



*Dreams cost nothing...
Implementation gets expensive.*

It's Time to Find a Job

You never get a second chance to make a first impression.

Oscar Wilde

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www.dreamscostnothing.com

The views and opinions expressed in this essay are solely my personal views and opinions based upon my personal experiences, and do not represent the views or opinions of my employer.

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Outline

- The Changing Landscape
- Personal Preparation
- Job Interview Preparation
- What Are Companies Looking For?
- Typical Questions

The Changing Landscape

Here are some of the changes that I have seen take place over the last forty years.

- The old boy network does not work like it used to. When I grew up it was not unusual for my father to make a call to help me get a job. Of course, this is still done today but nowhere near like it was in the past. The "call" can sometimes get you the interview; seldom does it get you the job.
- Interviews can have multiple loops. Companies have different departments of the organization interview potential candidates. Candidates will need different skill and mind sets depending upon who is conducting the interview.
- Companies prescreen the applicants. In my day there was normally just one interview. Today companies usually employ two or three interviews before making an offer.
- Companies today focus more on hiring for the right fit when making a job offer. In my era I believe there was less strategic hiring than done today.
- It is important to research the company and the position before the interview. Start with the internet but don't stop there. Talk to people who you know in the industry. Use contacts you have made over the years, either from high school or university. Talk to friends. In short reach out to anyone you can think of who can help you.

Personal Preparation

Here are some suggestions for your personal preparation:

- Get organized. Finding a job will be one of the greatest challenges in your working life. It requires a "battlefield" mentality. Your supply lines must be linked to where the battle is taking place.
- I recommend you create a directory for all job search related material. Here are the sub directories:
 - Personal information
 - Personal mission statement
 - Reference letters
 - Marketing Material
 - Resume
 - Create an "*elevator talk*" of who you are.
 - Contacts
 - Research material
 - Meetings
 - Weekly job report
- Develop a personal mission statement. I discussed this in the previous chapter. Make sure you know what you like and don't like; what you do well and don't do well. Be able to discuss your successes and how you dealt with your failures.
- Develop a resume that talks to a recruiter. In most cases your resume is your first introduction to a potential employer. I recommend you get professional help in this area, but here are some of my thoughts:
 - Keep it short – maximum two pages
 - Make sure it flows
 - Use functional headings
 - Focus on your accomplishments
 - Explain who you "*really*" are
 - List some hobbies. They can be a good icebreaker
- Develop your own personal network (within it, a mentor group).
- Practice interviews with your family and friends (even your dog!). Tape them. Time them. Work on them so they become natural to you. I read recently Steve Jobs spends four to five weeks rehearsing his presentations when Apple releases new products. Why does it seem so natural to him? Preparation and practice.

Job Interview Process

Here are some of the “**dos**” in the job interview process:

- Dress appropriately.
- Be who you are. I know this can sometimes be difficult but in the long run it is your best interests to do so.
- Maintain eye contact. Pay plenty of attention to your non-verbal behavior.
- Listen to the questions and be concise in your answers. And make sure you answer the question!
- Let the interviewer lead the conversation.
- Obtain the correct titles of the people who interviewed you; send them thank you emails within two business days.

Here are some of the “*don’ts*” in the job interview process:

- Don’t stop job-hunting – always have a Plan B. My father used to say: “The more oars in the water, the better chance of getting the boat to shore.”
- Don’t burn any bridges – you may not be a fit with the job you are being interviewed for but the company might make you an offer elsewhere in the organization.
- Don’t be impatient. Hiring the right person takes time and communication within the organization.
- Do not ask about the money. That will come later in the process. If asked though, be prepared to state your expectations.
- Don’t ever criticize previous employers or colleagues.
- Don’t talk too much or interrupt. Both faults of mine in the past. Today, through recognition and hard work, I have better control over both.
- Don’t ever be late for an interview. A good saying to remember is: “*The latest you should be for a meeting is five minutes early.*”

What Are Companies Looking For?

Of course each job is different, but here are some common requirements companies today are looking for when hiring new employees:

- Companies are looking to hire individuals who have the same values as the company. This is hard, if not impossible to discover in one interview. That is why companies use multiple interviews.
- Companies, for the most part, want to hire team players. The star system may have worked in the past but today there are many so many good candidates for each position that companies can afford to be more selective.
- Companies are looking for candidates with a diversified background, especially when it comes to their academic background. Recruiters tell me they like to hire students who were prepared to spend an academic term at another university in a different country.
- Companies want candidates who are prepared to take some risk and have done so in the past.
- Companies are looking for candidates who are self-starters and want to establish a career with their company, not just a job. I recently read that only two percent of all employees require no supervision when they work. They are self-starters with a great work ethic; a rare combination in today's world.

Typical Questions

Here are some typical questions:

- Why are you interested in this field?
- Why are you interested in this company?
- Why are you interested in this position?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is your greatest weakness?

Here are some of Bob's "outside the box" questions:

- What book are you currently reading?
- What are you currently doing to make yourself a better person?
- What is the best lesson you have learned from a failure in your life?
- How do you define success?
- What is your value add?
- What is your passion in life?

I ask these types of questions in the hope I can flush out who the real person is behind the mask. While the technical skills are important, I believe companies today want to know your personal skills; who you are, what you believe in, etc. They want to find the right fit when it comes to matching your character with the firm's culture.

My criteria when I hire someone would include the following:

Personal Values

- What are your core philosophies in life?
- What are your values in life?
- Do you know who you really are?
- What is your passion?
- Are you prepared to take risk?
- Do you have a sense of responsibility or entitlement?
- Do you know how to have fun?
- Do you have a sense of balance in your life?
- How do you handle success?

Personal Skills

- What are you doing to make yourself a better person?
- What are you doing to make yourself a better potential employee?
- Are you a self-starter? Is it part of your DNA?
- Are you a team player?
- How do you deal with failure?

About the Author



Bob Livingston has spent over 40 years on Bay Street, on both the sell-side and buy-side. In the last 15 years he has made numerous presentations on wealth management and has spoken at several conferences on the part philanthropy can play in managing your wealth. In addition to Bob's financial management experience, he has become very interested in personal development. He has made numerous presentations to high school and university students, stressing the importance of wealth management and personal development.

Bob has written numerous essays on family issues, personal development, philanthropy, and wealth management. Two common themes in his essays are the importance of developing financial responsibility in your life as well as increasing personal involvement in your community. These goals can be realized by learning the basics of wealth management and making personal development an integral part of your operating DNA. Bob uses numerous family anecdotes to illustrate his personal journey in pursuit of these two goals.

When asked why he has such a passion for personal development, Bob's answer is simple: "It is my way of giving back to the community, it expands my comfort zone, and most importantly, I am having fun doing it." Bob has come to realize one of his true passions in life is helping others achieve their dreams.

Bob has developed a website, dreamscostnothing.com, where you can access his reflections on family issues, personal development, philanthropy, and wealth management. There is also resource material available regarding specific topics like organizing your financial documents and starting a personal development library.

Bob suggests that you never forget: "Dreams cost nothing. Implementation gets expensive."

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