

US Veteran's Résumés, Cover Letters & Interviewing Techniques



Resume

Success is not a destination, it is a journey.

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WHAT IS A RESUME?

A Resume Is...An Oversized Business Card

Your resume **Summarizes** your accomplishments, skills and responsibilities and highlights your potential for future endeavors. It cannot tell the reader your life story, nor should it. Never include personal information in your resume. Keep it short and to the point.

A Resume Is...A Summary of Your Professional Accomplishments

When an employer has a position to fill he/she starts out with a job description mapping out specific duties, skills and experience needed to be successful in that position. The primary goal of the employer is to find the person or persons who come closest to meeting all the requirements for the position. The person who achieves that goal wins the interview.

Your goal is to **honestly** state your skills, experience and accomplishments accurately but with as few words as possible. This **within** itself is a great accomplishment.



Why should
I hire you..?

RESUME COMPONENTS



HEADING: Your name, phone number & email are fine. Do not list more than two phone numbers. If you have a “questionable” email address e.g., “hotstuff69@hotmail.com” get an email address that will represent you in a more professional manner. The same rule applies to your voicemail message. Make sure your outgoing message is professional and non-offensive to a potential employer.

OBJECTIVE: This statement tells the reader exactly what kind of work you are seeking. If it is not included, most readers will assume that your *objective* is similar to your most recent position. Make your objective brief and to the point. (See “Objectives” page 9)

SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS: The “Skills and Qualifications” section gives you the opportunity to highlight your professional assets. List the computer hardware and software you are familiar with; the languages you speak; your technical skills, etc. This is not the place to write, “hardworking, honest, get along with others.” These statements are subjective and considered unnecessary fluff to the employer.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY (EXPERIENCE): Company names, city, state, dates of employment and job titles should be included. Do not put company supervisor names, complete company addresses or phone numbers in this section.

Example: <i>ABC, INC.</i> , Willowbrook, CA 4/2013-Present Human Resources Manager
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RESPONSIBILITIES (DUTIES): This is the most important section of your resume. Here is where you tell potential employers how valuable you can be to their company. **List all duties relevant to the position you are seeking.** Remember, internships and volunteer work count as work experience. Don't use complete sentences but make sure you're getting your point across clearly. Do not abbreviate. You do not have to type "Duties" before starting this section.

Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Processed New Hire/Confidential Paperwork● Facilitated Benefits Workshops
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EDUCATION: Most recent school attended first: Name of school, major, dates attended and degree/certificate you received should be included. Do not include your high school if graduated more than 3 years ago. If you have attended several colleges without completing a degree do not list all of them. Employers frown upon this the same as they would an inconsistent work history.

Example: UCLA, Westwood, CA 5/2013 BA, Business Administration/Human Resources
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PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND TRAINING: List additional training or courses that support and are relevant to your employment objective.

MEMBERSHIPS: Include memberships and offices held in professional/academic associations, boards and community activities that support your objective. Avoid religious affiliations unless relevant to the position you are applying for.

THE CHRONOLOGICAL & THE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

The chronological resume is the most frequently used format. It lists work experience chronologically with emphasis on accomplishments and professional experience. This format is most accepted by recruiters because it is clear and concise. Functional resumes often cause suspicion amongst recruiters because they list skills and accomplishments but don't show consistent work history.

The Functional Format

The functional resume is designed to stress your qualifications with less emphasis on specific employers and dates. Some functional formats found in popular books do not include a work history. The formats presented in this book include a work history because omitting it nearly always raises questions about you in the reader's mind.

The functional resume format is particularly suitable for individuals who want to make a significant career change. If you have to use this format, don't worry. A good resume partnered with your excellent networking skills will help to land you a great job.

RESUME DO'S & DON'TS

Don't stress out over your resume. There are no rigid rules for designing a professional resume. The guidelines below will assist you in creating a resume that will impress potential employers and get you the interview you've earned through your diligent efforts.

