and implementation in a supportive environment. The information should be critically evaluated and updated based on empirical findings. This guide is not static, but should be continually evolving and improving. Therefore, critical evaluations and recommendations are not only welcomed, but requested. If something does not work, change it or get rid of it. Just be sure this is accomplished after thorough evaluation. It is important to determine what works best.
APPENDIX

Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, Comprehensive Job Search in Sacramento:

A Job Search Guide
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INTRODUCTION

This job-search guide is intended to be used by veterans with service-connected disabilities. It is educational and directional. Educational because as stated by Bolles (2010), "For now I just want to give you an illustration of one of the things that just makes me sick, and that is: The job hunt has been researched in exquisite detail, to help us find the most efficient strategies when we are out of work, but neither our school nor anyone else ever tells us this stuff" (p. 35). This guide will tell you this stuff. It is directional because it intends to provide direction on how to use this stuff. It is intended to be used by those who are ready to pursue their job search. It will address the reader as "you" in order to make it personal, because it is.

It would be a good idea to establish a base line. What do you know about job search? How can I use my military experience? It just doesn’t seem to count in the civilian world and I’ve heard they don’t care about it. Can I use it? How much time should you spend on your job search? How much time can you spend on your job search? But the essential question is: How much time will you spend on your job search? I don’t want to waste my time, so what are the effective ways to look for work? I've heard of informational interviewing, what is it? What type of resume should I develop? How do I do that? Why is networking important? I don't want to use other people and I don't want to bug my family and friends. I just want to find my job on my own. How do I do that? Do I have to tell them about my disability? These and other questions will be answered as we proceed in an orderly fashion. But first, it is important to clarify the issues.

The Problem

Before you can start a job search, you must know three things:

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

WHAT DO YOU HAVE TO OFFER TO GET WHAT YOU WANT?
You must have answers to the first two questions so that you can articulate them with conviction, clarity, enthusiasm, and specificity. Without this, you relegate yourself to another hapless job seeker hoping to get lucky, just one of the herd. Conversely, in order to stand out from the herd, you need to do some hard work. We are here to help you become that standout job seeker: Someone who knows what your goal is, someone who knows what your values are, someone who has identified your skills and abilities and knows how they fit into the job goal, someone who can articulate your achievement stories in a clear and meaningful way to showcase your unique talents, and someone who exudes enthusiasm and conviction, absent in many other job seekers. And . . .

HOW DO I GET WHAT I WANT?

It all starts with preparation. You have completed a training program in preparation for new job, a new career. You did the hard work, no one did it for you. The economic environment in which we find ourselves today is less than encouraging. There are fewer jobs for many more job seekers. The competition for those jobs is significantly greater today than it was 5 or 10 years ago. This is why it is imperative to do everything conceivable to make yourself the best candidate possible. Therefore, our responsibility is to provide you with the tools you need. We can provide the guidance and assistance, but you will provide the hard work, the preparation.

The Solution

So what does all of this mean to you? What will we provide? We will provide expertise and support. Here are the basic areas we will cover:

1. Organization and Planning
2. Skills, Achievements and Stories
3. Job-search Methods – The good, the bad and the ugly
4. Informational Interviews and Networking.
The Challenge

Here is your challenge. This program will put you in charge. Not only for this job, but in the future for any job that you may wish to pursue. Or, do you want to leave your job search in the hands of other people? Who has your best interests at heart, you or the other guy? How much time and effort will you devote to your job search? How much time can the other guy? The simple fact is: No one can do it for you as effectively as you can! So take control now. This program can help prepare you to do exactly that. Are you willing to do the necessary hard work? Are you up to the challenge?
Disability and Disclosure

It is important to clarify language and points of view. Officially, you are classified as a DISABLED veteran. There is a significant difference between being disabled, and having a disability. Are you really a disabled veteran, or is it more accurate to state that you are a veteran with a disability, a service-connected disability? Let's see how Webster's dictionary defines the word disable:

"1.a. To make motionless or powerless by damage or injury. b. To weaken or destroy the normal physical or mental abilities of. 2. To render legally disqualified. syns: DISABLED, CRIPPLE, IMMOBILIZE, INCAPACITATE, KNOCK OUT, PARALYZE v. core meaning : to render powerless or motionless by infliction of severe injury or damage <veterans disabled in the war><disabled the tank with a rocket>” (p. 381)

Based on the understanding that you are able to work in the open labor market where you will compete with anyone else seeking the job you have been trained for, it would seem more appropriate to state that you are a veteran with a disability, not a disabled veteran as depicted using the definition above. Why is this even a discussion in this program? Because it is critical to make the distinction between being disabled and having a disability. Words have clear definitions and meanings, and some people are going to make the assumption that if you present yourself as a disabled veteran, you will not be able to do the job that a so-called able-bodied individual would be able to do. You are not just damaged goods in their eyes, you are fatally flawed, someone who needs assistance with virtually everything you do. If that is their assumption, you have no chance at a job with that individual.

However, if you have a disability, that's a different story. Could you be discriminated
against because you have disability? Certainly. That brings us to the second point. Some
disabilities are readily apparent, and some are not. If your disability is readily apparent, you need
to address it up front. Failure to do so could be disastrous. You have no way of knowing what
your interviewer is thinking. Most businesspeople understand that they cannot discriminate based
on disability. Most did not know how to address or deal with that issue, so they don't say
anything out of fear that they may say the wrong thing and open themselves up to a lawsuit. If
that's the case, they will not say anything to you, but when they are at the point of deciding who
to hire, the one sure thing they will remember is your disability. That does not bode well for
garnering a job offer.

On the other hand, if you address your disability right away, you can make that issue
disappear, or at least reduce it significantly from the equation. So what are some of the ways to
put the employer's mind at ease? Tell them exactly what the disability is, and that you took it into
consideration before choosing the vocational goal and spending time and money to be trained in it. Because you researched the job, you know that you are capable of handling the requirements for the job.

There is another point that you can interject into the equation very easily at this juncture. People who have limitations due to an injury, medical condition, or birth defect, are much more
aware of what their capabilities and limitations are. They know what makes them hurt, and they
avoid doing those things that make them hurt. Those who are in the general population and are
considered "able bodied" are much more likely to engage in activities that would cause them
injury. As a result, you can assure your prospective employer that you are significantly less likely
to do anything that would result in further injury to you specifically because you know what your
limitations are. The other guy doesn't, and he is statistically at a higher risk of injury. For
example, your job is bookkeeper. Bookkeeper is classified by the Department of Labor as a
Sedentary job. Sedentary work is defined as having an occasional lifting requirement of 10 pounds maximum. If that is your medical restriction, bookkeeping is an appropriate occupation to pursue. However, your company is rearranging the office and things need to be moved. You are doing your part, but not lifting anything over 10 pounds. One of your enthusiastic coworkers doesn't want to wait for help to move the desk, so bends he over and attempts to move it himself. Now your employer has a workers’ compensation claim, and your coworker is looking at surgery. You can paint that picture quite vividly because it is reality. You can invite him to ask any clarifying questions if he has any further concerns. You have now relieved your prospective employer of any rational concern about your disability.

The decision to disclose a disability that is not readily apparent is left to the person with that disability. That decision should be made after careful consideration. There is no requirement for you to disclose your disability to a prospective employer before you were offered a job. That would be discrimination. If you are able to do the essential functions of the job, you need not disclose your disability at all. If you need accommodation to perform one or more of the essential functions of the job, you can wait until the offer of employment has been extended. At that time, the employer has the right to ask if you can perform the essential functions of the job with or without accommodation. They cannot rescind the job offer because you then say that you need an accommodation. The issue being addressed here is whether or not you want to voluntarily disclose information regarding your disability. Many employment counselors recommend against doing so, but it is clearly your decision, not anyone else's.

**How to Get Organized**

Organization and planning are critical to an effectively run job-search campaign. One of the first items to be covered is time commitment. An effective job search is a full-time endeavor with scheduled and structured activities each and every day. A Weekly Planning Schedule is
included below which can be copied as necessary. If you already have a weekly appointment book, so much the better. As you proceed, specific times should be blocked out for certain activities on a daily basis, but appointments with those who can assist in your job search should always take priority. Your job-search efforts should be your number one priority, and should always be at the top of your daily To-Do List. For planning purposes, you should plan your daily job-search activities and appointments each week in advance.
Table 1
Weekly Planning Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MONDAY</th>
<th>TUESDAY</th>
<th>WEDNESDAY</th>
<th>THURSDAY</th>
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Goal Setting, Planning, and Prioritizing

In order to maintain an effective job search, you should establish weekly goals. What do you want to accomplish next week? You should list all of those activities to include such topics as: How many cold calls will you plan to make this week, how many informational interviews will you schedule, how many new contacts will you add to your list of potential networking prospects, how many applications will you submit, how much time will you devote to research, and how many companies will your research? These are planning goals, goals that you will strive to accomplish for the coming week. You should prioritize these activities with the most important items at the top of your list of goals for the week.

