

(A CEO's) Tips on Building a Professional Image

- ✓ Define **SUCCESS**
- ✓ Conduct an **INTROSPECTION**
- ✓ I.D. your **VALUE PROPOSITION**
- ✓ Develop a **PERSONAL BRAND**
- ✓ Create a **VISION**
- ✓ Exploit a **SEARCH STRATEGY**
- ✓ Delineate and execute a **TACTICAL PLAN**
- ✓ Establish a **NETWORK**
- ✓ Research **TARGETS**
- ✓ Exercise a **DISCIPLINE**
- ✓ Start at the **TOP**
- ✓ Understand your **MARKETABLE VALUE**
- ✓ Use the **KING'S ENGLISH**

Your unique qualities, character and personal values ... thoughtfully depicted and creatively projected is key to job search success

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Good afternoon!

Be ready to take notes because here is the famous American oil billionaire J.P. Getty’s sure-fire formula for financial success in life:

Here they are:

1. Rise early;
2. Work hard;
3. Strike oil

Well, only because I like you so much I’ll break the sad news that you’re not going to strike oil. Sorry about that and in this slogging economy with unemployment at 10.2% as of last Friday (that’s the highest since June of 1983 26 years) attaining a job is obviously tougher than it once was.

Hi. My name is Walter Bateman and I am the retired Chairman/CEO of a publicly traded Fortune 800 insurance group and my mission today is to share my thoughts and experiences on professionally imaging and marketing yourself.

Oh! Now that we are properly introduced the second sobering fact I regret passing along is that as “fresh out of school” workplace entrant (that would be you) coming onto my payroll you are a short term after tax net income loser for my company in that my return on investment has a two year lag; that’s the two years it’ll take you to acclimate, climb the learning curve and make a financial contribution.

O.K., we've teed up the harsh realities so now let's go back to J.P. Getty's first two points as you job search: rising early stay and working hard. Both are entirely accomplishable and along with some thoughts will share here and now, you can beat the odds and achieve a starting gate slot for a terrific and fulfilling career.

First an idea. Get organized. Buy a manila file and write "Job Search" on the label and keep it close by.

I've the pleasure of working with CEO's and Board Chairmen and the first question I normally ask is "how do you define success?" Incredibly, some cannot adequately answer that question. The lesson here is in a lyric the Beatle George Harrison wrote: "And if you don't know where you're going; any road will take you there."

This is truth applies to your job search and career goals so my first admonition is to start your image building process by looking at yourself, figuring out where you are going and as Beatle George expressed "What roads will take you there". Why not start with a reflective paragraph regarding your desires about a satisfying first job and prospective career ladder. This is harder than it seems but give it a try then put the output in your newly acquired manila file.

Honest introspection is an essential under-lier of my first five points on the screen behind me. Often I tell my CEO clients to cloister themselves and armed with pen and yellow pad engage a day-long session candidly looking at themselves as they perceive others view them, strengths and weaknesses, successes and failures, warts and all.

So here's your takeaway: Same advice. Do what I asked of these CEO's with the object being getting below your own veneer. Put another way, if you don't honestly know yourself how

can possibly image yourself to a future employer? Then store the result of your candid self-analysis in your newly acquired manila file.

This bridges to identifying your value proposition (sometimes referred to as a value exchange). Again scribing your thoughts in one or two sentences, capsulize what value you bring to a future employer in terms of talent, competencies, and personal beliefs and in exchange what fulfillment (beyond monetary) you expect to receive in return. An imbalanced value proposition will greatly diminish job success and long term career satisfaction. (Pause) You guessed it, once written down put your value in your manila file.

From the foregoing, define (briefly) your personal brand. In other words what do you represent? Why do this? Because when I read your resume, your blog or other social networking expressions, or when I review your portfolio, if you have a distinction (a brand) that separates you from the hundreds of other resumes I see it can be your door opener. Once you define your brand ensure that it emerges on your resume and elsewhere.

Let's see. Where are you now? In your file you've articulated your version of success; taken a hard look at yourself as others perceive you; identified your value exchange; and in a brief sentence or two articulated what you represent (your brand). And you've written all of this down as a baseline for immediate use in your job search and future career introspections years down the road.