Resume Do's

- **Proofread** the final product for correct *spelling, punctuation, grammar and typographical errors*. Have a friend or school counselor proofread it before you send it out. Remember “spell check” will not catch words used in the wrong context e.g., no or know/there or their. Always proofread.
- It is OK to have more than one resume targeting more than one industry or specific position. **Make sure you keep a log of which resume was sent to which employer.**

➤ Describe specific responsibilities. Make sure you're not vague. “Performed general managerial duties” does not give the employer specific details about your skills and experience.

- Use the present tense to describe your current job. If describing something already implemented or achieved, use the past tense.
- Use short phrases rather than complete sentences. **If you can say something in three words, don't use 10.**
- Your resume should be no more than one or two pages. Recruiters usually do not have time to read a lengthy document. Make it easy for them to keep reading yours.
- Use the same font throughout the document.
- Pick a resume format and be consistent.



Resume Don'ts

- Do not use abbreviations. Use professional or technical language only if it is relevant to the position you seek. Be sure the reader will understand.
- Do not use odd-sized paper, overly fancy stock, bright colors or anything considered eccentric.
- Do not put a snapshot of yourself with your resume unless it is requested and related to the position i.e., modeling or acting positions.
- Do not list references on your resume.
- Never include personal data such as age, marital status, number of children, etc.
- If possible, do not leave any gaps between employment dates, but always be honest.



OBJECTIVE & SUMMARY STATEMENTS

If your employment history is not consistent, use an objective statement to give employers a clear idea of the kind of work you are seeking.

If you choose to include an objective statement in your resume, keep it short and simple but not vague or generic. “Seeking a good position with room for growth” does not

tell the employer what kind of position you are looking for. Be specific.

OBJECTIVE

To attain a position in US Customs & Border Protection.

OBJECTIVE

A Human Resource Management position.

OBJECTIVE

A position as a Financial Analyst in the Aerospace Industry.

OBJECTIVE

To attain a position in the field of Logistics & Transport Management.

OBJECTIVE

Seeking an Internship in the field of Sports Marketing.

OBJECTIVE

Seeking an Internship with Sony Music in the PR Department.

OBJECTIVE

An Internship with Merrill Lynch in the International Trades Department.

STEP 1: INVENTORY YOUR TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Inventory the skills you used during your service. Whether you were a sharpshooter in the Army, a diver in the Navy, or had another profession in the military, there are marketable skills you developed in your career that apply to the civilian workplace.

- Think beyond the specific function you carried out and identify the core value, skills or expertise you brought to the table. For example, a sharpshooter would have led small teams to carry out high-priority objectives with minimal room for failure in high pressure situations.
- Some core values, skills and/or expertise displayed above are leadership, ability to carry out work with minimal supervision, attention to detail and ability to work under strict deadlines.

STEP 2: GIVE THE FULL PICTURE OF YOUR EXPERIENCE

Be sure to include examples of the following types of skills:

- **Technical Skills:** Military careers such as a telecommunication technician, financial management technician, mechanic or health care specialist all have closely related civilian careers. The technical skills you developed in your military career should be included in your resume.
- **Interpersonal Skills:** Working in the military requires working with a variety of personalities, from high-ranking officers to unit commanders, teammates and subordinates. Often, service members must master the art of interacting with supervisors, peers and subordinates to complete a task. Interpersonal skills are valued in the civilian workplace and should be detailed in your resume to reflect your ability to work with many different kinds of colleagues to get the job done.
- **Leadership Skills:** Any leadership experience or training that you acquired in the military is also highly valued by civilian employers. Overseeing subcontractors is a leadership skill that can be valuable in the civilian world.

