

The Process of Finding and Landing a Job, Babuji Reddy
... Handout prepared for mock interviews! July, 2019

Many of the statements made here may be obvious to some but not to all; obviously! [Picked up from an Einstein quote :]. But if they are not captured in one place, they may be lost to some.

In this process

This process has many steps. You are at the baseline - step-0: College! As a student, you must be trained in the basics of the field you have chosen, both in the theoretical aspects and a touch of the practical aspects.

An engineers real objective is not to make one successful prototype. An engineers job is to write the steps in detail (these steps must be testable) so that technicians or people with less training will be able to produce thousands of them in a factory. Sometimes one prototype may cost a million dollars. **Boeing slogan: Investment in physical research pays for itself many times over.**

Believe it or not, technical things, though important, are only the tip of an iceberg of what a good employer is looking for.

That said, there are many aspects that can reveal themselves only in person ... one such thing is related to comport, eye contact, spoken language, ...

Though you may not realize it, you have learned many life skills at home itself, even as you were growing up. Some of those life skills are beneficial when working in a team and some may be unsuited. It is up to you to take a stock of yourself and list your strengths AND your weaknesses. Share your strengths and learn to overcome your weaknesses. With practice,

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(sometimes in front of a mirror or a friend or family member) it can be done. Doing something repeatedly is called a mantra!

Preceding step 1 you will need to find the job ... preferably a written job description from an advertisement ... even when you use personal networking to attain your objective, it is still profitable to have it in writing. When reading an advertisement, your attention must be focused on discovering the key words; action words.

In the competitive world of today, time is of the essence and when dealing with employers/employment let not time flow away. This is the whole concept of planning. One of my friends said "failing to plan is planning to fail." Your calling card mentioned below is the first (CEG) red brick in your plan. Make it strong; realize all propositions are verifiable (what your LinkedIn says must match what you say on the CV and so should what your FB profile says).

Step 1.

Highlight your capabilities in the document you use (this is your calling card) to project yourself [the Curriculum Vitae, CV and the five kinds of resumes. There are five because a resume is tailored for a situation. Only the last one is for a full-time entry level job]

... From an employers perspective, what you name your calling card (Resume or CV) tells them a lot.

Apart from the Resume or CV there are many other documents that you must compose and generate as the infrastructure supporting your projection. I call these the cradle to grave job search documents. Even though you may need to use only a few of them to land a job, you must still know about the others because you must keep all your options open

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opportunities ... after all everybody wants to open all doors but nobody must close any door.

To adopt a language standard in English, the Chicago Manual of Style has been one of my guides. A good library will have one.

A letter shall be one page or less. All letters must have five sections. They are: Salutation, Body, Valediction.

[A] The salutation is in the form Dear Mr. or Ms. <name of recruiter> ... [no hi or hello or] never miss the salutation!

[B] The body has three parts: Introduction: The body is where you introduce yourself; quote the advertisement (with number when available) and ask the question about the job. Match: The body must also summarize your capabilities and what you can do for the company if given an opportunity. Lastly: contact information for yourself. Don't worry, that some of the information such as telephone number and e-mail address may be repeated in the CV/Resume [but do worry to make sure, they are identical ... HR is not too tolerant with tardiness ... material tardiness or time tardiness]

[C] Valediction can be as simple as saying: Thank you, Sincerely followed by your signature.

The above ideas are not only for formal communications but also good in personal communication.

Note ... I have seen a few sample CV's where it is stated that what was stated in the CV is true to the best of the persons knowledge. It is not necessary to make such statements as, being truthful is a given.

There is something called a LETTER OF INQUIRY. Even though in normal circumstances, it does not come up much, it could, if you are trying to find

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a position of which you have heard on the grapevine. Similar to it is a NETWORKING LETTER (a recommendation from a professor ... this happened in my case) ... here you must declare the source of your tip or recommendation. Such letters show you to be enterprising, proactive.

The Application Packet must contain: [1] A Cover Letter, [2] the CV or Resume, [3] a list of References (of people or teachers who will speak for you ... this must be a detailed reference ... the referee must be able to speak about you, if he or she is called on the phone ... so, the list of referees must be current ... in my case, to be on the safe side, I have always provided my current resume to my referees ... though they know about you it does not hurt to provide them the info ... at the beginning of my career, Prof. K.S.Hegde [he was a principal but he seemed to know students personally] gave me such a beautiful recommendation. I was so surprised that he observed minute details of myself and remembered them enough to write). Many people list the references at the tail end of the Resume. This only lengthens the resume. You must develop your referees over time. In my case, I am still in touch with some of my teachers both in India and here.

