

Working Group
“WORKING”
Sub-group: Training
Self-Training CD Presentation

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EUFASA 25th Conference
Prague, April 26–28, 2009



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1. Career Aims: Developing & Managing your Career

- a. The 9 stages of a career structure
- b. Schein's Career Anchors¹
 - i. Technical / practical
 - ii. Independent
 - iii. Stability / Security
 - iv. Service / Commitment to a cause
 - v. Entrepreneur
 - vi. Challenge
 - vii. Maintaining life habits
- c. Career aims' evolution
- d. Questions to ask yourself in order to determine your career aims
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¹ Schein, Edgar H, (1990). Career Anchors (discovering your real values), Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, San Francisco



2. Building your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- a. Collecting your data and writing your CV
 - i. Entry to mid-level experience (Templates & Tips)
 - a. Decide on the type of jobs you target based on your career aim(s) and **market conditions**
 - b. Write your CV keeping in mind that you should emphasize your knowledge, experience and / or abilities & skills relevant to the jobs you target (Tailor made CVs)
 - c. Be brief and concise and try to present a few bullet points that support your statements or explain in concrete terms your qualifications (e.g. how your knowledge was acquired, demonstrate your skills & abilities with concrete examples, state specific achievements while at a specific job etc.)
 - d. Make sure you include all necessary basic parts of a CV (i.e. Name, contact details, photo (if required), work experience (if applicable, including voluntary work), education, PC skills, languages, references (if required)). Your CV should not be more than one page. [**Voluntary Work:** It may be appropriate to list some skills that you developed outside regular employment. For example, you may have developed your team-building skills in the Territorial Army or your flair for organizing events in part-time voluntary work for associations or your duties as spouse/partner of a diplomat. These ‘selling points’ can be fitted into your skill groupings in the same way as those gained working for an employer. However, the main focus of your CV must be on your achievements in regular employment].
 - e. Maintain a simple and neat format so that dates, positions held or education acquired in chronological order as well as supporting bullet points are clearly visible



2. Building your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- a. Collecting your data and writing your CV (Cont'd)
 - ii. Mid to top level experience (Templates & Tips)
 - a. Set your next job target based on your career aim(s) and **market conditions**
 - b. Write your CV keeping in mind that you should emphasize your experience, knowledge, and / or abilities & skills most relevant to the targeted position at the targeted company (ies) [You may need to create tailor made versions of your CV for each targeted employer based on their requirements]
 - c. Be brief and concise.
 - d. Always include a few bullet points that support your statements or explain in concrete terms your experience & achievements & qualifications in general (e.g. Positions you held and major achievements, demonstrate your skills & abilities with concrete examples, etc.)
 - e. Make sure you include all necessary basic parts of a CV (i.e. Name, contact details, Photo (if required), work experience, education, PC Skills, languages) as well as any other important achievement or distinction necessary to better paint your professional picture. Try to keep the length of your CV to the minimum indispensable.
 - f. Maintain a simple, neat & clearly visible format



2. Building your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- b. Putting together Cover Letters - ***This is the letter that will invite the person opening your letter/ email to read your CV. It introduces you and sets the tone of your application.***
 - i. Entry to Mid level experience (Templates & Tips)
 - a. Observe the custom for writing business letters, with your address on the top right and the recipient's address under this on the left. Make sure your spelling, punctuation and grammar are immaculate
 - b. **Always** address a person (you can phone the organization to ask who to address your Covering Letter to).
 - c. You can keep the general layout the same for all organizations, but it is imperative to tailor each Covering Letter to reflect the things the organization is looking for.
 - d. Flatter the company/employee and show the reader that you have done your company research, mention any news articles that you have seen about the company.
 - e. **Never** say that the company can benefit you, say how you can benefit the company, give an example of where you have benefited a company in the past.
 - f. The Covering letter should have a polite, friendly, yet formal tone.
 - g. Keep the Covering Letter short, employers often do not have the time to read long Covering Letters, should be one Side of A4.



2. Building your Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- b. Putting together Cover Letters (Cont'd)
 - ii. Mid to top level experience (Templates & Tips)
 - a. Observe the custom for writing business letters, with your address on the top right and the recipient's address under this on the left.
 - b. **Always** address a person (you can phone the organization to ask who to address your Cover Letter to).
 - c. If you are responding to a job advert and it has minimum educational or experience requirements, mention that you have these requirements in your Cover Letter.
 - d. **Never** say that the company can benefit you, say how you can benefit the company, give an example of where you have benefited a company in the past.
 - e. Keep the Cover Letter short, employers often do not have the time to read long Covering Letters, should be one Side of A4.
 - f. The Cover Letter should have a polite, friendly, yet formal tone.