Scheduling and Record Keeping

You now have your list of goals for the coming week, so it is time to enter them into your schedule. Be sure that the most important goals take priority in scheduling. You want to do this to ensure that there is sufficient time to accomplish them if for some reason you need to rearrange your schedule during the week. You should break down these goals into daily increments that are manageable. For example, you might schedule yourself to complete research online or at the library between 9 a.m. and noon on Monday. Your goal could be to identify 15 companies to contact to schedule informational interviews. You might schedule the following morning between 10 a.m. and noon to call those companies. You might schedule 7 a.m. to 10 a.m. on Wednesday to work on identifying your motivated skills and abilities. These are just examples of some of the activities you could schedule.

Time Commitment

The importance of time commitment cannot be over emphasized. Time-on-task is critical. This applies to any endeavor you may undertake. For example, if a typical job search required 800 hours (this is just for illustration purposes only), that would equate to 20 weeks at 40
hours a week (full time). The realities are reflected below:

- 8 hours/day 40 hours/week = 20 weeks - 5 months
- 7 hours/day 35 hours/week = 25 weeks - 6 months
- 6 hours/day 30 hours/week = 30 weeks - 7 months
- 5 hours/day 25 hours/week = 35 weeks - 8 months
- 4 hours/day 20 hours/week = 40 weeks - 10 months
- 3 hours/day 15 hours/week = 60 weeks - 14 months - 1.2 years
- 2 hours/day 10 hours/week = 80 weeks - 18 months - 1.5 years
- 1 hour/day 5 hours/week = 160 weeks - 37 months - 3.1 years

It is quite clear that the more time you spend per day on your job hunt, the quicker you will find employment. How much time are you willing to spend on your job search? This segues into another factor regarding the harshness of the job search.

**How to Deal with Rejection, and Maintain Your Sanity**

One of the biggest problems facing jobseekers is the debilitating effect of rejection. None of us likes it. With the unemployment rate as high as it is, it is a given that looking for work right now is difficult at best. Not only are there lots of people competing for each job, but that correlates into a high number of rejections for those job seekers. And, rejection is often cited as one of the major reasons that some people stop looking for work. So, what can you do to counteract that situation? There are several things to take into consideration which should ameliorate the problem. Let's take a look at one of them. In his book *1978 Guerrilla Tactics in the Job Market*, Tom Jackson states:

“Every job campaign looks like this:

NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO

NO NO NO NO NO NO NO NO
This presents an interesting question. If your job search is similar to the three lines above, and you could look into the future to see when a job would be offered, then you would know how many “NO’s” you would have to go through to get to the final YES. Those NO’s would then be welcomed because each one would bring you closer to that final YES. That first NO would elicit from you something like: "Thank you! Only 22 more to go!” Rejection shock? Not in this scenario. How fast could you get to those next 22 interviews? Understand that you are going to get a bunch of NO’s, but each one brings you closer to your final goal. You just don’t have the luxury of knowing what your number is.

Another way to reduce the number of rejections, and therefore the stress associated with them, is to conduct informational interviews. They do not have the same stress factors associated with job hiring interviews. Informational interviews is the subject of Chapter 4. Job clubs provide another way to reduce the stress related to rejections, and is addressed in greater detail in Chapter 3, Job Search Methods.
Demilitarize Your Language

The more time you spent in the military, the more accustomed you became with military terms and acronyms. It became ingrained in you, a part of your everyday lexicon. It's kind of fun to use some of those terms around your civilian friends, especially when you have fellow veterans sharing in the fun. It's part of your culture, who you are. As we hear frequently, "Once a Marine, always a Marine," but this is not confined to the Marine Corps. However, in the job hunt, that does not work. You have to speak to Civilianese. The person who will hire you may put great credence or no credence in what you did while you were in uniform. He or she may be fascinated by your exploits, but will only hire you only for what you can do now. Your interviewer has to know that you know what you are doing and, unless you can you can speak their language, that will not happen.

The following is an example of military language that would be confusing to most people (even some with a military background), and needs to be put in language civilians can understand. You stated: “I was the OIC of the SEA Division of DIE at PACAF HQ and prepared daily Intel reports emphasizing 7th AF HQ status of NVAF, AOB and BDA both In-Country, broken out by CORPS Areas and all Route Packs to the CINC PACAF, for which I received the AFCM and outstanding OERs.”

Compare that statement to the following, “As a senior level manager at the company headquarters, I prepared and delivered precise, accurate analytical daily reports and briefings to the Chief Executive Officer on the status of domestic and foreign operations regarding both our partners and our competitors. The CEO awarded me a prestigious company award for excellence, and outstanding annual performance evaluations for me and for the department I managed.”
Table 2

That's a big difference, so let's see how we got there.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
<th>Civilian Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>OIC</td>
<td>Officer in Charge</td>
<td>Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEA</td>
<td>South East Asia</td>
<td>Geographic Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIE</td>
<td>Directorate Intelligence Estimates</td>
<td>Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACAF</td>
<td>Pacific Air Force</td>
<td>Company Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HQ</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
<td>Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intel</td>
<td>Intelligence</td>
<td>Status Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7th AF</td>
<td>7th Air Force</td>
<td>Regional Headquarters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NVAF</td>
<td>North Vietnamese Air Force</td>
<td>Competitor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AOB</td>
<td>Air Order of Battle</td>
<td>Inventory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BDA</td>
<td>Bomb Damage Assessment</td>
<td>Operational Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-Country</td>
<td>South Vietnam</td>
<td>Partner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CORPS Areas</td>
<td>South Vietnam, Four Regions</td>
<td>Partner Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Route Packs</td>
<td>North Vietnam, Seven Regions</td>
<td>Competitor Regions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CINC</td>
<td>Commander-In-Chief</td>
<td>CEO</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFCM</td>
<td>Air Force Commendation Medal</td>
<td>Achievement Award</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OERs</td>
<td>Officer Efficiency Reports</td>
<td>Annual Evaluation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your military experience says a lot about you. Many in the civilian community have great admiration for the virtues instilled in veterans. The military is widely known for its
discipline, punctuality, its acceptance of the chain of command (levels of management), the
willingness to do what needs to be done, when it needs to be done--the can-do attitude. These are
all highly desirable and sought after traits by industry.

The re-worked statement is accurate, pertinent, and easily understood by anyone who
reads it. All of the military jargon has been removed. This is what needs to be done when
depicting your military experiences. However, it is not only reasonable and useful to write about
the military experiences in military terms, but necessary too. That will help ensure that you get
all of the information on paper. Therefore, your next step is to civilianize your military
accomplishments and language in the same fashion as the example above. Another suggestion is
to double space your write up and then put the civilian translation above the military jargon.

Job Specific Skills

Job-specific skills are also known as "hard" skills. These are skills that are taught or
acquired on the job and are usually tied to a specific function or activity. For example, welding is
a very specialized skill with many subsets. These skills are used within defined parameters.
Typing is not a skill needed by welders, just as welding is not a skill needed by typists. When
considering if you should apply for a job, it is important to know what skills are required. You
must then determine if you have the requisite skills to qualify. Putting in an application for a
welding position without knowing how to weld is pointless. It is important that you understand
and know the skills you possess.

So how do you identify them? You already know what many of them are. If you operate
heavy equipment such as a front-end loader or backhoe, you possess that skill. By listing all of
your previous jobs and completing an inventory of the things that you did in each one, you will
begin to see what those job-related specific skills are. Just because you have a skill does not
automatically mean that it is one you want to continue using. However, since you are in the job-
search mode, it is important that you also identify the skills required for the job you are seeking. Those skills should be listed so that you can compare both lists, the skills you have and the skills required for the job. This should be a pretty close match. If not, how will you overcome the deficit? Suffice it to say, this is an important undertaking on your part to clarify your work skills or "hard" skills.

**Transferable Skills**

In addition to these job specific-skills, there is another set of skills that you should be cognizant of as you work on your preparation. These are transferable skills, also referred to as functional, or "soft" skills. These skills can be taken from one occupation to the next, unlike the job specific skills. An example of transferable skills includes: Analyzing, motivating, producing, trouble-shooting, speaking, presenting, planning, negotiating, constructing, coordinating, and researching. Some have even suggested that functional skills are more important in some settings, because they are typically not "learned" skills, but rather innate skills. Some employers value these skills more in some instances because they make for cohesive work settings. They believe that the hard skills can be taught, but the functional skills do not lend themselves readily to being taught. You can use the same method of evaluating your functional skills by inventorying the things you did in your previous jobs or activities. Another way is to use the following list of 250 transferable/functional skills to check off those skills which you have used. You can then use a highlighter to identify the ones you have enjoyed using most.

