

# Career Change: Discover The Most Powerful New Approach

Presented by **Your CV Coach** [www.your-cv-coach.com](http://www.your-cv-coach.com)

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## 1. Drive Your Career Change with a Direct Approach

If your career has gone off the road, or taken a turn for the worse, here is how you can re-take control and drive it back to full job satisfaction with a more direct approach than you might think possible. In this report I'm going to let you in on some of the techniques I use to successfully coach my clients when they need a career change. Many of these tactics have not been disclosed publicly outside of my coaching practice before for fear of the hiring managers getting wise to the techniques.

When you're looking for that new job or a career move it's easy to think that 'they' hold all the cards. They want you to think that way, but it doesn't have to be that way.

If you can change the way you think about it, you can get back in the driving seat, and after all, this is your career we're talking about so let's get it right!

First of all - **'they'** don't hire you for the sake of it; **they hire you to help them make a profit!**

So we'll start with these two things first – **how you are** (attitude) and **how you react** (the way you see things)

## **1 Attitude**

Everyone goes on about positive mental attitude, don't they? But what does it mean?

To some extent we can all have some influence over what happens to us. I don't mean to say that we can make everything go right all the time, but we can hold an attitude of expecting things to go right

- If we expect things to go well they're more likely to.
- If we expect things to go badly they probably will.

So even if everything doesn't go right we can get past the things that go wrong so much easier. This is what I mean by positive mental attitude.

## **2 The way you see things**

- Instead of thinking they're in charge, why not try 'I'm in charge'
- Instead of waiting to be chosen, decide what you want and present some proposals;
- Instead of dreading interviews, think of yourself influencing key decision-makers;

- Instead of scouring the adverts, read them as sources of inside information;
- Instead of worrying about vacancies, think of them as needs waiting to be met;
- Instead of having to accept the offered terms, think how you can negotiate;
- Instead of them getting what they want, you both get what you want.

Job banks, search engines, job listings, and job guides are all useful tools in your employment search; however they won't find you the unadvertised jobs. Statistics show that perhaps up to 60% of all jobs are unadvertised and are found informally - that is to say through networking and the direct approach - so the unadvertised jobs are what you really need to uncover.

You can uncover these unadvertised jobs and get back into the driving seat by putting together a carefully crafted direct approach letter.

This direct approach is no more and no less than a 'marketing' exercise to a specifically qualified target audience. It is NOT a mail-shot and certainly NOT 'speculative' letters that some people would have you waste your time writing.

Compared to a direct approach letter, **the speculative letter or mail-shot is a complete waste of time, effort and possible opportunity.** So don't do it!

- A speculative mail-shot aims to cover as many possibilities as you can, so inherently it's not specific to any particular reader.
- A speculative letter labels you as a jobseeker and gets sent to the Personnel Department (if they have one and it gets past the waste-basket).
- Unless you want to work for the Personnel Department (if they have one) that's the last place you want your letter to go.
- Mail-shots in general usually have less than 2% response rate so to generate some interest, (even before an interview is offered) you'd have to spend maybe £300 on postage alone.
- This approach at best will bring you what 'they' think you should have, not necessarily what you want for yourself.
- And the most important reason:
- Because you try to cover all the possible employers you then make it virtually impossible to approach them again or in any other way. (Oh yes, you already sent your details in to us didn't you?)

### **What should you do?**

- Each direct approach must be tailor-made for the reader;
- Your letter must include a business proposition;
- Only address to the decision-maker who can employ you;
- Research the organisation in detail;
- Be businesslike and professional;
- Do NOT include your CV

### **You should also:**

- Make it clear you would like to arrange a meeting;
- Be prepared to follow-up quickly once sent;
- Be persistent – they need you.

You already know there is so much more to job or career change than waiting for the right advert to appear so if you want to get back in the driving seat prepare a good direct approach.

### ***Remember - fail to prepare - prepare to fail***

Use your research and personal achievements to pack real benefits into your letter; the research you do will show you exactly what proposition you need to develop.

- When a need exists because of...
- Expansion or new locations;
- Departure or retirement of employees;
- New product launches;
- New markets at home or overseas;
- Downsizing (businesses often lose people they'd rather keep);
- Change in legislation.

...somebody has the problem to solve.