STEP 3: FROM INFANTRY TO LOGISTICS MANAGEMENT

- **Military Experience:** An infantryman with 23 years in the Army (E-9/command sergeant major). He operated tanks, weapons and dug ditches, and is having difficulty identifying skills or direct experience to bring to the civilian workforce.
- **Experience to Market to Civilian Employers:** Supervised, trained and evaluated 40 personnel, supporting more than 2,000 troops in four countries, with an inventory list of 1,500 line items, and material assets valued at \$65M.
- **Functional Areas of Expertise or Core Competencies:** Personnel management, logistics and operations. Later on in his career he also demonstrated strategic planning and tactical application.
- **Possible Employment Opportunities:** Based on his experience, this command sergeant major could market his skills as a logistics expert and apply for management positions.

STEP 4: EXCEL IN THE CIVILIAN WORKPLACE

After you've translated your military experience and secured a job in the civilian workplace, it is up to you to do the best job you can in your new career. It's important to remember that the military system is based on seniority and rank, but career advancement in the civilian workplace is a matter of excelling in areas that propel the success of the organization. To ensure your success, it is important for you as a former service member to pay attention to three key differences that exist between civilian and military environments:

- **Communication Style** – Former military personnel can be formal, direct and to the point while civilian communication styles are slightly different and may be more informal or conversational. Try to be sensitive to the communication styles of your civilian coworkers and remember to be patient, accept challenges with a positive mindset and always be willing to adjust.
- **Efficiency** – The U.S. military has a top-down system for making decisions, while many private and public companies have organizational processes that involve more people and may take more time. Be patient, and understand that although taking direct orders from the top works well in the military, civilian organizations often benefit from having multiple stakeholders contribute to the decision-making process.
- **Flexibility** – Many companies today offer flexible hours, schedules and work locations. While the military benefits from having a rigid structure for service members to operate within, the corporate workplace can benefit by allowing its employees to have a flexible work-life balance.

Learn more tips and tools to help you transition to life at home by reading the Real Warriors Campaign article, "[Reintegrating to Civilian Life](#)." For transition tips specific to the civilian workplace, check out our article, "[Reintegrating into Civilian Employment](#)."

It is very important to stay positive and use the [psychological resilience skills](#) you learned during your military career to help you cope with the stress often experienced with job searching. There are a variety of programs to support you as you transition from your military career to a new civilian career as well as initiatives to help you get your civilian career started.

MILITARY SKILLS TRANSLATORS

VA for VETS Military Skills Translator

<https://mst.vaforvets.va.gov/mst/va/mos-translator>

The VA for Vets military skills translator allows you to translate your military skills, experience, and training to learn about VA career options that best use your capabilities. Begin by entering your military occupation code (MOS), area of concentration (AOC), Air Force specialty code (AFSC) or Navy enlisted classification (NEC). Multiple codes and classifications can be entered and saved.

Mil2FedJobs Federal Jobs Crosswalk:

www.Mil2FedJobs.com

Mil2FedJobs helps translate military occupations to federal jobs. This website assists Servicemembers and Veterans identify federal jobs related to their military occupational specialty. Mil2FedJobs.com also assists Servicemembers and Veterans identify federal job characteristics, such as duties, pay grade, and qualifications of existing vacancies. Mil2FedJobs.com also allows visitors to search USAJOBS.GOV for vacancies.

Department of Labor (DOL) Military to Civilian Occupation Translator:

<http://www.acinet.org/acinet/moc/default.aspx?nodeid=213>

The Military to Civilian Occupation Translator helps Servicemembers match military skills and experience to civilian occupations. CareerOneStop is sponsored by the U. S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

O*NET Military Skills Translator:

<http://online.onetcenter.org/crosswalk/>

O*NET, the Occupational Information Network, is a comprehensive database of occupational skills, knowledge, and other occupational characteristics - including those that veterans bring to the workforce. O*NET can help you align military educational and job training curricula with current civilian workplace needs. Use the Crosswalk Search to find O*NET occupations that match "Military Occupational Classifications." Users can also crosswalk their primary military occupational skills (MOS) to apprenticeship programs. O*NET OnLine has detailed descriptions of the world of work for use by job seekers, workforce development and HR professionals, students, researchers, and more!