**Motivated Abilities and Skills**

This section will cover a significant amount of material. You need to know what skills you possess. However, there are a great number of skills to address. As you have seen, there are work content skills (hard skills) and functional/transferable skills (soft skills). There is another set of skills that we will address, and they are referred to as Motivated Abilities and Skills.
[MAS]. Each set of skills is significant and vital to your job search. But your MAS may be the most important set because they get to the essence of who you are. They were developed by Dr. Ron Krannich, and he has provided authorization for us to use them.

It is not sufficient to know what skills you possess. You need to be able to demonstrate those skills, are efficient in using them, and enjoy using them. The manner in which you do this is by providing concrete examples of your achievements. Employers do not want to know what your duties are/were, they can figure that out. They want to know what you accomplished. If you have a work history, it is imperative that you address each job/assignment/function you had and identify your achievements from each one. After you have identified them, attempt to quantify them. What did you do? What was the result? Did you save money? Did you increase the bottom line? Did you improve the operation? If you did any of those, to what extent did you capitalize on them? Use dollars, percentages, volume, awards, anything to quantify the achievement.
Table 3
Transferable/Functional Skills

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Transferable/Functional Skills</th>
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<td>achieving</td>
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<td>adapting</td>
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<td>addressing</td>
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The following is the exercise to complete the MAS activity. This is a little time-consuming, but well worth taking the time to complete it. It is best to work with a spouse, a significant other, or a good friend. All of these activities, but more significantly the MAS exercise will provide you with a considerable amount of material from which to choose when developing your resume, and when preparing for interviews. It will be positive factual data, and should provide a bit of an ego boost, something that is most useful in the job-search arena. And, for those of you who find it difficult to talk about yourself because you don't want to brag, this information is factual data and evidence that says, "This is why you should hire me."

A job interview is much more than reciting a list of skills, where you have worked, and pleading for a job offer. It is a conversation between two parties, both of whom have a need. Normal conversations are replete with short stories. Your accomplishments provide you with a plethora of stories to choose from during your interview. The stories personalize who you are and give impetus as to why they should hire you. Therefore, it is important that you put in a solid effort when evaluating your achievements, especially those achievements in the MAS exercise.

Motivated Abilities and Skills (MAS)

**Exercises to Complete MAS Assessment**

This activity can be time-consuming but, according to Ron Krannich, it provides some of the best data on motivated abilities and skills. It was initially developed by Dr. Bernard Haldane, the father of modern career counseling. The purpose of this activity is to identify the skills that you enjoy using, and it consists of the following six steps below. Approval and authorization to use his work on Motivated Abilities and Skills was obtained during a discussion with Dr. Krannich on September 15, 2011. He also emailed his approval to use his MAS Assessment as long as his work was cited.
1. Identify 15-20 achievements

2. Prioritize your seven most significant achievements.

3. Write a full page or more on each of your prioritized achievements.

4. Elaborate on your achievements.

5. Identify patterns by examining the interviewer’s notes.

6. Synthesize the information by clustering similar skills into categories.

In order to ensure that all steps are accurately presented and there is no corruption of the process, each step is copied verbatim per Dr. Krannich.
1. Identify 15-20 achievements: While ideally you should inventory 100-150 achievements, let's start by focusing on a minimum of 15-20 achievements. These consist of things you enjoyed doing, believe you did well, and felt a sense of satisfaction, pride, or accomplishment in doing. You can see yourself performing at your best and enjoying your experiences when you analyze your achievements. This information reveals your motivations since it deals entirely with your voluntary behavior. In addition, it identifies what is right with you by focusing on your positives and strengths. Identify achievements throughout your life, beginning with your childhood. Your achievements should relate to specific experiences—not general ones—it may be drawn from work, leisure, education, military, or home life. Put each achievement at the top of a separate page of paper on which you will further elaborate. For example, your achievements might appear as follows:

Sample Achievement Statements

"When I was 10 years old, I started a small paper route and built it up to the largest in my district."

"I started playing chess in ninth grade and earned the right to play first board on my high school chess team in my junior year."

"Learned to play the piano and often played for church services while in high school."

"Designed, constructed, and displayed a dress for a 4-H demonstration project."

"Played a major role in developing my high school website, which resulted in starting a small but very successful web design business at age 16 that helped finance my way through college."

"Although I was small compared to other guys, I made the first string on my high school football team."
"I graduated from high school with honors even though I was very active in school clubs and had to work part-time."

"I was the first of my family to go to college and one of the few from my high school. Worked part-time and summers. A real struggle, but I made it."

"Earned an ‘A’ grade on my senior psychology project form a real tough professor."

"Finished my Master’s degree while working full-time and attending to important family responsibilities."

"Proposed a chef's course for junior high boys. Got it approved. Developed it into a very popular elective."

"Designed our house and had it constructed in time and under budget."

"Taught myself advanced digital photo methods that resulted in winning first place in a prestigious photo contest for amateur photographers."

"Organized a successful community effort that opposed developing a 10-acre historical site into a Wal-Mart shopping complex."

"Raised two wonderful daughters who are studying to become medical doctors."
2. Prioritize your seven most significant achievements.

Your Most Significant Achievements

1. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

2. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

3. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

4. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

5. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

6. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________

7. ____________________________________________
   ____________________________________________
3. Write a full page or more on each of your prioritized achievements. You should describe:

- How you initially became involved.
- The details of what you did and how you did it.
- What was especially enjoyable or satisfying to you.

Use copies of the "Detailing Your Achievements" Form on the following page. Make multiple copies and use one for each achievement.
Detailing Your Achievements

ACHIEVEMENT # ___: ____________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
1. How did I initially become involved? ________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
2. What did I do? ___________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
3. How did I do it? _________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
4. What was especially enjoyable about doing? _________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
4. Elaborate on your achievements:

   Have one or two other people interview you. For each achievement have them note on a separate sheet of paper any terms used to reveal your skills, abilities, and personal qualities. To elaborate details, the interviewer(s) may ask:

   • What was involved in your achievement?
   • What was your part?
   • What did you actually do?
   • How did you do that?

   Clarify any vague areas by providing an example or illustration of what you actually did.

   Probe the following questions:

   • Would you elaborate on one example of what you mean?
   • Could you give me an illustration?
   • What were you good at doing?

   This interview should clarify the details of your activities by asking only "what" and "how" questions. It should take 45 to 90 minutes to complete. Make copies of the "Strength Identification Interview" form on the following pages to guide you through this interview.
Strength Identification Interview

Interviewee _________________________ Interviewer __________________________

INSTRUCTIONS: For each achievement experience, identify the skills and abilities the achiever actually demonstrated. Obtain details of the experience by asking what was involved with the achievement and how the individual made the achievement happen. Avoid "why" questions which tend to mislead. Ask for examples or illustrations of what and how.

Achievement # 1:

Achievement # 2:

Achievement # 3:
Achievement # 4:

Achievement # 5:

Achievement # 6:

Achievement # 7:

Recurring abilities and skills:
5. Identify patterns by examining the interviewer’s notes:

   Together, identify the recurring skills, abilities, and personal qualities demonstrated in your achievements. Search for patterns. Your skills pattern should be clear at this point; you should feel comfortable with it. If you have questions, review the data. If you disagree with a conclusion, disregard it. The results must accurately and honestly reflect how you operate.

6. Synthesize the information by clustering similar skills into categories:

   For example, your skills might be grouped according to the clusters below:

   **Synthesized Skill Clusters**

   - Investigate/Survey/Read
   - Inquire/Probe/Question
   - Learn/Memorize/Practice
   - Evaluate/Appraise/Assess
   - Compare
   - Influence/Involve/Get participation/Publicize
   - Promote
   - Teach/Train/Drill
   - Perform/Show/Demonstrate
   - Construct/Assemble/Put together
   - Organize/Structure/Provide
   - definition/Plan/Chart course
   - Strategize/Coordinate
   - Create/Design/Adapt/Modify

   This exercise yields a relatively comprehensive inventory of your skills. The information will better enable you to use a skills vocabulary when identifying your objective, writing your resume and letters, and interviewing. If you are like many others who have successfully completed this exercise, your self-confidence and self-esteem should increase accordingly. (pp. 106 – 112).
**Stories**

You have just completed a significant amount of work identifying a wide variety of skills, abilities, and achievements. Some will pertain to your job goal, and some won't. You need to assess all of this information to determine what are your most qualifying skills, abilities, and achievements as they pertain to job(s) you want. However, the question is, how do you present this information in an interview? Do you just rattle off a list of skills and abilities? Of course not. Everybody loves a story, and that's what you need to develop in order to illustrate your strengths. Your stories should be short, no longer than two to three minutes maximum. Remember, these are achievement based stories. Employers are looking to see what you have achieved, and how you achieved it. No one can see into the future, but the old adage of past behavior being a good indication of future behavior is the best indicator available to the hiring authority. Therefore, go over your accomplishments, put them in a story narrative, write them down in story form, and practice, practice, practice. These stories should roll off your tongue as easily as reciting the ABCs. You want this to be a simple explanation and illustration of who and what you are. The job offer depends on it, and you deserve it.
Chapter 3

JOB SEARCH METHODS

The following information on job-search methods is adapted from What Color Is Your Parachute? by Richard Nelson Bolles (2011). His list identifies the various methods job seekers use to in their attempts to secure employment, and he puts them in descending order of effectiveness. The effectiveness of each method is judged on the basis of results reported by job seekers who utilized one method only in their quest to find employment.