Step 2 is the interview itself (and your thank you note) ... I'll cover this later

Step 3 is offer/negotiation/acceptance ... a good ACCEPTANCE LETTER is recommended because it goes into your HIRING DOCKET. A good acceptance letter must be assertive. It must also highlight the terms of the agreement like salary and hire-on bonuses, relocation expenses. These items come up at the last stage of the interview and they should be a part of your CHECKOFF LIST of questions to ask HR.

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Step 4 ... there are instances where because of circumstances you have to pick between two offers in a narrow window of time. In such cases, it is good practice to send a REFUSAL LETTER (with reason). If the company really liked you, they will remember you and the refusal letter will become a part of the record. Who knows? You may go back to the same company at a later time.

Step 2 ... continuing

Though we are talking about a MOCK INTERVIEW here, there is no harm in IMAGINING it to be the REAL THING (be like Ekalavya in the Mahabharata)

I have two daughters who went through the University and I have some experience with mock interviews with them as I helped them out.

Very often companies do a phone (or Skype) interview to go to the next step. These are not as good as the personal interview because both you and the interviewer miss the body language. During the course of the interview you must be prepared to answer three types of questions: Why, What-if and why not? for all statements you make you must rehearse answers ... only data based assertions like marks etc. don't need to be defended though even here situations arise. If you like an example, I will share on the phone.

Because all jobs involve not only technical prowess but also the need to work with people, very often soft-skills may clinch the deal. It is all in the perception of the person interviewing you. In the course of the hour or two of the interview, you will be continuously assessed on your level of preparation for the job, the perceived level of poise, friendliness, confidence), oral communication ... they want candidates that fit into their

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culture. At the same time, you must scope them out too. You probably do not want to join a sweat shop.

How you look at the interview is as important as how you project yourself. Think something about this and put together an appropriate wardrobe of a few pairs of clothes and accessories. Do not use them outside interviews. You can look unkempt [having an untidy or disheveled appearance], in un-ironed clothes.

Your CV is the staff (stick) with which you seek the job. Review it the night before (though you may know it by heart). Even though you present it in a comfortable sequence, the interviewer does not need to follow your sequence. Understand their question before answering but don't delay too long. Until you join the company, treat it as a competitor and learn as much about it before hand as possible (remember planning) ... prepare your own list of questions as you may be in the company for some time and ask the questions when the interviewer opens it up. The company will be happy that you took the pains to learn more about them ... and if you happen to offer an improvement ... bingo! To be at your best wits get the proper amount of sleep the night before.

more later ...

There is an idea about language that traverses all barriers. Learn some important words in each language. For example ... Hindi, Telugu, Punjabi, German, French, Spanish, ... if you run into a person and you find out this mother tongue, work some of the things you learned into the English sentences you both speak. I cannot emphasize it enough but just your

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willingness to do so will melt mountains of ice. It worked greatly for me when I worked in a true MNC ...

Of course, this also works for language of a different kind ... if you learn a little biochemistry and speak it, it will work well with someone in Biotechnology field ... only make sure the fact behind your utterance is true or else you will be caught flat footed ... With repetition and time, it will flow effortlessly ... which is what you want anyway ...

A resume matches the key words in an advertisement to your experience. A CV is not like that.

So how does a person without much experience build up a resume. Choose a field of interest.

Look for companies that operate in the field of interest

Then look for advertisements (even old ones but not too old) from 5 or 10 companies that want people at entry level or at junior level.

Print out the advertisement.

With a highlighter, highlight all words that look like key words (verbs are good)

List those words on a sheet of paper. Repeat for all 5 or 10 advertisements. Now you have a fair list of key words.

Reflect on your self and remember where you had experience with each key word. It does not have anything to do with engineering or studies. Write down what you reflected on.

So for each key word, you must have one or two stories in written form. As time progresses you will have more stories and some may be stronger than the others.

Now, go look for current advertisements. Pick 3.

Write your resume as if you are applying for that particular job but use the key words connecting your CEG experience to the required job.

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Remember every resume is unique ... your experience is the same but the words you use match what the company is looking for!!!

To get more experience, try to do (MOCK) answer one advertisement every week. File all such applications. One day, a resume will just flow from your pen!!!