My Next Move for Veterans:

<http://www.mynextmove.org/vets/>

My Next Move for Veterans is designed for U.S. veterans who are current job seekers. The interactive tool helps vets learn about their career options. The site has tasks, skills, salary information, job listings, and more for over 900 different careers. Veterans can find careers through keyword search; by browsing industries that employ different types of workers; or by discovering civilian careers that are similar to their job in the military. Veterans can also take advantage of the O*NET Interest Profiler, a tool that offers personalized career suggestions based on a person's interests and level of work experience.

H2H.jobs

<https://h2h.jobs/>

H2H isn't just another job site. We are a Yellow Ribbon-funded project with a special mission: to THANK YOU for your service by helping you find your perfect career. Utilize the available Military Skills Translator to enter your military occupational code and get a list of career paths that fit with your military training and experience



Sample Resumes

CONRAD ZAEUS
conradz@gmail.com
(515) 365 - 4905

SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS

Operations Manager offering seven years of experience in the United States Army. Accomplished measurable results while leading teams from four to 40 soldiers in a fast paced, dynamic work environment. Possess a comprehensive background in leadership, strategic planning, risk management and critical thinking derived from conducting global operations in support of Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. Managed risk along multiple lines to protect equipment valued at \$2M while meeting the vision of senior leadership. Possess extensive knowledge of computer networking and database administration. Career is supported by *US Army Ranger School* and current pursuit of BS in Business Management.

- Leadership / Team Building
- Risk Management
- Training / Development
- Strategic Planning
- Supply Chain Management
- Transportation / Logistics
- Regulatory Compliance
- Operations Management
- Customer Relations

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

UNITED STATES ARMY - Various Locations

2005 - Present

Senior Squad Leader / Platoon Sergeant-Translation: (Supervisor /Department Manager)

Served as a **Squad Leader** for a 13-man squad and subsequently as a **Platoon Sergeant** of 40 personnel.

- Mentored and maintained accountability of soldiers within the platoon, providing positive guidance for their personal and professional development
- Supervised inventory management functions for communications, medical and specialty equipment valued at approximately \$2M; conducted a monthly inventory with a 100 percent accuracy rate during a four year period
- Led over 300 missions during Operation Enduring Freedom; forged relationships with local leaders and trained Afghan forces to improve security and services in region
- Planned and supervised 120 logistical movements of ten vehicles traveling over 50 miles; completed movements with no delay time and finished ahead of schedule
- Assisted senior leadership with organizational movement of 500 personnel to and from Afghanistan; coordinated with supporting agencies to ensure all material resources were packaged in accordance with US Customs policy
- Planned and managed over 50 projects using project management concepts; established work breakdown structures and timelines, forecasted resources and supervised overall completion of projects
- Oversaw all aspects of platoon's fitness program; platoon averaged 240 points on the physical fitness test, far exceeding the US Army standard score of 180
- Assessed training needs and evaluated training effectiveness of platoon; assisted in the development of innovative teaching techniques and conducted professional development seminars
- Directly responsible for the security and maintenance of living quarters for 50 soldiers; ensured all soldiers quality of life needs were sufficiently met
- Analyzed violations of organizational code of conduct and administered disciplinary actions in accordance with published regulations
- Recipient of the Bronze Star recognizing exemplary performance and leadership in a combat environment

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Scout Sniper / Communications Specialist

Translation: (Survey Specialist / Data Reception and Transmission Officer)

Member of four-man specialty team operating under adverse weather conditions, irregular hours and severe physical strain. Prepared and briefed daily analysis reports to Division Commander. Daily duties required long range communications that were consistent and accurate.

