



BASG Insights

WINNING A JOB IS THE HARDEST JOB YOU WILL EVER DO

October 2022

Much of what is being written these days about finding a job is focused on a specific targeted group within the overall pool of potential employees, GenZ or X, Millennials, Baby Boomers, etc. The basics are the same regardless of where a candidate sits on that spectrum.

The sad reality is that many job searchers make their most significant mistake long before they ever respond to a job or talk with a Recruiter or Career Counselor. One of the major keys to success, and one that is often underrated, is the need for brutal honesty. It starts with self-honesty which can then be applied to interaction with others. Brutal honesty is vital from goal setting to accurately assessing strengths, to making employment decisions.

Those who are unwilling or unprepared to confront the tough questions that are critical to their search, diminish their success rate and limit the ability of anyone else to successfully help them.

HAVING A GOAL IS THE FIRST GOAL

There is a vast difference between looking for a job, something to pay the bills and support a lifestyle, and building a career. It is difficult to walk a line down the middle of this question, allowing your head and your heart to constantly vie for decision making power. Understanding the difference, and determining which is the appropriate category, is one of the most puzzling questions. Without a clear-cut answer, most people struggle to target the right jobs, and are disappointed by the outcome.

Someone actively building a career, always knows what the next job is going to look like, where the potential growth paths lie. That person is thinking one or two steps ahead, very much aware of the marketplace, in tune with companies doing the hiring, networking constantly with people who can help further their journey. Their every move is intentional and focused on the future. And their resumes reflect the training, and achievements which are the building blocks for growth.

Candidates seeking a “next job” either because of a life change, a concern about current employment or just a desire for something different, are less focused on the big picture and the long-term future, and more focused on one or two key improvements. It might be as simple as getting away from a negative manager, erasing a long commute, improving work/life balance, or making a few more dollars.

THERE IS A VAST DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LOOKING FOR A JOB, AND BUILDING A CAREER

There is no right or wrong answer to career move vs job search. There is the need for a realistic evaluation of which category governs every point in a career.

ASSESSING YOUR STRENGTHS

The most successful Candidates have thought through the tough questions well in advance of engaging with anyone else. They have looked inside; they have sought the opinion of colleagues who know them professionally. They are open to innovative ideas, options, or suggestions, but stay grounded.

They can:

- Succinctly and honestly articulate what they do best
- Clearly and factually describe their career history and how it contributes to their goal
- Know and appreciate where they are in their career: Growing, Maintaining, or Winding down, and be comfortable at that stage.
- Describe the next chapter they want to write

DEVELOPING A REASONABLE EXPECTATION OF SUCCESS

Knowing you can DO a job, and knowing you can WIN a job are very different. If the questions above have been honestly answered, and the Candidate applies a reasonable standard to his/her search, the percentage chance of winning any given job should be clear. But humans that we are, we confuse wanting with believing, and others who purport to know us well often try to be supportive by suggesting or endorsing application to jobs that are out of reach in today's competitive market.

Again, it is not a question of ability to do a job; it is the percentage chance a resume will be considered based on the number of respondents, candidates with more relevant experience, or support from someone within the hiring organization. According to Glassdoor, "On average, a corporate job attracts 250 applicants of which only 2% will be invited to interview."

A CORPORATE JOB ATTRACTS
250 APPLICANTS

There are at least five categories on which a job seeker might focus:

- **Career Advancing**: This job is a reasonable progression from past work, training, and experience.
- **Commensurate Experience**: The goal here is to maintain the current employment "level" if advancement is not possible. Most candidates have an internal standard to which they compare every job. This can be purely a fierce internal drive to live up to potential and not disappoint. Or more likely, it also contains some concern about the opinion of others.
- **The Fun Job**: Simply put, "if I could do it all again, I would be a _____."
- **The Dream Job**: This is the goal to which the Candidate aspires either based on experience or based on pure "want" vs qualifications.
- **The Money Job**: At some point most candidates stop prioritizing career advancement or dream jobs to just pay the bills. Or sometimes life creates situations where people cannot afford to care based on economics.

There is nothing wrong with targeting jobs within multiple categories. But it is critically important to devote the highest percentage of time and effort to reasonable and winnable jobs.