1. Form or join a job club.
2. Ask for job leads from everyone you know, most notably family, friends, people in the community, and school.
3. Yellow Pages.
4. Cold call in person.
5. State or federal employment offices.
6. Former teachers/professors.
7. Civil-service examination.
8. Hiring halls.
9. Private employment agencies.
10. Newspaper ads.
11. Professional or trade journals ads.

The Good

Based on his evaluation of these methods, the first four represent the best methods for finding employment. The second item on the list could be condensed into one category,
networking. Most other sources also confirm that the first two choices of forming or joining a job club and networking are significantly more effective than the other methods for finding work. The effectiveness rating for these two methods is approximately 80% to 85%. They are the best of the best.

It is widely considered that the job club concept has been around since Azrin and Besalel published their *Job Club Counselor’s Manual* in 1980. However, the concept of the job club first appeared 1973 (Jones & Azrin 1973), and again in 1974 (Azrin, Flores & Kaplan, 1974). Krannich (2010) suggests that joining or forming a job club could cut your job search time in half. The job club provides a supportive environment for its members. There are many different versions of the job club. Some provide assistance to specific targeted populations such as recovering drug and alcohol clients, people over 40, Ph.D.’s, and veterans, to name a few. Times and meetings are scheduled in advance, usually at the same time and place each week. The members determine what the agenda will be. Members help each other with various aspects of the job search such as practicing interviews, developing resumes, exchanging information about companies, providing additional contacts to other members, posting job openings, and providing emotional support.

As a veteran with a service-connected disability who recently completed a training program through the Department of Veterans Affairs, Vocational Rehabilitation & Education office in Sacramento, it would be advantageous for you to find and join or create a job club with other VR&E veterans. The benefits of doing so include the support, camaraderie and understanding of fellow veterans who are well aware of what each is going through. This is also where you could find assistance in translating your military background to language civilians understand, and where you can get and give job-search tips, and receive validation of your efforts.

Networking is critical to any job search and it is addressed in more detail in Chapter 4.
The next two categories, using the Yellow Pages and cold calling in person, round out the top choices at approximately 60% and 50% respectively.

You might ask, “Why would I use the Yellow Pages?” Because using the Yellow Pages is the third best way to find a job. The Yellow Pages provides a quick and easy reference to companies by categories, along with their phone number and usually their address. Since the phone book is updated annually, this is a good source to determine which companies are still in business. You can also prospect for and identify other companies by categories by reviewing the index.

Cold calling provides you with a golden opportunity to look into any business or organization that looks interesting, and it is a legitimate activity. It is to your advantage to research the business or organization before walking in. However, it is perfectly acceptable to walk into the business next to the location where you just finished having lunch and inquire as to the nature of their business, and if they have any job openings. The question regarding job openings has several aspects to it. You would be able to determine if your skills could or would be utilized there. If so, and a job is available, so much the better. However, if that is not the case, but they have an opening in a totally unrelated area, that information could be most beneficial to other job seekers, especially if you belong to a Job Club. In that situation, you would be in a position to do the employer a favor by informing him or her that you may have an associate who would be a perfect fit, and that you would pass along the information immediately. That employer then becomes a prime target to become a charter member of your network.

Bolles (2011) reported that using only one of these four methods provides a good success ratio. The success ratio increases when more than one method is utilized. He stated that incorporating two methods are better than one, three methods are better than two, and four methods are better than three, the best combination. However, when additional methods are
added to the mix beyond four, the effectiveness of the job search begins to deteriorate on a
continuous downward swing as additional methods are utilized.

**The Bad and The Ugly**

The remaining methods are also in descending order of effectiveness and none has a good
probability of success. It is interesting to note that the one method utilized most by job seekers,
going online to look for job postings and shooting off resumes to the openings found, is the least
productive of all methods. Ugly!

Why ugly? Let's see. In fifth place, we find applying at state or federal employment
offices with a 14% success rate. Next comes asking former teachers and professors at 12%, tied
at that rate with civil-service examinations. Coming in at the 8% success rate is going to places
where employees are picked up such as union hiring halls. Next on this dubious list is using
private employment agencies. The rate of success is 5% to 28%. This may be a little misleading
because as the salary increases, the openings decrease. Answering newspaper classified ads
follows at 5% to 24%. Again, the higher the salary, the fewer number of openings available.
And the competition becomes much greater when everyone knows about the job. The next two
methods, are tied at 7% success each. They are, applying to ads in professional or trade journals,
and mass mailing resumes. The former is less expensive, while the latter can be significantly
more costly due to the expense just for paper, envelopes, and more significantly, postage.

Coming in in last place is looking for a job on the Internet. Why would that come in so low? Job
seekers who apply for jobs posted on the Internet not only compete with local job seekers, but
also regional and national competition. Depending upon the job, they could also be competing
against international competition. Hundreds if not thousands of individuals could apply for each
job posted on the Internet. That truly is ugly.
Chapter 4

INFORMATIONAL INTERVIEWS AND NETWORKING

Informational Interviews

What is an informational interview? An informational interview is talking with people about their jobs and careers to gain information and advice. The term was coined by Richard Nelson Bolles, the author of *What Color Is Your Parachute?* published in 2011. For anyone who is apprehensive about job interviews, informational interviewing provides a golden opportunity to improve your confidence and communication skills, and begin developing your network of potential employers. It is also a way to evaluate potential employers (more about that later). Because this is a meeting between two people with similar interests, and there is no job riding on the outcome, rejections are avoided. As a veteran, you may be apprehensive about how best to approach employers. Informational interviewing is a great way to get your feet wet in the interviewing process in a non-threatening way. Initially, you will want to meet with people who are doing the job you are interested in doing. You can find out what they like about the job, what they dislike about the job, what is the best part, the worst part, how they got started, and a myriad of other questions. This is research, you are acquiring information.

Because this is not a hiring interview, it does not mean that you do not need to prepare for it. Quite the contrary; preparation here is important because you want to make the best impression on what could turn out to be one of your primary targets for employment. Therefore, conduct thorough research to acquire as much information as possible, and prepare thoughtful and intelligent questions to take with you to the interview. Thought-provoking and insightful questions will impress your host and raise your status. Questions like, "What do you guys do here?" demonstrates that you are not serious, and will ruin any options for the future with that individual and the company.
Why are we talking about informational interviews when I need job interviews?

Excellent question. Informational interviews are one option to aid in the job-search. It is far easier to meet with the decision-maker in an informational interview setting than it is to schedule a job interview. And, by demonstrating your value with thought-provoking and insightful questions, coupled with a few of your achievement stories sprinkled in, you have an opportunity set the stage for a job interview later. It also provides you with an opportunity to learn about problems or needs the company is facing, potential expansion into new areas that might be your area, and any number of other issues that might be right up your alley. You may also be able to identify a hidden need that you have the expertise and interest in filling. In that instance, you have the prospect of developing your own job. Don’t laugh, that is a distinct possibility that could present itself at any point in your job-search. Without that informational interview, you may not have uncovered any of this information and may have missed a golden opportunity.

There is another caveat to informational interviewing, and this cannot be over emphasized: You must not attempt to move the informational interview directly to a job interview. Never, never, never do that, ever! That will destroy your credibility in an instant. When asking for the interview, be sure to put them at ease by emphasizing that the purpose of the meeting is for information and advice, not a job.

Okay, how do I set up an informational interview? The best way is through a referral. Contacting your target is always best if you can say something to the effect of, “I was talking with a mutual friend of ours, John Jones, about (your company or your career field), and he suggested that I contact you. He said you were (knowledgeable, an expert, or whatever John Jones said), and that I should call to schedule a short 20 minute meeting at your convenience. I could sure use a little help. I am not applying for a job at this time. However, I am looking to get your insight on “X”. So, what time would work best for you?”
"But, what if I don't have any contacts to use as a referral?" That is not a problem. You just have to identify the person you want to talk with, and contact him or her. "Why would they be willing to talk with me?" Aside from the fact that most people like to help other people, there are two reasons why your target would be willing to meet with you. First, most people like talking about what they do. Second, they like talking about themselves. If you don't believe this, think back to your last social gathering and the topics of conversation when introduced to someone new. It generally goes something like this: "Glad to meet you John. What do you do?"

Conversations typically start out with who are you and what do you do.

You made the call and scheduled the appointment. What's next? Preparation. Be sure that you research the company so that you know who they are, what they do, where they do it, and any additional information available. Check the company website, annual reports, industry reports, trade magazines, newspaper articles, and any other sources that come to mind. You should develop specific questions that you want answered and that show your level of understanding and knowledge of the company and the career field. These questions are about the job, working conditions, training and qualifications, as well as pertinent questions about how your host likes the field, how he or she got into it, and what his or her perception is of the future.