- Supervised and trained four personnel in small unit tactics, demolitions, marksmanship and advanced close quarters battle movements, as well as communications and radio procedures
- Integrated risk management process into operational planning for over 400 combat missions during a 15 month period; proved ability to lead under stressful, time critical conditions
- Maintained accountability of classified communications equipment and vehicles valued in excess of \$250K
- Developed lesson plans and instructed military personnel in the installation and use of radio equipment; trained approximately 400 personnel in three years
- Conducted joint operations with foreign forces, displaying ability to effectively communicate with diverse populations

Infantry Fight Vehicle Operator / Commander's Radio Transmitter Operator

Translation: (Heavy Equipment Operator / Director's Assistant)

Operated and maintained heavy equipment vital to the success of the organization; oversaw daily operations, policy compliance and standard operating procedure compliance of all aspects of tracked vehicle.

- Hand selected by senior leadership to serve as commander's aide; only junior leader chosen for position out of 100 applicants
- Maintained various weapons for marksmanship training and daily use; resulted in 100 percent accountability of assigned weapons with zero defect in functions due to proper maintenance
- Received award for competence and performance during a highly stressful training exercise and recognized as being in the top tenth percentile of peers

EDUCATION / TRAINING

- Duke University, Bachelor of Science, Business Management, 2013
- US Army Ranger School - Advanced Leadership and Management Development Course
- Basic Non Commissioned Officers Course - Intermediate Leadership Development Course
- Primary Leadership Development Course - Basic Leadership and Management Development Course

NAME

Address • Phone number • Email Address
LinkedIn Account if you have one

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

[Job Title] and Military Veteran with a [Secret Security Clearance] and [how many] years of proven experience in to develop and manage human resource teams and outcomes. Recipient of multiple awards for outstanding performance and professionalism in the United States [Branch of Service]. Career supported by a [Degree if earned].

- Career Experiences
- Proficiencies
- Specialties
- Examples:
- Data Analysis
- Training and Development
- Policy Implementation
- Organization/Communication
- Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

EMPLOYER – City, St.

2012 – Present

Job Title

Job Description.

- Give 3-4 bullet points highlighting your work experiences. Back up any statements made by using quantifiable evidence to support those statements.
- If you are unsure of what you did, use the **STAR** method: What was a **Situation** you were in? What was the **Task** you were assigned? What **Action** did you take? What was the **Result**?
- Use quantifiable evidence in supporting your arguments; this can be number of employees managed, number of items in an inventory, values of equipment, values of machinery, values of an inventory, number of customers received or processed in a day, etc.

UNITED STATES ARMY – Various Locations

2007 – 2011

Plans & Operations Officer

Job Description.

- Developed and maintained computer database program containing over 40,000 employee files to facilitate personnel record-keeping and to increase U.S. Military awards document production by 60%.
- Planned, coordinated and managed an annual budget of over \$50M supporting operations and maintenance of over 290 systems positioned globally, utilizing and implementing industry best practices, specifically the efficient application of policies at the enterprise level in order to reduce total ownership cost
- Analyzed violations of organizational code of conduct and administered disciplinary actions in accordance with published corporate guidelines and investigated financial loss claims and equal opportunity grievances

NAME

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Department Manager

Job Description.

- Managed nightly operations of grocery department responsible for ordering and displaying products as well as all aspects of customer service
- Directed staff responsible for processing, verifying and maintaining personnel-related documentation, to include: staffing, training, time cards, performance evaluations, and employee absences
- Scheduled work shifts to ensure employee coverage of all grocery sections

EDUCATION / CERTIFICATIONS

SCHOOL

Degree – Year

Certifications - Year

AWARDS

List all professional awards

Military Awards

SKILLS

If you are applying for a very technically oriented job, list all proficiencies or systems you are familiar with. These can be operating systems, programs, hardware, software, networks, systems, or other technological proficiencies!