**You simply present yourself as the solution, and so remove their headache.**

Use this direct approach as one of the main tactics in your overall career change strategy; your time is better spent on this and networking than scouring the papers for adverts to reply to.

## **2. How to Create Massive Cover Letter Impact**

When writing your cover letter or application letter what you need to do above all is create impact and interest. You may be the most talented finance manager or account executive, market analyst or horticulturalist but if that talent doesn't flow through your cover letter then you might as well forget it.

This is not the time to be boring or submit a fact-laden covering letter that has no oomph! What you want is a sharply focused, punchy letter that leaps up and demands attention.

### **How do I do that?**

Crisp white paper with clear black print is the starting point. Ensure all the address details, both theirs and yours are easy to spot and there are no errors or typos. Use a headline in bold to identify the position or job your cover letter refers to; along with this include the date and publication where you saw the advert. Address the letter formally.

**Now the next part is the most important.**

You have to catch their attention in such a way that they want to read on. (If they don't, you're out of the running anyway.)

Start by including the reader in your application. You do this by your first words which should be:

"Your advert..."

What this does is turn their thoughts to the content they produced and **OWN**.

Now extend this by adding how it interests you:

"Your advert really interests me..."

This shows you are interested in something they produced and own and starts to make you sound interesting.

**Now you must say why you are interested:**

"Your Advert really interests me because..." and continue with your reasons i.e. specific comments about their products and company reputation.

With this you have engaged the interest of whoever is reading your cover letter, so now is the time to start making your own case. Follow your comments about the employer's business with "...and I am confident that I have all of the skills and experience that you require."

Just the use of words like '**confident**' is enough to grow the stature of your application.

With a maximum of five bullet points you can summarise what these skills and experience are, relating them closely to the demands of the advertisement. Finally close your covering letter by referring to any instructions such as enclosing a CV or Resume, stating location preferences or salary details and say that you are looking forward to **MEETING** them at the interview stage. Of course you haven't been asked yet to attend an interview, but you must assume you will be called. After all you are sure to

be of interest and you know you have the skills they need, so why wouldn't they want to interview you?

To get more information and help with your cover letter writing go and visit this page: [Instant Cover Letters](#)

### **3. Overcome Your Interview Nerves and Be Better Prepared than Your Interviewer**

Although interview preparation is everything it's sad to say that perhaps as many as half of all interviewers you're going to meet will be unprepared or incompetent. It's not all their fault; it's just lack of interview preparation time or responsibility; some of them will be co-opted at the last minute to meet you and won't have had time to prepare.

However there are those who just think they're great interviewers and fly by the seat of their pants!!

It's not all bad news though; you can turn this to your advantage. You can be better prepared than they are by following a few simple rules.

It may sound too simple but what they really want to know only falls into 4 key areas:

- ✚ Why are you here?
- ✚ What can you do for us?
- ✚ What sort of person are you?
- ✚ Can we afford you?

Let's examine each one:

### **Why are you here?**

Because you are interested in the job, the company, the challenge, the chance to learn and develop new skills, and you are ready to move for such a great opportunity.

### **What can you do for us?**

You bring all of your experience, your skills and achievements, as well as your desire to develop and contribute to a new team or department. (This is easy if you've already done your homework on your achievements and skills). You should have a number of skill stories to illustrate these specific points ready prepared.

### **What sort of person are you?**

Someone who has initiative and gets on well with others and is flexible in attitude to different ways of working; maybe you are a great team player, or a strong leader or you describe yourself as loyal and conscientious. Try to avoid the "open-door" or "hands-on" type of response. Remember that 'compatibility' is much more important than 'competence'.

Put that to the test if you like - who would you rather work with? Someone who can do everything or someone you can get on with?

### **Can we afford you?**

Salary negotiation is another issue altogether, but the point is you should have a feeling for what the remuneration is likely to be and show them that you bring value-for-money. If the salary is a lot more or a lot less than your

recent earnings then you must be able to show convincing reasons why you are pursuing this job.

That's all fine as a general background but if you're going to overcome your interview nerves and be better prepared than your interviewer, you must be more specific.

Put yourself on the other side of the desk – if you were doing the interviewing, what would you really want to know that would convince you to make a job offer?