Be sure to stick to the time schedule agreed upon. If the meeting was set for 20 minutes, wrap it up at 20 minutes. Always thank your host. Always ask for referrals, and request permission to use your host's name when contacting the referrals. Also, if your host did not provide you with a business card when you arrived, always be sure to ask for one before you leave. This is important so that your thank you note is addressed properly. Names can be spelled in funny ways, and you don't want to misspell his or her name when writing.

After Interview actions: First, it is important to document as much information as possible, in as much detail as possible immediately following your interview, and this applies to
any interview, informational or hiring. Why? The same reason that pilots get debriefed after a mission, or anyone else coming in from a mission files an after action report: Documentation and lessons learned. The sooner you write down this information, the better, because the longer you take to do it, the more you will forget. Fill out the following After Interview Checklist or develop your own list of questions that will elicit the information you want to keep. What was discussed? What topics were covered? What was your overall impression of the facility? Did you get satisfactory answers to your questions? How did you rate the company? The reason to do so is that you want to develop a network of contacts in your industry. You just started with this interview. You will probably interact with this individual in the future, and you want to be sure that you have as much information as possible. You never know who you will be interviewing with for a position. If you had previous interaction with your interviewer, reviewing your notes on what had transpired would be invaluable. It would give you the inside track, and an opportunity to bring up pertinent tidbits of information from your previous meeting. It would demonstrate that you either have a phenomenal memory, or are exceptionally organized. Either of these scenarios puts you in good light. Second, you shall send a thank you note! And, you shall do it the same day as the interview, without fail (see Chapter 7, Follow Up). Third, contact the referrals from your interview to schedule subsequent interviews. Keep the momentum going.

Another advantage to informational interviewing, but not restricted to it, is the possibility of identifying an as yet unknown job opportunity. Even though you have completed a training program to acquire skills to qualify you for your job goal, there may be other options for which you are qualified that you have not considered. It is often said that many if not most college graduates end up working in fields other than the one for which they were trained. In fact, Krumboltz and Levin (2004) wrote an entire book addressing the very point that even though we plan for one career, we should not wear blinders and reject other options that may come our way.
So keep your eyes open, you may find the proverbial pot of gold in another field.

One final note: How would you rate a company immediately after an informational interview or first meeting? Grade both the company and your interviewer on the After Interview Checklist. The ranking system is similar to school grades with an “A” equaling top marks, “B” equaling above average, “C” equaling average or OK, and “F” equaling a failing mark. In his best-selling book, *The No Ass Hole Rule*, Sutton (2007) gives examples of tyrannical managers and supervisors. If you identify one of these, that company is an automatic “F” company to be avoided at all costs.

There are several reasons for ranking companies. If given sufficient time, you would be able to identify the “A” companies, and could then apply to them at the same time with the goal of securing at least one job offer, and preferably more. You would know that any one of those companies would be terrific to work for, and you would not have to wonder if you made the right choice. If only one job offer is extended, you take it. But, if more than one offer is forthcoming, you are in a position to negotiate to improve the offers. On the other hand, if no offers are forthcoming from those companies, you move down the scale and repeat the process.
After Interview Checklist

Following any interview, you should record as much information as you can as soon as possible.

Circle the number of any of the items below that you would like to work on. Below that, describe in as much detail as possible what occurred, what questions were asked. The more detail, the better. Comment on your assessment of the people you met, what you thought of the physical facility (new, old, well maintained, rundown), etc. Use the back of this form or extra sheets for additional space, but get it all down.

1. Arrived on time
2. Dressed properly
3. Friendly with receptionist/others
4. Wrote down name of receptionist
5. Introduced myself
6. Explained the reason for my interest
7. Mentioned who referred me
8. Maintained good eye contact
9. Obtained answers to prepared questions
10. Mentioned responsibility and dependability
11. Provided resume (if appropriate)
12. Described my qualifications
13. Used stories effectively
14. Used good body language
15. Determined the next step
16. Obtained referrals
17. Obtained business card
18. Sent thank you letter
19. Other
20. Rate the company: A  B  C  F

______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________

Name & address of company: _____________________________________________________
Name & title of person you met & date: ____________________________________________
As we saw in Chapter 3, networking is critical to any job search. The hidden job market makes up as much as 80% of available jobs. Breaking into the hidden job market is best accomplished through the process known as networking. Bolles (2011) places networking high on his list of job-search methods. He starts the process by listing virtually everyone you know beginning with family and friends, and then expanding it to everyone else you know in the community.

Krannich (2010) espouses three major activities when networking: Building, expanding, and nurturing your networking contacts. Start developing a contact list of people you know. Begin contacting them in order to obtain information, advice, and referrals. As you acquire more names, you begin expanding your network. You also expand your list by making cold calls. In this way you are growing your list by contacting people you know, and people you have not met yet. These activities are not one-time shots, never to be seen again. These are people you will be working with in the future. Therefore, you need to nurture them by keeping in contact with them. This includes thank you notes, returning favors, and helping them whenever possible. It is a two-way street, one you will be traveling the rest of your life. Drive courteously.

Krannich (2010) also recommends making networking a centerpiece of your job search. He further states that networking is a give-and-take proposition. It is important to maintain those contacts and to provide assistance to those in your network, not just pester them for job leads. Networking should become a life-long habit. In fact, many employers prefer this method because it reduces their recruiting costs and hiring risks. "Personal contact is the major job-finding method, used by nearly 75% of all successful job seekers." (p. 151)

As you saw in the previous section on Informational Interviewing, record keeping is important. It is no less important here. In fact, it is vital to keep records on all of your contacts
regardless of how they come about or the results. It does not have to be an informational interview or a networking meeting. You could meet someone at a concert, at a sporting event, at a fundraiser, or any number of other venues.
Chapter 5

RESUMES

What Goes in Your Resume?

There is no such thing as the perfect resume, or the single “best” resume. Each one should be unique to its owner. There are several formats from which to choose: Chronological, functional, and combination. We will address those three shortly. However, there are some basic principles that are common to all three. Let's start at the top and work down. The information contained in your resume should be in descending order of most important to least important by the major categories you select, and within those categories. Before addressing the categories, it is critical that your contact information is included at the top. It is not only permissible, but it is recommended that you use a slightly larger font for your name. You should include a physical address, phone number, and e-mail. Resumes should have major headings, with the primary ones generally including OBJECTIVE, EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE, and sometimes QUALIFICATIONS, and ADDITIONAL INFORMATION. There can certainly be other headings. Let's look at some of them, the first being the objective.

Objective: The reader should not have to guess what job you are applying for. A small minority suggest leaving this out because you stated it in your cover letter. What happens if the cover letter and resume are separated? Do not leave the reader in suspense or doubt as to what you want; that is the first item that should be in the objective statement. The second item should indicate where you want to work. Is that Sacramento, Northern California, New York, where? Finally, you should include two key skills and how you would utilize them to help the company.

In John Fitzgerald Kennedy’s inaugural address, he uttered the famous quote, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country.” That is a good thought to keep in mind. Remember it when preparing your resume and in your interviews, the
prospective employer wants to know what you can do for him, not what he can do for you. Too often, job seekers include comments in their objective statement to the effect they are looking for a company that is growing and can provide opportunities for education, a good benefits package, advancement, and other things that benefit them, and have little to do with their ability to do the job for which they are applying. That sends up a red flag to the reader of the resume that screams out "Me, me, me!" Here is an example of a good objective statement:

OBJECTIVE

Sales Representative for XYZ Corporation based in Sacramento, where I can utilize my organizational and networking expertise to help expand the territorial market.

Education: If you have more than one college degree, put them in descending order: Ph.D., master's degree, bachelor’s degree, associate’s degree. If you have any of these degrees, do not include your high school information. If you do not have a college degree, it would be appropriate to include your high school diploma or your GED. Your degree is more important than where you obtained it. Therefore, place it first, followed by the institution from which you graduated, followed by the month and year of your graduation. That should fit on one line. If you have a high GPA, that should go immediately under your graduation date. If there are significant courses that specifically address your job goal, you can list those under a subheading of: Major coursework. Do not list more than five courses, and be sure they are relevant. Here is an example:

EDUCATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Institution</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>GPA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B.S.</td>
<td>Business</td>
<td>California State University, Sacramento</td>
<td>Dec. 2010</td>
<td>3.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Major coursework:</td>
<td>Small Business Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Business Accounting</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Account Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Territorial Expansion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.S.</td>
<td>Marketing</td>
<td>American River College</td>
<td>May 2008</td>
<td>3.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Sacramento, California</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Experience: This section provides an opportunity to illustrate the experience you have. As stated before, simply listing your duties and/or responsibilities tells the reader practically nothing. It does not separate you from the rest of the job seekers, it lumps you in with them. It will not result in an interview offer, unless your background is unique. Don't count on it. What will set you apart are your achievements. That is why you spent so much time and effort identifying and quantifying them. Here is where you illustrate your value. Employers want to know what you have accomplished. Did you save money, increase income, expand the business, improve the operation, develop a new procedure? This is where you get to shine. Each achievement statement should start with an active verb as illustrated below. That gets the reader's attention and makes each achievement stand out in a hard-hitting way. Also, what you did, your job title, is more important than the company where you worked, it's the experience that counts. Therefore, put your job title first, followed by the company, dates, and location. Here is an example that reflects a second option for formatting:

**EXPERIENCE**

Counter Sales Associate (Summers)  Avis Rental  2008 – 2010
Sacramento, CA

Developed tracking system to follow-up with diverse customer base in order to facilitate repeat business. Increased repeat business by 15% and referrals from current customers by 10%. Awarded Outstanding Associate each summer for highest customer satisfaction rating.

