



Career Corner

Guidance for Hiring Managers and Candidates: Part Two

By Joyce Brocaglia

As we mentioned in last month's "Career Corner," the third quarter of this year marked the beginning of life again in the information security jobs community. For the first time in over two years there has been a dramatic increase in the amount of active hiring in all industry verticals. This is part two of an article that talks about how job seekers can prepare themselves to take advantage of this awakening job market.

Whether you have been relentlessly searching for a new position for the last year or have just decided to enter the job market, there are some key principles that you must have in place in order to be successful.

Your Resume

First of all, take a good, hard look at your resume. In a recent meeting with a team of hiring managers, I was told that if a resume's first page listed every operating system, network protocol, programming language, and operating system, they threw it directly in the garbage. Be careful to only include specific technical skills on your resume that you are confident in answering detailed questions about. The best way to shoot yourself in the foot early in the process is to be asked questions that you can't answer regarding topics that you list on your resume. So review your current resume and make sure it includes highlights of your accomplishments, responsibilities and technical acumen and eliminate any fluff or irrelevant information before sending it out.

Sending Your Resume

Once your resume is edited and ready to go, be selective about where you send it. If your resume is received numerous times by one company, it is a negative reflection on you. It appears that either you are desperate for a job or you have no knowledge of where you are being represented. This often happens if you are using multiple recruiters or have an automatic program sending out your resume to key word job searches. Both of these methods have the potential of causing more problems than benefits. If you are answering on-line ads, then personally review and select each job that you respond to. Occasionally when candidates are represented by a recruiter to a company that has also received their resume through an automatic submission, the hiring company will not proceed on setting up an interview because of conflicting sources. In these instances the candidate loses out on the opportunity. In terms of recruiters, ideally you should build a relationship with one recruiter that you trust and feel has both strong ties within the industry and the ability to aggressively represent you. Always insist that you are informed of every company that you are represented to prior to your resume being sent. Keeping in regular contact with your recruiter through the course of the year should be part of maintaining your network whether you are job searching or not.


Preparing for the Interview

Once you have landed an interview, research the company and find out as much as you can about the position, so you can identify and articulate how your background meets their needs. Know your job history. Mentally review your past achievements and be prepared to describe your work experience in detail. Practice out loud, describing your experience in terms of your responsibilities and accomplishments at each job.

I'm sure you've been told, "You never get a second chance to make a first impression." This is especially true of a job interview. Studies indicate that an applicant's appearance and communication skills are the most important part of a first impression, created during the first few minutes of a job interview. Be conscious of your body language, eye contact and attentiveness to the discussion.

Don't underestimate enthusiasm. We have had candidates go through a barrage of interviews only to be turned down because the interviewers didn't feel the candidate was sincerely interested or excited about the opportunity. I was recently told that "unless the person we interview is really passionate about security, does it in his free time, and doesn't just consider it part of his job," he's not the right person to join our team. Remember that the people interviewing you are not professional interviewers; you must be engaging and work your accomplishments into the conversation. Providing real-life examples is one of the best ways for an interviewer to understand how you handle difficult situations or relationships.

Counteroffers from Your Current Employer

If you are successful in your search and receive and accept an offer from a company that has provided a challenging opportunity and competitive salary, never accept a counteroffer to stay at your current employer. It's important to remember that your reasons for wanting to leave still exist. Your employer may have offered to make conditions more bearable for the short term by promises made to keep you, but statistics prove that four out of five people who accept counteroffers are gone within the year. Some stay for positions that were not nearly as attractive as the one they turned down. No matter how tempting or flattering counteroffers may seem on the surface, choosing to stay rarely lives up to your expectations of furthering your career. 

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