***You'd want to know more about the 4 key areas above wouldn't you?***

So all you have to do now is work out your questions to explore those 4 areas. Make it at least 25 questions long and don't avoid that question you don't want to be asked (you know the one don't you?) and then carefully work out your own answers.

Don't forget to include at least half a dozen personal attributes of the ideal candidate; why these are also your attributes and be prepared to explain why they should hire you as opposed to any of the other candidates. You should go and find out more about [interview strategies](#).

One final thing on interview preparation and being better prepared than the interviewer. The "Tell me about yourself" type of question is used by many interviewers to allow you to settle in and feel comfortable. An interviewer who hasn't prepared beforehand will tend to ask this question to buy time while she thinks of the next question.

It's then only human nature to ask questions relating to what has already been said (by you).

Your answer to the **"Tell me about yourself"** question can therefore set the whole agenda for the interview.

Prepare this well and you're streets ahead. It should include a brief walk through your career history from the first job or when you left university; touch on each move you made with positive reasons for the move [I wanted to get some activity based costing experience...] and key in only relevant facts that show how you meet their needs. Allow only 3 minutes for this with most time spent on your most recent experience.

Now even if you do get the well-prepared, competent interviewer you will have done your interview preparation and you will be the well-prepared competent interviewee!!

However, don't get too complacent some organizations use structured interviews which are actually a boon to incompetent interviewers as they ask the same pre-determined questions to each candidate. No worries! The best preparation for structured interviews is to work on your skill stories. They usually tell you in advance what skills or competences they are interested in.

What else should you do? Well there all sorts of interviews so you can never do too much interview preparation it's the most certain way of feeling confident when you meet the interviewer, whether she's competent or not.

I'll give you a start if you're struggling, click on my link below for some of the most common questions you can start to work on. But don't just leave it there, build up a good list then get to work on your interview preparation. Go and find out more about [interview strategies](#) and preparing your questions and interview answers.

## **4. Self Describing Skills - Key Strengths**

You need to be the best you can at describing your best qualities; particularly your key strengths. In my coaching practice I generally, at some point, ask my client: "What are you good at?" purely as a means to establish if they have already thought through this most important question. Some have, but more often they haven't and the answer usually involves lots of head-scratching, umms and arrhs and then quite often a monologue on what they're NOT good at!!

Your answer to this should be your key strengths statement which we talked about in personal marketing on my website - let me remind you.

A "Key Strengths" statement is a summary of your most powerful skills and attributes.

### **The Key Strengths statement**

- Highlights your most important skills and abilities
- Differentiates you from others
- Avoids generalisations
- Provides examples of your achievements
- Spoken naturally should take no more than two minutes

Of course at interview, the question may take many different forms:

"What are your main strengths?"

"Why should we hire you?"

"What do you think makes you the best candidate?"

"Convince me you're the right person for us"

"How do your skills match our particular needs?"

As with all your Presentation Statements it should be so well rehearsed that it sounds completely spontaneous.

This example I've given you here should get you thinking so give your Key Strengths statement some thought now.

"I have very good communication skills; I work well either leading or being part of a team and I am self-motivated and capable of working on several tasks at once.

As a leader of small teams I involve people in the decisions so that they feel involved and ensure they have the opportunity to contribute to tasks facing the team. I manage the information, plan and organise and make the decisions as required.

With my strong communication skills, I have been able to motivate the staff to higher standards of performance meaning we have also helped our profits figures through increased sales and tighter cost-control.

Alongside this I have encouraged innovation and my team has produced several very good ideas for new products, services and markets. As an example the new widget has taken off in Eastern Europe and is contributing 7% of profits in less than 18 months.

Most importantly I actively seek to develop members of my team for their own careers sake but also for the future of the business itself. This means I also look for personal development opportunities to ensure my skills are kept up to date."

As another example, the Key Strengths statement from a Chief Engineer might go like this:

*"I have very good communication skills and work across all departments to ensure that issues are identified and practical solutions are prepared.*

*Coupled with my project management skills and my hands-on leadership style I am able to consistently deliver and commission projects on time and to budget.*

*I am focused on internal and external customer's needs, rather than purely functional needs and I apply specialist skills in continuous improvement and world class manufacturing to increase efficiency, reduce waste and losses due to downtime.*

*As Chief Engineer I have initiated and managed strategic change programmes and implemented effective quality improvement programs all the way through to successful local level implementation. This has led to savings of £750k per annum and helps to maintain the position and financial strength of my employer".*

These key strengths statements naturally answer many of the interviewers questions whilst being reassuring in content. You will find though, that they will create new questions for the interviewer, so be aware that you must be able to substantiate everything you claim.