Name _____
ADDRESS _____
PHONE NUMBER _____
EMAIL ADDRESS _____

OBJECTIVE:

SUMMARY OF SKILLS & QUALIFICATIONS:

EDUCATION:

School: _____ Dates Attended: _____

Major of study or Degree received: _____

School: _____ Dates Attended: _____

Major of study or Degree received: _____

EXPERIENCE:

Company Name: _____ City, _____ State _____ Dates _____

Position held: _____

Duties: _____

Company Name: _____ City, _____ State _____ Dates _____

Position held: _____

Duties: _____

Company Name: _____ City, _____ State _____ Dates _____

Position held: _____

Duties: _____

Company Name: _____ City, _____ State _____ Dates _____

Position held: _____

Duties: _____

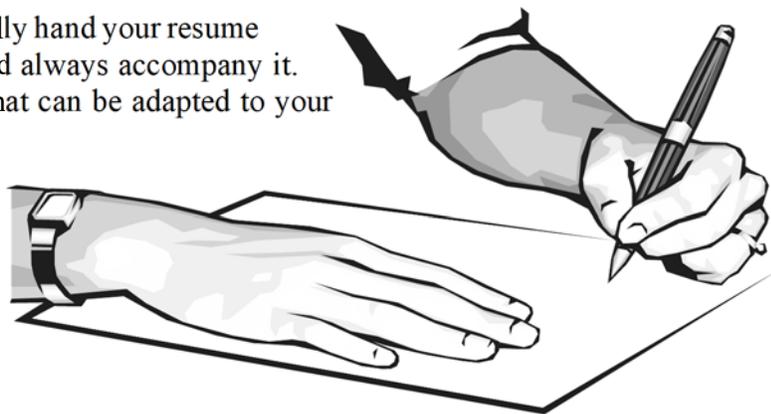
References Available Upon Request.

COVER LETTERS

WRITING COVER LETTERS

Cover letters are important. Unless you personally hand your resume to a prospective employer, a cover letter should always accompany it. Every cover letter follows a general formula that can be adapted to your specific needs.

The cover letter should not repeat your resume verbatim. It should highlight how your skills and accomplishments fit the requirements of the position you are applying for.



- ***Address someone in authority*** (by name and title) who could hire you. When it's ***Impossible*** to get that information, use a functional title (“Dear Sir/Madame”).
- ***Tell how you became attracted*** to this particular company.
- ***Demonstrate that you’ve done some “homework”*** on the company and have general knowledge of what services they provide.
- ***Convey your enthusiasm and commitment*** for this line of work.
- ***Remain as brief and focused as possible.***

What should go into a cover letter? What is the employer looking for?

You should show motivation to work for the company. Show that you have done some research on the company and are not just looking for a job, but want to work for that particular company. Show self confidence, that you are a hard worker, and how you will benefit the company if hired. Let the employer know that you have passion for the job and the company if possible. Show some personality. **Be careful what you give as an email address and the message on your voicemail. Always be professional.**

NAME
Email
Phone

September 26, 2013

Contact Name
Company Name
Complete Address
City, State Zip Code

Re: Veteran Transition Special Specialist

Dear *Hiring Manager's Name*,

Your organization's posting for the position of Veteran Transition Specialist, seems to perfectly match my background and experience. My 7 years of experience in the U.S. Army, where I progressed through the rank of Staff Sergeant, has refined my interpersonal skills and provided me with the ability to thrive in challenging environments. Please see my qualifications versus your requirements listed in the Hire Heroes USA job description:

YOUR REQUIREMENTS

- Bachelor's degree or equivalent professional experience
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills
- High energy and passion for Hire Heroes USA's mission is essential
- Strong organizational and time management skills with exceptional attention to detail

MY QUALIFICATIONS

- Earned MBA from the University of Wisconsin and BS in Business Management from Wake Forest University
- Prepared and briefed daily analysis reports for a period of 13 months to senior leadership in combat; clear communication and articulation of ideas were paramount to success
- Firm believer in Hire Heroes USA's mission, vision and core values; possess a strong desire to positively impact the lives of veterans on a daily basis
- Planned and organized missions for a 20-man team in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom

I am confident that I can offer you the skills you are seeking. Please see accompanying resume attached for additional details of my experience and education. Feel free to call me at *phone number* for further information. Thank you.

