

# Career Coaching – Practical Advice – *Mike Taylor* updated August 2010

## Presentation

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Posted online at: <http://www.mltweb.com/seminars/index.htm>

## Articles and Topics

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- A. Is it just a job or is this a career?  
[www.mltweb.com/prof/job.htm](http://www.mltweb.com/prof/job.htm)
- B. How do others in the company perceive me?  
[www.mltweb.com/prof/perception.htm](http://www.mltweb.com/prof/perception.htm)
- C. Make The Performance Appraisal Process Personal  
[\*Make the Performance Appraisal process personal\*](#)
- D. What skills will I need to compete for a job tomorrow?  
Professional skills are as important as a skilled practitioner  
[www.mltweb.com/tools/sharpen.htm](http://www.mltweb.com/tools/sharpen.htm)
- E. Positioning yourself in the job market? What is my public image?  
Trip reports, newsletter articles, asking better questions  
[\*Conference trip report example\*](#)
- F. Networking, building “Social Capital”  
A good first impression  
Working the network [www.mltweb.com/tools/buytrain/relate.htm](http://www.mltweb.com/tools/buytrain/relate.htm)
- G. The Interview *Interview graphic*  
Interview Questions – [www.mltweb.com/prof/interview\\_questions.htm](http://www.mltweb.com/prof/interview_questions.htm)
- H. Professional Strategies – What can I do to enhance my marketability?  
[www.mltweb.com/prof/prodev.htm](http://www.mltweb.com/prof/prodev.htm)
- I. Requisition a new job  
[www.mltweb.com/tools/buytrain/requisition.htm](http://www.mltweb.com/tools/buytrain/requisition.htm)

## Make The Performance Appraisal Process Personal!

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- A. Interview your manager! Ask for an appointment at a different time period from your usual performance review to do this interview
  - a. If you were hiring someone to replace me, what skills, attributes would you be looking for?
  - b. What do you value most about my work?
  - c. What can I do to make myself more valuable to you? ... the team?... the company?
  - d. Are there areas I need to improve?
  - e. What would you recommend for my personal training plan?
  - f. What improvements would help me get my next promotion/raise?
  - g. What do I need to learn in order to qualify for your job?

- B. Prepare a short bio - 500 words or less – write it as though someone were introducing you.
  - h. What do I do? What’s my experience doing it? What skills do I use when doing it?
  - i. What value do I add to the organization?
  - j. Identify key career milestones, significant accomplishments and future aspirations
  - k. Demonstrate some depth... professional awards, recognitions, volunteer organizations.
  - l. What’s unique about me? *A point of interest that will be the basis for a later conversation.*
- C. Carry a personal reminder (3x5 card): Schedule a monthly meeting with yourself to update it
  - m. What am I changing about me in order to be a more valuable team member?
  - n. What professional or technical skills am I presently improving/learning? How? Deadline?
  - o. What job do I want to have in 3-5 years and what I am doing to get it?
  - p. What don’t I know about our business and how am I learning about it?
  - q. What am I contributing to my personal network? Who will I add to the network this month?
- D. Maintain a list professional accomplishments: Use actions words and keep adding to the list
  - r. Managed, directed, lead, coordinated...
  - s. Acquired, improved, enhanced, increased ...
  - t. Reconstructed.
  - u. Represented...

## A Competitive Edge

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- A. You are part of a team. Contributors are much more valuable than disruptors.
- B. It’s important to follow all company procedures and policies – but if that’s all you can do – or if that’s all you know - then you aren’t worth much to an outside company. Managers want people who understand their profession and can make appropriate decisions when unique situations arise.
- C. You are competing for your job every day. You will be replaced when it’s more valuable to the company to have someone else do the job, or to eliminate the job altogether.
- D. When you interview for a job – you have to be better than the other candidates. The hiring manager needs a good reason to hire you instead of someone else.
- E. The workforce is not static. Managers have new options and choices for replacement personnel every day.
- F. Longevity in your career isn’t necessarily the most important attribute unless you are antique
- G. If nobody knows what you do – then it’s easier for them to think that they can get along without you
- H. You represent your company in the business community. A business isn’t going to hire someone or keep someone who is embarrassing.
- I. Your personal network takes cultivation and regular maintenance.
- J. In your bio, don’t use obscure acronyms, or buzzwords – but leave some hooks for discussion. Example: “ Gee, that’s an unusual skill, how did you acquire that...?”

## What does it take to get the job?

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- A. Keep in mind that hiring managers must justify their hiring decision and work with the new employee. So candidate decisions tend to be made on the safe side. Only rarely will a lucky

candidate be the only one who possesses unique skills. More often than not, the hiring manager has to choose the candidate that will best fit into the organization. Thus the optimum strategy for people seeking a new job is not to depend on being unique – but instead to be better than all of the other competitors for the job.

**B. So what do hiring managers consider when choosing the best candidate?**

- a. Flexibility. People are the company's tools and resources. The most valuable tools are the one that multitask.
- b. Professional skills. An office worker today must be able to cope with technology and communicate well.
- c. A good fit for the organization. Each organization has a working style. Formal/informal, humor/stoic, quiet/noisy, food in the office/ sterile, etc.
- d. Appearance. This could be dress, energy level, mannerisms, speaking, enunciation, language, communication style, etc.