Now, there's one more paragraph for your manila file and that is an answer to the question: "What would represent my ideal long term career?" What industries would I seek (by the way, are they long term growth or stagnant industries?); do I want to be a CEO; manager -

administrator; worker bee; creative force; technician; event planner; communications person; media type, etc.? What's my goal? Please, one and only one well thought out paragraph here and then let's dub this your vision; in other words your long term horizon which will provide career fulfillment and attain your definition of success. Put it in your manila file.

O.K. The due diligence and documentation of "you" is now complete and this should provide a constructive self-understanding baseline to launch your job search.

So, my first action plan question is this: Do you have a job search strategy, an overall written framework that is do-able?; or is your strategy merely to carpet bomb the business world with resumes and hope one hits the target?

My suggestion is that a one or two sentence written strategy statement along with supporting tactics can provide an instructive framework for keeping you on course with momentum. Here are three sample tactics to include:

- (1) For sure your tactics should include engaging a network of influential people (you'll be surprised at how many people want to help you) and I believe this is your number one avenue to an interview;
- (2) Another must tactic is maintaining a knowledge of the economy; the political environment; issues regarding the sector your trying to work in; and general business buzz. You can do this by maintaining a clipping file and by the way, in my clipping file for this meeting I've stored an article detailing the hardest hit sectors for hiring in first half of 2009. They were:

Hospitality: down 76%
Technology: down 55%
Transportation: down 42%
Investment Banking: down 39%
Telecommunications: down 31%

You may be asking what publications you should regularly read to ramp up your awareness of the business world. For sure I would recommend the Wall Street Journal; Forbes; Fortune; Business Week; The Economist; and the leading trade press for whatever industry you're leaning toward. There are of course many others but these would provide a good base.

(3) A third must tactic: Assiduously due diligence (do your homework on) your target economic sectors, industries and employers.

All of the forgoing presumes that you are going about this process in a very organized manner. Keeping notes of your successful forays, logging your conversations, which went well and which did not, keeping a calendar of subsequent reach out/follow up dates are all good disciplines.

The next point is sometimes questioned and that is my recommendation to direct your resume to the attention of the CEO/leader of your target organization with a brief eye catching cover letter; my experience being that 99.9% of all resumes end up in a dustbin in the catacombs of the Human Resources Department never to be seen or heard from again; so why not take a flyer at getting the CEO's attention before your resume suffers this ignominious fate.

The takeaway is this: all it takes is one resonating nugget to get the CEO's attention. Now here's a caveat and it's a big one: remembering that Mr. or Ms. CEO may want to personally meet

you, if you do not have the confidence to hold court in a one on one interview with that CEO then direct your resume through more normal channels. Historical example: I got my first job sending my resume to the target company CEO. He was Wharton Class of '38. I was Wharton Class of 71. He noted that; interviewed me personally; I was hired and worked there for 16 years and we remained friends until his passing. As I said, all it takes is one eye catcher on your résumé and in my case it was the Wharton connection.

Finally and especially in this day, know what your value is to a hiring company. Business week recently reported that full time bachelor degreed-only workers (non-masters degrees) “saw a sharp 11% decline in their real earnings between 2000 – end of the tech boom – and 2008”. My experience is that most job world entrants over estimate their initial worth and hurt their prospects.

My closers are these:

(1) Be proper in your approach with words that are resonating and distinctive. Colloquialisms and informalities can offend or turn off the reader so to create a powerful first impression, proper grammar, syntax and the correct level of formality (what I've termed the King's English) along with crispness of appearance is always the safest bet. Also, please avoid business buzzwords!

(2) Closer number 2: Remember that resume writing is a sales effort and you are the product. Your limited resume space (one page!) and the power of your words make a difference. When imaging yourself avoid a task orientation instead adopting an accomplishment approach with words that demonstrate commitment, leadership, teamwork, success, transferrable competencies, maturity and sophistication; words like:

- Planned
- Organized
- Coordinated
- Led/was leader of
- Project
- Managed
- Supervised
- Guided
- Counseled
- Had responsibility for
- Diverse/diversity
- Experienced
- Travelled to
- Culture/cultural
- Team/teamed with
- Successful outcome

That's it.

Thank you for your kind attention.