Regards,

Name

CONRAD ZAEUS
16 Main Street
Santa Monica, CA 90303
(213) 228 – 5021

REFERENCES

Professor Thomas Brady
University of Washington School of Law
1221 N. Oregon Street
Seattle, WA 03301
(512) 228 - 3245

I performed research and prepared draft materials for Professor Brady to use in his course on International Patent Law. He can provide insight regarding my strict attention to detail, dedication to my work and ability to complete tasks ahead of schedule with complete accuracy.

Mr. Ismael Rogers, Esq.
Drake & Delvin, PLLC
1337 Poppy Way
Port Don, NJ 03801
(415) 479 - 8732

I was a volunteer law clerk for Mr. Rogers while attending my second year of Law School. Mr. Rogers can speak to my professionalism in the office and knowledge of Business Law practices.

Theresa St. Clarise, Esq.
Walden, Standford & Peters, PLLC
33 East Market Street
Stamford, CT 03101
(703) 630–9253

I assisted Ms. St. Clarise in preparing materials for her presentation at a Connecticut Bar Association seminar on Intellectual Property Law for the General Practitioner. Ms. St. Clarise can provide insight regarding my work ethic and high standard of practices.

TOP 10 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND SAMPLE ANSWERS

1. TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF. Be brief! Keep this answer to 30-45 seconds max or you will lose the employers attention very quickly. Remember, ‘tell me about yourself’ doesn’t mean they want your life story. Summarize your skills and experience in a way that make you stand out and show why you are the best person for the job.

Sample Answer: I am a law enforcement professional with a degree in criminal justice with an active Top Secret Security clearance. I have fifteen years of experience in international and homeland security and outstanding leadership capability managing large security teams. My experience also includes knowledge of patrol, search and rescue and investigative and criminal procedures.

2. WHAT ABOUT THIS JOB INTERESTS YOU? The interviewer is listening for an answer that indicates you’ve given this some thought and are not sending out resumes just because there is an opening. Be clear about why you are interested in the job and the value you can bring to their organization.

Sample Answer: “I’ve applied to companies where I know I can get excited about what the company does. Your company is one of my top choices. This job is really attractive to me because it combines my interest, experience and skills in logistics and security with work in a more global business environment.”

Be specific about what attracts you to that particular company and some of the duties that most attract you to the position you are applying for.

3. WHAT ARE YOUR CAREER GOALS AND WHERE DO YOU SEE YOURSELF FIVE YEARS FROM NOW? The key here is to focus on your “achievable” objectives. Your goals should fit with the position you are applying for showing some growth.

Sample Answer: “Within 5 years, I would like to become the very best mechanic your company has on staff. I want to work toward becoming the expert that others rely on. Hopefully, this will allow me to take on greater responsibilities with the company if the opportunity arises. I am also working towards additional certifications in the field to enhance my career potential.”

4. WHY ARE YOU LEAVING THE MILITARY? OR WHY ARE YOU LEAVING YOUR CURRENT JOB? When answering this question, always focus on the positive: You are looking for a new challenge, more responsibility, more experience or a change of environment. **Never** be negative about your former or current employers or talk about negative experiences you had there.

Sample Answer: “I feel that the time is right for me to transition the outstanding skills and experience I obtained during my last four years in the military to the civilian job market. I received great training and education in the military and have been given job assignments that have enhanced my technical skills, leadership ability and taught me how to meet deadlines and multi-task in a very fast-paced and often stressful environment. I am very eager to bring these same skills to a corporation such as yours.”

5. WHAT ARE YOUR STRENGTHS? This is one question that you know you are going to be asked so be prepared! Concentrate on discussing your main strengths. List three or four proficiencies such as your ability to learn quickly, determination to succeed, positive attitude, your ability to relate to people and achieve a common goal, etc. If you have a strong technical skill related to the position make sure you list that skill in your strengths.