Try working on your own statement using your own words and skills, blending them together to create a strong "key strengths" statement to meet your needs.

**You'll be surprised how often you use this one!!**

## **5. CVs and Resumes Sometimes Just Get In the Way**

As a head-hunter and Career Coach I see so many CVs and resumes that look as though they are designed to get in the way of what I (or any other recruiter) might need to know about you the candidate. They vary from pure meaningless waffle without any identifiable facts to lengthy tomes with so much detail they send me to sleep. And I persevere where many others wouldn't bother.

My least favourite CV of recent times was seventeen pages long. The first page had only the candidate's name on it (you know who you are don't you?) and the second page was devoted to a full page head and shoulders photograph. The other 15 were packed full of so much information that I felt I knew his life history.

Most professionals I know would not take the trouble to even read this; someone here seems to need to justify their existence. At this point I lose interest.

**Don't do this to yourself!**

## **All the poor recruiter wants to know is: should I interview this candidate?**

So make it easy for them to conclude: yes I want to interview this candidate. That is the sole job of your CV or resume.

So get your information in the right order and keep it brief and relevant. Too much information can disguise all the good things you have to offer, because nobody can find them.

- ✚ The first page is the most important part of the CV or resume. The reader needs to see immediately who you are, what you have to offer and how they can get hold of you.
- ✚ What specific skills are showcased on your CV or resume?
- ✚ Have you clearly identified your level of expertise and competence?
- ✚ Have you worked in different sectors?
- ✚ A short section of “Key Skills & Achievements” can cover a lot of ground for you.

Have you done everything you can to convince and reassure your reader that an investment in your skills is a good choice? Check what you need to do with the [Ultimate Resume Writing Guide](#)

If you have an impressive but meaningless job title – change it to convey its real meaning. At interview you can explain “my actual job title was...”

When you come to laying out your employment history always start with the most recent job - employers take most notice of current skills and experience.

Within each employment section you should include the company name, the dates, your job title (but see above) and two or three lines which describe the purpose of your job. By this I mean why you are employed there at all. You should then follow this by detailing how you have met that purpose, including achievements and outputs quantified wherever possible. These can of course be simple bullet points of information.

Go back through your history but don't bother too much with what happened more than 10 years ago; with the pace of change much of it may not be too relevant anymore.

For a more comprehensive view of constructing a CV or resume that will not only be read, but also acted upon you should check what you need to do with the [Ultimate Resume Writing Guide](#) where you will also find guidance in developing what should be included as well as specific examples of CVs and Resumes you could model yours on.

## **5. You Want A Better Salary? Negotiate Your Way**

You can't force your boss to stump up more money, but you can attempt to negotiate a better salary. Here are some simple strategies that are easy to use and that will boost your case if used carefully.

1. Choose the best and most receptive time for your boss. Ask for a meeting midweek, when the initial issues of the week have been dealt with and the

end of the week is in sight. Most people are in a slightly more amenable frame of mind at the midweek point;

2. Make sure you have all your performance statistics at hand to show how you have added value. Your boss is only interested in paying for results, so what can you show?

3. Don't go in aggressively or in an adversarial frame of mind however much you need the extra money. Start pushing and you may as well forget it;

4. Use friendly language and gestures - the issue needs to be a "what can we do?" discussion, rather than a "what will you do?" confrontation;

5. Be prepared to chat about general business subjects before getting down to business;

6. Try to arrange your seat at an angle or around the corner of the table rather than directly face-to-face.

Negotiations can break down over the smallest misunderstanding; so if there are any doubts over a statement or quoted fact make sure you query and get it clarified immediately.

Before you enter the negotiation, check your strategy here first. It just may make all the difference! To find the right information, negotiation tips and advice take a good look at [A Better Salary](#) - you are sure to find some negotiation tips that fit your discussion.

Best Wishes

**Peter Fisher**

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