3. Interview Preparation

a. Entry to mid level positions (Sample Job Specs, sample questionnaires, interview types and structure, tips for successful interviews)

A few Tips:

- i. Think positively & go to the interview as calm as you can
- ii. Be punctual. Allow ample time to get to the interview place to avoid lateness
- iii. Watch your body language and seat on the chair normally (not too upfront and not too comfortable as if you were watching TV)
- iv. Be honest and sincere but answer only what you are asked for as briefly & concisely as possible. Do not offer unnecessary details.
- v. Use hand movements only if they help you express your points
- vi. Be prepared to present your points to solidly support your background and skills & abilities.
- vii. Try to “sell” yourself for the position you are targeting by placing emphasis on what you have to offer based on your skills set & abilities, knowledge & experiences or multinational experiences (where applicable). Not by making general statements about yourself.
- viii. At the end ask valid questions about the position, the company (make sure you do some research so as to have specific questions to ask) and the next steps regarding the candidate selection process (subsequent interviews, time frame to completion, notification process, etc.
- ix. Avoid questions such as salary & benefits from the first interview.



3. Interview Preparation (cont'd)

- b. Mid to top level positions (Sample Job Specs, sample questionnaires, structured evaluation interviews, tips for successful interviews)

A few Tips:

- i. Think positively & go to the interview looking & feeling professional
- ii. Be punctual.
- iii. Make sure you don't come across arrogant or aggressive or intimidated because of your diplomatic status
- iv. Be honest and sincere but answer only what you are asked for as briefly & concisely as possible. Do not offer unnecessary details.
- v. Use hand movements only if they help you express your points
- vi. Be prepared to present your points to solidly support your past work experience, accumulated know-how, skills & abilities.
- vii. Try to “sell” yourself for the position you are targeting by placing emphasis on what you have to offer based on your past work experience, technical & market know-how, set of skills & abilities and multinational experiences (where applicable). Not by making general statements about yourself.
- viii. At the end ask valid questions about the position, the company (make sure you do some research so as to have specific questions to ask) and the next steps regarding the candidate selection process (subsequent interviews, time frame to completion, notification process, etc).



3. Interview Preparation (cont'd)

- c. How to effectively sell yourself as a diplomat's spouse/partner whether abroad or in your home country
 - i. Approach it positively. “Sell” the advantages to your prospective employer:
 - a. Multinational / multicultural experiences
 - b. A fresh look at things coming from another country / culture
 - c. Know-how accumulated from different employers, jobs, markets
 - d. Demonstrated flexibility, resilience, adaptability, stress tolerance, independence, self-organization and risk taking due to diplomatic lifestyle
 - e. High community visibility and a vast social network due to diplomatic status which could be beneficial for the company
 - f. Multinational network
 - g. No long-term commitment for the employer since there is no need for permanent contract . *Willingness to fully & properly train replacement well in advance (Offer it).*
 - ii. Present yourself as a professional with your specific background & experiences and do not put emphasis on your diplomatic lifestyle
 - iii. When probed regarding the disadvantages of your lifestyle emphasize the advantages and try to shift the discussion focus to what you can offer as a professional
 - iv. There will be employers that are narrow minded and prejudiced but the majority can be convinced by your valid arguments. **DO NOT GET DISCOURAGED** if you get turned down a few times. **Keep trying.**



4. Psychometric Testing (Ability, Aptitude & Personality testing)

- a. A brief review – some samples (i.e. individual presentations, managerial role play, teamwork role play etc.) along with tips -
- i. **Ability Testing:** Ability tests measure a person’s potential, for instance to learn the skills needed for a new job or to cope with the demands of a training course. Ability tests are not the same thing as *Tests of Attainment*.
 - ii. **Aptitude (Skills & Competencies based) Testing:** There is no widely accepted definition of the difference between ability and aptitude. Most people would agree that to some extent the two terms refer to the same thing: *aptitude* referring to *specific ability*, and *ability* referring to *general aptitude*. We could probably view ability as underlying aptitude, and aptitude as being more job related than ability. For instance a computer programmer might score highly on a verbal ability test and highly on a programmer aptitude test but not the other way around.
 - iii. **Personality Testing:** Personality is a term which is commonly used in everyday language but which has been given a particular technical meaning by psychologists. When we discuss personality we must remember that it is not a single independent mechanism but closely related to other human cognitive and emotional systems. A *personality test* aims to describe aspects of a person's character that remain stable throughout that person's lifetime, the individual's character pattern of behavior, thoughts, and feelings. An early model of personality was posited by Greek philosopher / physician Hippocrates. The 20th century heralded a new interest in defining and identifying separate personality types, in close correlation with the emergence of the field of psychology. As such, several distinct tests emerged; some attempt to identify specific characteristics, while others attempt to identify personality as a whole.