Sample Answer 1: “I have very good organizational and time management skills, but my greatest strength is my ability to effectively handle multiple projects and deadlines.”

Sample Answer 2: “My strength is my flexibility to handle change. As a front line manager at my last job, I was able to turn around a low morale working environment and develop a very supportive and productive team.”

6. WHAT ARE YOUR WEAKNESSES OR AREAS YOU WOULD LIKE TO IMPROVE? This is another frequently asked question. Everyone has weaknesses, but when answering this question in a job interview, stay away from personal qualities and focus on professional traits. Describe what steps you have taken to overcome your weaknesses so that you can demonstrate areas of improvement.

Sample Answer 1: “I am always working on improving my communications skills to be a more effective presenter. I recently joined Toastmasters which I find very helpful.”

Sample Answer 2: “In the past I have had some trouble delegating duties to others. This has sometimes backfired because I’d end up with more work than I could handle. I’ve since taken courses in time management and learned more effective delegation techniques and I’m happy to say that my last several team projects were a great success.”

7. WHAT ARE YOUR SALARY EXPECTATIONS? Do your research and know your bottom line. Research the industry standard for the positions you are applying for in your geographic area. Whenever possible, try to defer the salary question on the first interview so that you don’t under or over sell yourself. If pressured, be prepared to give the employer a salary range.

Sample Answer 1: “I’m sure that your company offers a fair, competitive salary for someone with my education / training, skills and experience. I am also willing to negotiate for the right position.”

Sample Answer 2: “I will need more information about the job and the responsibilities before we can discuss salary, but it would be great if you could give me an idea of the salary range you have budgeted for this position.”

8. HAVE YOU EVER HAD A CONFLICT WITH A SUPERIOR OR COLLEAGUE? HOW DID YOU HANDLE IT? Almost everyone has been in this situation. If you say no, interviewers will usually dig deeper until you can give them an answer. The key is to show how you reacted to the conflict and what you did to resolve it.

Sample Answer: “I think that everyone at some point has had a conflict at work whether it’s with a supervisor or co-worker. I’ve found that when I’m in a difficult situation, it helps to communicate with the other person, understand their perspective and try to work out a collaborative solution whenever possible.”

9. WHY SHOULD WE HIRE YOU? Be prepared for this question because the answer will sell your story. Know clearly what you bring to the organization such as your knowledge, skills, experience, education/training and personal qualities that demonstrate why you are the best person for the job. Be able to show how you add value to the company. Always qualify your answers with quantifiable results you have achieved in previous jobs or assignments. This will add tremendous credibility!

Sample Answer: “I think I am a great match for this position. My degree in management coupled with more than 10 years of experience managing 100+ employees and delivering top notch training, helped me to improve staff productivity by 30% and reduce employee turnover. I believe that I can do the same for your organization and would be a great addition to your team.”

10. DO YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS? Always be prepared to ask the interviewer a few questions as well. This helps to demonstrate your preparation and interest.

Make sure you do not ask questions that have already been covered by the interviewer.

Sample questions might include:

- How would you describe a typical week/day in this position?
- Is this a new position? If not, what did the previous employee go on to do?
- How would you describe the company’s management style?
- Who does this position report to? If I am offered the position, can I meet him/her?
- How many people work in this office/department?
- Is travel expected in this position? If so, how much?
- What are the prospects for growth and advancement?
- What would you say are the best things about working here?
- Would you like a list of references?
- If I am extended a job offer, how soon would you like me to start?

At the end of your interview, thank the interviewer for their time. Ask her/him what the next steps are and when you should expect to hear back from them.

Send a “*Hand written Thank You*” note within 24 hours of the interview. Do not send an email. The interviewer may never receive your note due to spam, firewalls, etc.