Bullet points are a cleaner way to highlight your major points and make it easier to read.

- Developed efficient tracking system
- Initiated and expanded customer contacts
- Increased repeat business 15%
- Increased referral business 10%
- Awarded Outstanding Associate each summer (3) for highest customer satisfaction rating.
Additional Information: This is somewhat of a catchall, but it provides a place to include other relevant information. The operative word here is relevant. The reader does not need to know that you are an avid stamp collector, that you sing in a barbershop quartet, or what your political affiliation is. This is where you can put information such as campus activities, technical computer skills that could be utilized in your job or any other appropriate information that makes the case for why they should hire you. Here is an example:

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- President, Student Business Association  2010 - 2011
- Secretary, Student Business Association  2009 - 2010
- Excel, Word (55wpm), PowerPoint

When you pull this all together, this is what the resume would look like.
Rufus T. Whizbang  
1234 Howe Ave., Apt. X  
Sacramento, CA 98525  
(916) 555-1234  
rtwhizbang@aol.com

OBJECTIVE

Sales Representative for XYZ Inc. Based in Sacramento, where I can utilize my organizational and networking expertise to help expand the territorial market.

EDUCATION

B.S. Business  California State University, Sacramento  Dec. 2010  
3.92 GPA

Major coursework:  
Small Business Management  
Business Accounting  
Account Management  
Territorial Expansion

A.S. Marketing  American River College  May 2008  
Sacramento, CA  
3.98 GPA

EXPERIENCE

Counter Sales Associate (Summers)  Avis Rental  2008 – 2010  
Sacramento, CA

• Developed efficient tracking system  
• Initiated and expanded customer contact  
• Increased repeat business by 15%  
• Increased referral business by 10%  
• Awarded Outstanding Associate each summer for highest customer satisfaction rating.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

• President, Student Business Association  2010 – 2011  
• Secretary, Student Business Association  2009 – 2010  
• Excel, Word (55wpm), PowerPoint
Before we move into the different types of resumes, here are a few more items to consider. Generally, most employers are not interested in information that goes beyond 10 years. The resume should be limited to one page, but it is permissible to expand it to two pages if there is sufficient information to warrant the second page. However, do not use a second page just to have more "stuff" in your resume. In your first draft of your resume, you can make it as long as you want. But you then need to go through it, delete anything that does not help your case, tighten it up, and by all means, target it to the job for which you are applying. You want your resume to look good, regardless of what is included on it. You do not want to have the resume cover the top two thirds of the page with the bottom one third blank. In order to do that, you can change the font, change the font size, change the margins, and adjust or change spacing so the resume is centered and fills the entire page. You want to leave sufficient space in the margins so that it looks crisp, clean and easy to read.

**Chronological Resumes**

Chronological resumes are the traditional resume format, and the type most often used. It is used to present your professional experience in chronological order with your most recent employment first. After identifying your job title or function, your employer, the dates of employment by month and year, and the city and state, you put your achievement statements immediately below. This is followed by the next most recent job until you have included all of the information you want in your resume.

When should you use a chronological resume? Chronological resumes are most frequently utilized when there is an upward mobility that is clearly identified by the jobs you have held. The following list illustrates that point:

- **Regional Sales Director**  
  July 2009 - present

- **District Sales Manager**  
  May 2006 - June 2009
Office Sales Manager April 2002 - May 2006
Sales Associate Sept. 2000 - April 2002

This work history illustrates a progressive continuous upgrade in this person's career, and a chronological resume is the appropriate type of resume to illustrate that point. However, to reiterate a point, and to illustrate it, the Sales Associate job should be deleted from this individual's resume. Why? First, it is more than 10 years old. Second, it does not add any power to this resume. When looking at the other four positions, it is impossible to come away wondering if this person ever sold anything. He did not start his career in sales as a sales manager. The following is an example of a chronological resume:
John Q. Worker
1234 What’s It Street
Sacramento, CA 95625
(916) 555-5555
jqworker@aol.com

OBJECTIVE:
To obtain an auditing position with XYZ, Inc., a CPA firm.

EDUCATION
BS in Business Administration, Accountancy concentration GPA 3.87
California State University, Sacramento Dec. 2011
CPA Examination: Jan. 2012
Honors: Business Student of the Year, 2011
Dean’s list all four years
Computer Skills: Quicken, Excel, Word, PowerPoint, Access
Internship: PDQ CPA Inc. Spring semester 2011

WORK HISTORY
Bookkeeper (self-employed) Sacramento, CA
John Q. Bookkeeping 2009 to present
• Assisted startup companies by setting up their bookkeeping systems
• Prepared monthly reports for companies and businesses
• Provided profit and loss statement
• Networked to obtain referrals to expand business

Accounts Receivable Sacramento, CA
Johnson Construction 2008 – 2010
• Reconciled accounts
• Developed early tracking system that improved receivables by 12%
• Researched and recommended installation of computer accounting system which resulted in smoother operation of all accounts

AFFILIATIONS
Future CPAs of America

VOLUNTEER WORK
Big Brothers Big Sisters 2005 to present
Networked to expand the number of volunteers by 22%
Functional Resumes

Functional resumes tend to be the least favorite resume for employers because they see them as a technique to mask problems such as gaps in employment. As a result, it should be your last format choice. Functional resumes emphasize skill areas such as organizational skills, management skills, and technical skills to name a few. Frequently, this style is utilized by people who are attempting a career change and want to illustrate their transferable skills. Functional resumes deemphasize employment chronology and may even exclude employers and dates of employment. The following resume illustrates a functional resume.
William “Willy” Williams
1234 Williams Way
Williamsburg, Wisconsin, 00004
(102) 555-5555
wwwilliams@aol.org

OBJECTIVE
Front Office Medical Assistant with The Doctors’ Clinic in Sacramento, CA.

EDUCATION
Medical Assistant Certificate                Feb. 2012
NBS Training Institute                   Sacramento, CA

Training included:
• Phlebotomy
• ICD coding
• Front-office procedures
• Proper telephone etiquette
• Scheduling
• Sterilization of instruments
• Taking vital signs
• Back-office procedures

Carbondale Community High School, Carbondale, TX    June 1996

QUALIFICATIONS
Patient Care                                      3 years
• Certified Nursing Assistant
• Trained other CNAs
• Worked hand-in-hand with registered nurses

Medic                                            4 years
• Received medical training in the US Army
• Assisted in training new recruits
• Stationed at medical evacuation center, Hamburg, Germany

Volunteer firefighter and paramedic              3 years
• Worked with Sarpy County volunteer fire department
• Trained other firefighters and paramedics
Combination Resumes

Combination resumes are ideal for individuals who have been employed in the same company for a long time. This resume emphasizes skill subsets in much the same fashion as a functional resume, but it also includes an employment section to show the continuous work history. The combination resume is also good for career changers because it eliminates the questions that the functional resume raises when the employment dates are excluded. This is an excellent format for veterans. The following page illustrates a combination resume:
Harvey X. Schmidlap
0000 Speedy Street
Sacramento, CA 91234
(916) 555-5555
hxschmidlap@aol.com

OBJECTIVE
National Sales Manager for Utopia Insurance Conglomerate, where I can use my extensive networking and organizational skills to increase market share.

QUALIFICATIONS
Networkin
- Developed, maintain and continue to expand an extensive personal network of over 1,500 influential leaders in education and a wide variety of industries.
- Published two books and several articles on networking.

Organizational Skills
- Devised and implemented a reorganization of present company which streamlined processing claims yielding a 15% increase in customer satisfaction.
- Consolidated sales districts for greater efficiency.
- Successfully expanded market share by 25% through development of better training, incentives and profit sharing.
- Improve retention of sales force by 10% with improved training and incentives.

Program Development
- Conducted extensive customer research in order to determine strengths and weaknesses of products and services.
- Implemented corrective measures to address weaknesses in services, both in sales and retention, as well as in claims service. Recommend additional training. Results included improved morale and retention of sales force, with improved customer relations in claims and speedier claims service.
- Increased profit margin by 35%.