5. Following up

Following up after the interview is very important as it can demonstrate the candidate's level of professionalism (Templates, samples and tips).

A few tips to consider for effective follow ups:

- a. **Do** ask at the end of the interview when the employer expects to make the hiring decision.
- b. **Do** be proactive and consider follow-up a strategic part of your job search process. Follow-up can give you just the edge you need to
- c. get the job offer over others who interviewed for the position.
- d. **Do** use these follow-up techniques to continue to show your enthusiasm and desire for the position, but **don't** make it seem as though you are desperate.
- e. **Do** obtain the correct titles and names of all the people who interviewed you. (Ideally, **do** get each person's business card.)
- f. **Do** write individual thank you notes or letters to each person who interviewed you -- within two business days. Each letter can be essentially the same, but try to vary each a bit in case recipients compare notes. **Don't** ever fail to send a thank you - even if you are sure the job is not for you. And **do** write thank you notes after *every* interview.
- g. In your thank you letter, **do** show appreciation for the employer's interest in you and **do** remind the employer about why you are the perfect person for the position.
- h. **Don't** ever have any errors (misspellings or typos) in your thank you letters.
- i. **Don't** stop job-hunting, even if you feel confident that you will get a job offer. **Do** continue to interview and attempt to find other opportunities.
- j. **Do** follow-up with a telephone call to the employer within a week to ten days (or sooner, if the employer had a shorter timetable) to ask about the position. And **do** continue to build rapport and sell your strengths during the phone call.
- k. **Do** be patient. The hiring process often takes longer than the employer expects.
- l. **Do** continue following-up, especially if the employer asks you to. Just **don't** go overboard and annoy or bother the employer.
- m. **Don't** place too much importance on one job or one interview; there will be other opportunities for you.
- n. **Do** use other job offers as leverage in your follow-up -- to get the offer you really want.
- o. **Don't** burn any bridges if you do not get a job offer. And **do** try and turn the situation into a positive by bringing the interviewer (s) into your network, possibly even asking them for referrals to other contacts.



6. Balancing & Revisiting your Aims; Building & Maintaining a Good Network (Exercise, Tips)

- a. Balancing & Revisiting your Aims
 - i. After each employment experience and before you proceed to the next try to assess your career at the point and the experiences you accumulated. Identify specific skills & competencies that you acquired or developed / strengthened through these experiences
 - ii. Check all of the above against your career aims. Are these aims served by your experiences? Are your career aims still valid? Are there specific personal / family conditions that prevent you from realizing your career aims? If yes, maybe you need to adjust those aims for a while to your specific life situation.
 - iii. Deviating from your preset path to your aims does not necessarily mean that you need to totally give them up.
 - iv. Based on new experiences gained, new career aims may surface. It is perfectly normal to decide to change your course.
- b. Maintaining a Good Network
 - i. It is very important for your career to maintain a good network
 - ii. Collect reference letters from previous employers and maintain a good log of their contact details
 - iii. Maintain contact details of people you have met and keep in touch from time to time.
 - iv. Maintain an up to date log of key information that you have learned which could help you in developing your career next steps or help you in your current job



7. Appendix

- a. Next post = next career step; Planning ahead checklist**
- i. Inform as early as possible your current employer
 - ii. Offer to train replacement
 - iii. Offer availability for support / advice for a month or so after your departure via email, phone etc. (Your x-employer's positive experience could help prospective employers to decide on your hiring)
 - iv. Ask your last post supervisor and/ or your employer for Reference Letters and discuss with them if they have any contacts they could provide you with at the new country or even your home country
 - v. Get in touch with liaison officers (if applicable) to find out about the local job market conditions and possibly local contacts
 - vi. Check EUFASA Job Databases
 - vii. Contact your network for possible contact referrals
 - viii. Research the internet for local market players and multinational companies present. Get into their websites and search for job opportunities or contact details of recruitment officers you could get in touch with
 - ix. Once on site, draft a daily schedule to help you organize your appointments with prospect employers



7. Appendix

b. CD SUPPORTIVE DOCUMENTS INDEX

- I. 7 steps in the Career and Life planning cycle by Helen Alm
- II. Questions to ask yourself in order to determine your career aims
- III. CV Samples & Templates
- IV. Cover Letters Samples & Templates
- V. Sample job specs, sample interview questionnaires, interview types & structure
- VI. Psychometric Test Components, Sample Questionnaires, role plays, assessment / development centers
- VII. Follow up / thank you sample letters
- VIII. Revisiting your Aims – Self Appraisal Questionnaire by Penna Consulting Plc.
- IX. Networking strategies
- X. Next post = next career step; Planning ahead checklist**
- XI. References - Bibliography