GETTING THE WIN

The higher the profile of a job or a hiring organization, the more responses will flood the decision manager. Everyone wants to work for brand name companies, companies led by a high visibility leader, or for fun organizations. This is where the battle between head and heart comes in. It is easy to convince yourself that you are a great candidate if you do not employ brutal honesty.

Respondents to postings today fall into three categories.

1. Realistically qualified for the job to which they responded (80% match)
2. Somewhat qualified for the job to which they responded (40-50% match)
3. Totally unqualified for the job to which they responded (0% match)

Success requires honestly placing yourself in one of the three categories with each submittal and applying with a realistic understanding of the odds. Too many people reach for the stars and then allow a lack of success to cause them to doubt their worth and cloud their focus. Either or both of those conditions compromises the candidate's ability to successfully find a job that can be won. If application to a dream job results in a firm but polite "not interested," remember that it was a "dream," then just move on.

If you are truly ready for a new job, focus 85% or more on jobs you are highly qualified to do, and have unique skills/experience which make you the ideal candidate.

WHAT ARE YOUR MUST HAVE'S AND
WHAT ARE YOU WILLING TO GIVE UP

DEFINING WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT

What are your must have's and what are you willing to give up if everything else is right?

- Remote vs hybrid or in-office
- Level of compensation
- Flexible work schedules
- Benefits
- The job title
- Location of the company
- Culture of the organization
- Expectations of the employer. Listening carefully to conversations with an organization or a Recruiter should provide every clue needed to assess the level of internal support in an organization, how much of an uphill battle is ahead for whoever joins this Team, whether the stated goals are attainable.
 - a. Do you really want to take on a highly challenging assignment at this point in your career?
 - b. Do you really want to work 50 hours a week or more?
 - c. Do you want to manage the effort of others OR be a sole contributor?

MANY PEOPLE TODAY THINK THIS IS
ANOTHER "PAY DAY" MARKET WHERE
MONEY IS NO OBJECT - IT IS NOT!

There is absolutely nothing wrong with preferring a less chaotic environment, a more mundane job, reduced responsibility, an easier ride. You have earned the right to make that decision.

When reviewing options, be as flexible as possible and willing to continue the dialogue if the majority of what you are hearing is positive. Be prepared to be surprised, and open to listening to every option unless and until you have good reason to back away.

FINDING A JOB IS HARDER THAN DOING ANY OTHER JOB

Are you desperate for work or just trolling to see what is out there? Many people today think this is another “pay day” market where money is no object, firms will pay anything, etc. It is not, except in rare instances. Most organizations today are focused on streamlining staff. Hiring Managers are searching for candidates who have backgrounds that are diversified and have proven they can learn quickly and function well in a multi-dimensional role. If you have those qualities, sell them in your resume and in your conversations with Recruiters and Hiring Managers; they will resonate!

The grass is not always greener. If you are in a decent job, getting a reasonable paycheck, being treated respectfully, and valued, maybe that is enough. Changing jobs is stressful, time consuming and potentially negative. Nothing is guaranteed in today's job market except change itself.

Be sure you are ready for a lengthy effort, be careful not to burn any bridges in the process OR just take a closer look at what you have and be happy to count yourself among the lucky ones.



About BASG Insights

BASG Insights publishes original articles, reports and periodicals that provide insights for businesses, the public sector and non-government organizations. Our goal is to draw upon research and experience from throughout our professional services organization, and that of coauthors in academia and business, to advance the conversation on a broad spectrum of topics of interest to executives and leaders.

BASG Insights is an imprint of Business Advisory Solutions Group, LLC.

About BASG

Business Advisory Solutions Group supports business profitability and growth by standing at the intersection of People, Process and Technology. BASG has delivered tangible results that improve productivity, mitigate risk, and maximize profits for organizations. Our Clients range from Fortune 500 companies to mid-sized and owner-managed businesses across a broad range of industries.



704.887.3493



WWW.BASGLLC.COM



INFO@BASGLLC.COM



15720 BRIXHAM HILL AVENUE, SUITE 300, CHARLOTTE, NC 28277