EXPERIENCE
Regional Sales Director  National Insurance  Dallas, TX  2009 - present
District Sales Manager  XYZ Insurance Co.  Dallas, TX  2006 - 2009
Office Sales Manager  UBTF Insurance  Norman, OK  2002 - 2006

EDUCATION
MBA  Stanford Business School  Palo Alto, CA  2001
BS  Business  University of Oklahoma  Norman, OK  1999

AFFILIATIONS
Toastmasters, Past National President, 2009
Million-Dollar Circle, Lifetime Member
**How to Use a Resume, and When**

Here's a good question, how do you use a resume? Your resume is your sales piece, your flyer, that golden nugget that extols your virtues and compels the reader to rush out and beg you to come to work for them. Well, not quite. In actuality, a resume is used as a screening device, not a selection device. Put yourself in the position of the employer who needs to fill a job. If that job is advertised, the company will be swamped with resumes. Usually, the first screening is not done by the hiring authority, but by a lower-level employee. That could be an administrative assistant to the decision-maker, or someone in the human resources department. Their job is to weed out people. Anything in the resume that is not consistent with their desires results in elimination. That could be colored paper, irregular sized paper, misspelled words, strange and mysterious formats, or any idiosyncrasies the employer wants to exclude. Regardless of the screening method, there will be two stacks--those few resumes that survived the cut (they could not find a reason to dump it), and the vast majority that did not. That is the general accepted method of how employers use resumes. So, avoid that scenario. How?

By networking, you can avoid the wrath of the individual who has to go through stacks of resumes. Networking gets you into the hidden job market. You are able to meet and talk with decision-makers, and uncover job openings that have not yet been advertised, or identify opportunities just waiting for someone with your skills, and your abilities, and your interest, and your enthusiasm to resolve. When you find that opportunity, or you are meeting with a decision-maker and talking about your talents, do you take a resume with you? Some say yes, and some say no. If you do take a resume, and you decide to show it, it may not fit the opportunity being discussed. That won't help your cause. It may be more appropriate for you not to take your resume with you when exploring options and opportunities with a decision-maker. If he wants to see it, let him know that you would be most happy to bring one by first thing in the morning.
This gives you the opportunity to make revisions in light of the information you acquired during your meeting. When you bring it in the next morning, it will be targeted to exactly the position you had discussed which puts you in a much stronger position.

There is another advantage for doing this. It provides you with an opportunity to come up with one or two insightful questions generated from your meeting with this person. Why is that important? It is important because it provides you with one more opportunity to shine. And, it puts your face in front of his face a second time, which helps to further cement that bond. This is a good technique to use regardless of whether or not you make any changes to your resume, and it also allows the other party to ask additional questions of you. He has had time to think about your previous meeting, and he may want to talk more. He may also decide that he wants you to meet other people in the organization, and could even do it at that time, or schedule it in the next day or two. That would be a clear indication of significant interest on his part.

On the other hand, if you are meeting with someone doing the type of work you are most interested in, but the individual is not the one who makes the hiring decision, it would be advantageous to have your "draft" resume with you. Getting feedback from those who are already doing what you are most interested in doing can be valuable. This is an informational interview, and you can get some good recommendations on your resume from these informational interviews. This is especially pertinent for veterans. If you have never sought civilian employment before, getting this kind of feedback and advice should help to reinforce that you are doing all the right things, taking the right steps. It is one thing to hear so-called "experts" tell you that you are doing the right thing, but validating those comments by talking to those who are actually doing the job, who are "in the trenches" is a liberating experience, well worth the effort.

**Cover Letters**

Cover letters accompany resumes. If you are mailing your resume as opposed to handing
it to someone, you should include a cover letter. Never address a cover letter with the catchall salutation: To whom it may concern. You must get the name of the person to whom you are sending it. The cover letter serves as an introduction to your resume, not a summary of it. In your first paragraph, it is important to show your enthusiasm, how you heard about the position or company, and who you are. Who you are pertains to your current status, a recent graduate, someone with experience in a particular area, something that gives credence to why you should be considered. And to reiterate, demonstrate in this paragraph why you are interested in them.

In the second paragraph, you need to present proof that you are the best candidate. You do this by illustrating activities that demonstrate you can do the job. These are not just statements, but concrete examples. This relates to some of your stories. There isn't enough space to recount your stories, but you can use the topics. You can also utilize coursework, internships, class projects, as well as current and past jobs.

In the third paragraph, you need to illustrate your interest in working for that company, agency, organization. Why do you want to work for them? Explain that in convincing terms.

Your final paragraph refers to the enclosed resume. You can mention referrals, but do not include referral letters. And, specify the next step or action you desire. The final step is to proofread everything that goes out. If you have someone who will also proofread your work, so much the better. You can never be too careful.

The preceding information on resumes and cover letters was adapted from class notes and handouts for college course EDS 268 at California State University, Sacramento Spring 2012 semester.
Sample Cover Letter

John Q. Public, M.S.
1234 High Street
Quincy, IL 60123
(916) 555-5555
Jqpublic21@aol.com

April 2, 2012
Mr. John Jones, Ph.D.
Managing Partner
Life Services, Inc.
99999 X Street Mall, Suite 205
Sacramento, CA 91234

Dear Dr. Jones:

You in your company have been in the forefront of developing unique services in the field of physical therapy for amputees. I have followed with interest your growth and expansion since you opened your practice six years ago. Your innovative approach is exciting to me. I know firsthand what your clients experience, having my left leg amputated just below the knee seven years ago. That influenced me to return to school where I recently earned my Master’s degree with honors in physical therapy from Six Rivers University.

While undergoing therapy, I started a self-help group with fellow amputees to get them up and out. We begin taking on projects to assist the elderly in nursing homes. What started out as a program to motivate my fellow veterans to be more active turned out to be psychologically useful because they were helping other people. I have continued with this project on a volunteer basis, and we now have six chapters in Illinois.

The research I have done on your company is most encouraging. Encouraging because my philosophy seems to fit like a glove with the direction you are taking. As I said, I have followed your company because of my personal experiences. My training, commitment, and desire is to be associated with the leading company on the West Coast, Life Services, Inc.

My closed resume provides additional information regarding my qualifications. I will be in Sacramento during the second week of May, and would appreciate an opportunity to meet with you. To that end, I will call you on Tuesday, April 16, 2012.

Sincerely,

John Q. Public

Enclosure: Resume
Chapter 6

JOB INTERVIEWS

Traditional vs. Behavioral Interviews

The job interview is where everything comes together. All your preparation, all your hard work coalesces into this one event. There is still some work to be done. There are two types of interviews, the traditional and the behavioral. The traditional method has not worked well for employers, and more and more they are transitioning to the behavioral method. So what's the difference? The difference is how the question is posed, and is probably illustrated best with an example. The traditional method tends to present questions in a hypothetical setting. "What would you do if the customer became angry?" You then have the opportunity to respond anyway that you wish. Is that really how you would respond? Or is it what you think the interviewer wants to hear?

The behavioral method is much different, although it addresses the same issue. The behavioral question is more specific. "You have indicated you have good people skills and provide great customer services. Can you give me an example of when you had to deal with an irate customer?" This is no longer hypothetical. The interviewer wants to know what you did and how you did it. If you are not prepared for these types of questions, you will not do well in the interview. If you do not do well in the interview, you will not be considered and will not get a job offer. Therefore, as stated earlier in this process, the answer is simple. As you have heard in the business real estate world, the three important things are: Location, location, location. In this case, the three important answers are: Preparation, preparation, preparation.

You have already done a great deal of preparation, and now it needs to be polished off. The preparation that you have completed on your motivated abilities and skills, job skills, and
Transferable skills will provide the groundwork for this next effort. When you are ready to apply for a job, you must know as much as possible about that job. It starts with the job announcement which identifies the list of skills, knowledge, education, and experience the employer wants candidates to possess. That job announcement needs to be carefully dissected to extract all of the key elements the employer wants, so that you can compare them with what you have to offer.

Take each sentence separately, identify the skills associated with the statement, and list the skills underneath that statement. You need to be a detective, a researcher, a nitpicker. Pull out everything you can from each statement. As you go through the job announcement, you will begin to see which skills are most important and what they are want. You may also get the impression that there are important issues that are not included in the announcement, but that you suspect are still vital. Once you have seen the announcement and listed all the skills and qualifications they want, identify the top six or seven factors and condense them into one-or two-word categories such as influential or persuasive, leader, motivator, imaginative, analytical, trainer. These are keywords which will also help you to customize your resume. You have now identified the key factors that the employer is looking for. The next step in the process is to identify what you have to offer. This will come primarily from your previous work on skills.