**C. These are all “soft” issues which are hard define and in the wrong context might be considered discrimination. In fact they are very important issues to managers. The above are all factors which managers cannot use to discriminate against a candidate; HOWEVER these are factors which could make one candidate appear to be a better fit for specific type of job.**

## **Career Limiting Behavior**

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**A. Bad attitudes can dramatically affect chances for future employment.**

- a. Have you ever heard people make comments like these?
  - i. "My boss is a moron, without me he'd sink like a rock."
  - ii. "Of course I have good people skills. What kind of an idiot question is that?"
  - iii. "I don't get paid enough to stay late today."
  - iv. "I don't have time to keep up with professional articles and news."
  - v. "I don't have time to attend training, conferences or local programs."
  - vi. "Mike Taylor is a really good speaker." [Just checking to see if you were still with me.]
  - vii. "The other people in my office don't do squat – I have to do their work too."
  - viii. "I don't care who hears me, it's the truth."
  - ix. "I'll be stuck here forever." ....and maybe you will.
- b. Have you considered that hiring managers can perform a search for Facebook, web blogs, publications and news articles?
  - i. What positive or negative sounding information will the hiring manager find about you on the web?
- c. Have you considered that Supply Chain and HR managers network with others in their professions?
  - i. They do share information about prospective and former employees – even though they will never admit it.

**B. The important questions become**

- ii. Would you hire a person that you heard making those comments?
- iii. Who might have heard you make the comments and who might they have told?
- iv. When you change jobs – what do you think the chances are potential employers – or their employees might have heard about the comments?

## My Resume... Note to Self

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- A. Skip the generalized goal and purpose statements. Tell the hiring manager what excites me about my career. Describe how I can add value to the organization. Provide specific examples that the manager would probably have liked to see happen in his own company.
- B. Don't use – or repeat words that imply minimal responsibility.
  - e.g. “assistant” or “support”. Instead; use better sounding words like “managed administrative details for high energy 5-person team”
- C. Don't use phrases that sound like you were the last resort for the job.
  - e.g. “brought-in” or “phased-in” . Instead use; “recruited”, “promoted” or volunteered
- D. Don't list extraneous information unless you relate it to the performance expectations of the hiring manager.
  - e.g. “ swim coach, summer of '42” . Instead; “Coach, responsible for scheduling 43 member swim-team workouts, and motivating teenagers to achieve superior performance”

## Reality Check:

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I talk to a lot of Supply Chain Professionals from all over the world. I've interviewed many candidates and conducted numerous professional development workshops. One thing is very obvious when you get them all in the same room. ***Employment standards and job expectations are very different in various locations and different companies.***

People, who have only worked in one location or one type of industry, may not be prepared for a very different type of working environment in a different company. Unfortunately, this renders many of the experienced people I have interviewed unfit for the job they are applying for. Even worse, they don't realize why.

Think about it this way; Am I prepared to accept a job where:

- Advanced computer skills are required (Excel, Access)
- I have to prepare and presenting using PowerPoint
- International travel is required
- I have to wear a suit to work
- I have to spend time on the construction site
- I have to drive to pick up and deliver materials
- I am on call 24 x 7 for certain time of the year
- Overtime and weekends are mandatory at certain times
- Advanced negotiation skills are required

These are all requirements of some types of jobs in some companies. If it's not something you do now – are you prepared to take on that responsibility – or are you limited in the type of job you can apply for?

If you expect to qualify for a better paying job elsewhere, then you need to find out what will be expected and prepare for it ahead of time. The least painful way to check out the alternatives and the competition is to mingle with other professionals at an ISM workshop or conference. Talk about the aspects of the other person's job with a critical thought about how, or if, you would be qualified or willing to take it on.

## Motivation – How do I keep a positive attitude?

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- A. Focus on the end of the tunnel and what you are doing to get prepared for it
  - a. Each new task and all of the current challenges are learning situations for improving a skill, changing a behavior or achieving a resume-worthy goal.
  - b. More time on the current job gives more time to meet new contacts, perform a broader search and locate a better career opportunity [ while at the same time, putting food on the table].
- B. Find creative ways to apply the job skills you already have, to the job search
  - a. If we can motivate contractors and manage project engineers, then motivating ourselves should be easy. It's just a matter of thinking about the job search challenge like it was a job.
- J. Requisition a New Job [www.mltweb.com/tools/buytrain/requisition.htm](http://www.mltweb.com/tools/buytrain/requisition.htm)

## References:

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- A. Manpower Career Resource Center  
[www.us.manpower.com/uscom/contentDouble.jsp?articleid=16](http://www.us.manpower.com/uscom/contentDouble.jsp?articleid=16)
- B. ISM Email newsletters:  
*Just in ETime; Supply Line 2055 Certification Update; CPSM Qualification Update; NewsLine; ISM Press Releases*
- C. ISM Career Center; a place to search for jobs, post their résumé or post a job opening. and more...  
[www.ism.ws/careercenter/?navItemNumber=4893](http://www.ism.ws/careercenter/?navItemNumber=4893)
  - a. For **job seekers**:
    - i. Free résumé critique by a career expert
    - ii. Career tips, articles, newsletters, Web sites of interest and professional development links
    - iii. The ability to view the number of times your online résumé is accessed
    - iv. E-mail notification when new/updated jobs are posted
    - v. Listing of sample job titles and descriptions
    - vi. Relocation resources
    - vii. Listing of local ISM affiliates that offer employment services
    - viii. Scholastic opportunities
    - ix. Lists of external job hunting sites, recruiters, salary/career builders
  - b. For **employers**:
  - c. The ability to track the number of times your job posting is viewed
  - d. The ability to view the number of résumés/applicants received per job
  - e. The ability to search the résumé database (currently more than 900 candidates)

- f. Lists of your past and present job postings
  - g. Have your company's employment services site listed in the ISM Career Center
- D.** MLT Web Site Professional and Career related articles and links  
[www.mltweb.com](http://www.mltweb.com)