The first step in this process is to identify your best job skills, the "hard" skills and write them down. The second step is to list your functional or transferable skills, the "soft" skills. Don't forget to include personal skills in this group. These are things like self-starter, reliable, patient, and having a good sense of humor. The third step is to list your motivated abilities and skills, an important list. You now have three sets of skills which illustrate the best of you, and you should be proud of what you have to offer. Compare your skills with the list of key factors you identified from the job announcement. You are now ready to put together your stories which will answer the question of why you should be the person who is offered the job.
**Stories**

This program addressed stories previously when talking about skills, and especially the motivated abilities and skills. In the interview, it is important to remember that it is not an interrogation. It is a conversation between equals, each one seeking and acquiring information about the other in order to make a decision. The company wants the best candidate. You want the best company. They have to agree that you are the best candidate, and you have to agree that what they are offering meets your needs and desires. It all comes down to being able to tell your story in an interesting and convincing way. If your stories are not interesting, if you ramble on and don't get to the point, you lose. It is foolhardy to put as much effort into this process as you already have and not finish properly.

Great speeches are delivered by those who practice. Actors practice their lines until they get them just right. You do not have to make a great speech, and you need not memorize your stories. But, you must know what you are going to say. In order to do so, you need to write down each story and then practice it until it is easy to discuss in a conversational way. Your stories will have three parts: A beginning, middle, and an end. The beginning will describe a challenge, problem, or situation that you encountered. It should be brief and concise. The middle section describes the actions you took. This is the meat of the story, and it addresses the techniques, skills, actions, methods, or steps you took to resolve the issue/problem. The ending addresses the outcome, the results of your actions, what you achieved. It needs to be quantified, not just a vague statement that things got better. Finally, include a statement of how you felt about it; show your pride in your accomplishments, enthusiasm is important.

As a rule of thumb, try to aim for 2 to 3 minutes for each story. When considering time factors for the three sections of your story, always try to aim for 20% for the beginning section, 20% for the concluding section, with the middle section comprising approximately 60%. Review
your write up and eliminate any comments that do not add spice to your story or reflect anything in a negative light. Emphasize challenges which provided an opportunity to excel. Each of your stories should be relevant to the question asked, and should be specific, concise, and illustrative of the action you took, the results, and what you liked about it. Polish and perfect each story to make sure you are presenting a strong demonstration of why you are the best candidate for this job. In the military, especially the infantry, you did not automatically know how to be a good infantryman. You learned how to shoot well by practice; you learned how to care for, clean, disassemble, and reassemble your weapon through practice until it became second nature. The same applies to your stories. Practice them until they become second nature and flow naturally.

**Nonverbal**

How important is this? It depends on who you talk to. No one says it is unimportant, but some say that it is more than 50% of the process. Regardless of the percentage, it should not be ignored. Without going into a dissertation on nonverbal behavior, a few points to watch closely will be addressed. Greet others warmly, and when shaking hands, do so with a firm grip. Good posture is critical, so do not slouch in your chair. It is best to sit with the small of your back firmly against the back of the chair. That can help eliminate slouching. Don't fidget with your hands. If that's a problem, hold your legs, but don't strangle them. Don't put your elbows on the desk or table and rest your chin in your hands. Demonstrating enthusiasm is important, and leaning forward demonstrates both interest and enthusiasm nonverbally. Don’t forget to smile.

**Control**

Interview control may be a critical issue. Many job seekers believe that the interviewer controls everything in the interview. Not true. The interviewer controls the interview when asking closed-ended questions. Those are questions that can only be answered one of two ways: Yes or No. However, open-ended questions put you in control because you have the opportunity
to respond as you see fit. That does not give you carte blanche to do whatever you want. It does
give you leeway as to how you will respond to the question.

The issue here is, what happens in the occasional instance when the person conducting
the interview does not know how to interview, and seems to be floundering? If you allow that to
continue, your chances of being offered the position are virtually nonexistent. The reason for this
is that following the interview, your interviewer will know very little about you and will have to
make a guess as to who should be hired, or that person will have to tell the decision maker about
the people that he interviewed. And, the interviewer doesn't know much about you or anyone
else. None of you stand the proverbial snowball's chance when other interviewer's identify their
top candidates and give recommendations as to why they were picked. So how do you resolve
this dilemma? By taking control of the interview.

That may sound like an outrageous statement but, in this circumstance, your only hope is
to take control. First, you must recognize that your interviewer in fact needs help. You are able
to meet this challenge because you are thoroughly prepared to address the requirements and needs
for the job. You know which of your stories are going to be the most powerful, and you are ready
to deliver them. You simply need to guide the interviewer to ask the right question. "Okay, now
you have lost me. This makes no sense! How do I get the interviewer to ask the right question?"
You do this by asking appropriate clarification questions. For example, one of your greatest
strengths and best stories relates to a project you developed, researched, and presented to your
immediate supervisor who then took you to the regional manager for a formal presentation, and it
was approved. The regional manager put you in control of the project which resulted in a 65%
increase in regional sales that reflected increased revenues of $1,800,000.00 for this past fiscal
year. You are concerned that your interviewer is not going to ask the right question to allow you
to tell that story.
Here is what you do. When your interviewer asks an open-ended question, you respond with an appropriate story, but then conclude with a leading question, something like this: "I think that answered your question, but it brought to mind a related issue. In my research I saw that your company is growing and expanding its territory. I recently developed and completed a project that expanded our territory by 65% which increased our bottom line by $1.8 million this past fiscal year. Would that project be something you would like to hear about?" Of course he would! Not only do you have the opportunity to structure the interview to tell the stories you want to tell, but you have just made an ally of your interviewer. He is relieved because you are helping him by making his job much easier. At the end of that interview, he knows significantly more about you than he does about any of the other people he interviewed. If he is the one making the decision, he will select you in all probability. If he has to report to his supervisor, he will speak of you in glowing terms. He has numerous examples of your outstanding qualities, and you will be the only one he is extolling to his supervisor. In those circumstances, you will be extended an offer to meet with the hiring authority. If you had not taken control of the interview, you would not be granted further consideration. Once again, preparation and practice are the keys to success.
Chapter 7

FOLLOW UP

When you entered the military, you were required to learn how to salute, to respond with "yes sir" and "no sir." These were common courtesies that became an accepted part of your life. You did not follow these practices some of the time or most of the time, you practiced them all of the time. This chapter simply continues that practice, and addresses only one issue: Common courtesies or manners. Sometimes, that is the difference between receiving a job offer or a rejection. The job search is all about following accepted practices, and manners are probably the most abused and overlooked part of the job hunt. Some claim it is the most important part of the job hunt. Why would that be? When given the choice, we associate with people we like. When given the choice, we do business with people we like. And when given the choice, employers hire people they like. One report from years past (source unknown), reported that the vast majority of managers are laid off or fired not because they couldn't do the job, but because they couldn't get along with people. Manners count, significantly more than most people realize. This is not a discussion on which side of the plate the fork should be placed, or how to use a napkin properly. It is all about courtesy. If you do a favor for me, and I do not acknowledge it, what are the chances you will go out of your way to do another favor for me in the future? Not likely, or at least reduced. And, you would not look kindly on me for having ignored what you did. On the other hand, if I thank you in a meaningful way, your opinion of me goes up and you are more inclined to extend other courtesies to me because you are appreciated. The same holds true in the job search.

Anyone who assists you in your job search should be acknowledged appropriately. What exactly does that mean? It means that when you ask a favor and it is granted; thank the person in a meaningful way. For example, after an informational interview, send a thank you note,
immediately! After a job interview, send a thank you note, immediately! After getting good advice from anyone, send a thank you note, immediately! When you develop a new network contact, send a thank you note, immediately! Send a thank you note, immediately, to everyone who helps. Make it a habit to obtain business cards from everyone who provides assistance so that you spell the name correctly, and your thank you note goes to the correct address.

There is one other issue regarding thank you notes that needs to be addressed at this point. In your informational interviewing efforts, one of the things you have been asked to do is to obtain referrals to other people. Following that informational interview, you sent a thank you note for the informational interview, and then contacted the referrals to schedule informational interviews with them. As soon as you meet with this next referral, replicate the previous action and send a thank you note to that individual (and schedule meetings with their referrals).

However, one more step is vital. You must send another thank you note to person who gave you the referral, thanking him for the referral and commenting on how valuable it was. Don't forget, you are building a network. You will stand out because you had a good meeting. You will stand out more because you sent him a thank you note. And you will really stand out when you sent him another thank you note for the excellent referral. You are helping to cement that relationship. This cannot be overstated.

There is some discussion and dissent among the various experts regarding the right vehicle to use when sending your thank you note. Some advise a hand-written note or letter, some advise a typed note or letter, and still others advise e-mail. Some suggest an e-mail for speed and a handwritten note for the personal touch. Redundant? Yes, but not everyone reads their e-mail. If your handwriting suggests you should be a doctor, it is acceptable to print or, if you prefer, you may type it. Having a box of thank you cards in your car makes it much easier to write a thank you note and drop it in the first mailbox you find immediately following your
encounter with the person who assisted you. Whatever method works for you, make sure that you use it. One last comment regarding thank you notes. DO IT!
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