

*“Distills the essence of what you need to be and do to give you
a huge leg-up in landing your next job*

—Martin Rutte

co-author, *Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work*

THE INSIDER'S GUIDE TO GETTING GREAT JOB OFFERS

***Fast &
Thrilling Ideas
For Successful
Interviews in 2011
and beyond***



Russell Riendeau, Ph.D. & Brady Spencer



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**RUSSELL RIENDEAU
BRADY SPENCER**

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THE CEO'S GUIDE TO TALENT ACQUISITION
(co-authors Tim Tolan and Ginni Garner)

THAT WAS ZEN, THIS IS WOW
(co-author Rob Engelman)

THINKING ON YOUR SEAT: A Field Guide
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FINDERS KEEPERS:
Attracting and Retaining
Top Sales Professionals

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INTRODUCTION

Fact: The most qualified candidate doesn't always get the job, the most prepared candidate does.

In 2011, the world is recovering from a business recession as difficult as most of us have ever seen in our adult lives. The new world-at-work has turned every facet of how we market our businesses, how we research, how we invest both our money, as well as invest our time to enhance our professional skills. This new world is demanding documentation, facts of your achievements and proof you did what you said you did in every part of your professional career. Accountability, proof and the ability to present your message clearly, with confidence, is the new normal in business. Longevity and loyalty are not the same thing in the workplace and leaders are not fooled anymore. Technology allows any person to verify information you provide. Your social security number tells where you worked and how much you paid in taxes, as well as when you started and when you left.

As search professionals and providers of professional services, we have placed sales and management talent with thousands of companies since 1985. We have interviewed over 90,000 careerists and business professionals throughout North America. Yikes! You could say such numbers have given us an insider's understanding to what managers look for when hiring candidates.

In this book, we share how to strengthen your resume and supporting documentation, enhance your interviewing skills, and research tips prior to an interview. It is our intention to teach you how to represent yourself as a dynamic, proven professional. *This book will not show you how to manipulate the truth or make up for a lack of constant personal and professional development in your business world. Your value to the marketplace is determined by your ability to compete and provide better value than the candidate waiting next in line. With the Internet's 24/7 educational and instructional programs, videos, webinars, podcasts and free downloads of every possible scenario, there's no excuse today for you and I to not maintain our professional skills.*

Whether you're a seasoned executive in transition, a college student seeking your first of many opportunities to make a difference, a sales/management professional advancing one's career, or a adult re-entering the workforce, this get-to-the-point-fast *Insider's Guide* will help you compete and get better offers in the new world at work.

We wish you all the best in your career action plans.

BE STREET SMART

Interviewing for a new career opportunity is a challenging, emotional, and exciting experience. You never know what opportunities will arise from an interview, even if it appears within the first ten minutes that there is not a fit in that particular position. The street-smart interviewee realizes that the interviewer may have knowledge of other opportunities within the organization, or other contacts – hiring manager contacts – in other companies. To use an old sports adage: *you never know when the scouts are watching the game.*

Several recent studies have revealed that over 33% of the sales and management positions being filled today did not exist in their current design two years ago. What this shows is that you can create your own opportunity in this marketplace.

Successful interviews result and job offers can happen when you do homework on an organization, an industry, an interviewer, or a product/service. Surfing a website is not considered research, it's curiosity. It proves you can surf, not swim in the big waves.

The next decade will be exploding with new and lucrative business opportunities for sales and management professionals. Hiring managers are under pressure to increase revenue, keep costs down, and secure profits for shareholders. Make the hiring manager's life easier – show them how you add value to an organization. You can do it with preparation and practice. Here's how.

DOCUMENTATION

RESUMES, BRAG BOOKS & TROPHIES FROM YOUR ATTIC

Resume Fundamentals

- ◆ Managers hire value, not merely industry experience.
- ◆ Layout – Tell exactly what you do, sell, manufacture, lease, or service.
- ◆ 2 pages maximum – Managers want proven performers, not merely your whereabouts since pre-school.
- ◆ State a brief objective at top: It gives purpose, clarity and focus.
- ◆ Use language that is relative to the industry. Industry jargon can't be understood by managers outside your business. Write in their language or a broader vocabulary.
- ◆ Paragraphs under the job headings should show revenue numbers, number of direct reports if applicable and geographic coverage.
- ◆ Speak the truth. Say exactly who you work for, what you do and how well you do it.
- ◆ If you can't prove it, don't say it.
- ◆ Bullet points should show rankings, contests, awards, world records, trips to Hawaii; anything that proves you're in the top percentile of what you do in your field.
- ◆ Use bullet points to highlight accomplishments, not duties. Managers want to see results.

- ◆ Show client names in the resume. It adds credibility and excitement to the document. It also allows for “coincidental contacts” between your clients and the wants of the interviewer.
- ◆ Show college education and applicable training programs. Don’t show your high school graduation date.
- ◆ Explaining gaps in your work history are dangerous conversations. Clumping jobs under one category is an option, or omitting. However, be prepared to tell your reasons for leaving the data off. More than 50% of firms are hiring outside agencies to verify employment.
- ◆ Ethics is always in vogue.

DOCUMENTS TO BRING TO YOUR INTERVIEW

- ◆ A brag book of awards and contests won, sales rankings, pictures with the president, testimonials from customers, and anything that proves you are great at what you do. Suggestion: Compile as much accurate detail from memory, peers, or old notes. If asked to prove it, you’re on your own, partner. If you don’t have any of this stuff – good luck.
- ◆ Current business brochures, tear sheets, videos, promotional items, the widget, service contract or material samples.
- ◆ We all love “Show & Tell.” Make the meeting a “Show & Sell.” Managers can relate to your story with a visual aid. It also lets them see your style, expertise, selling ability and passion for the sport of professional selling.
- ◆ Don’t bring or leave anything that is confidential. Ethical practices must be demonstrated.

DIALOGUE IN THE INTERVIEW

- ◆ Smile. Be expressive. Move in your seat and show a wide range of energy and creativity. Act like a person who **SHOULD ALREADY BE IN THE JOB.**
- ◆ Keep your question list in front of you to stay focused.
- ◆ Take notes!
- ◆ Demonstrate how you add value, make money, save money, or lead people to the “promised land” everyday. Managers need people with energy directed towards results.
- ◆ Explain your business strategy. What is your daily, monthly, quarterly plan. How do you manage your time, your customers, your boss, your revenue stream?
- ◆ Are you profitable? Show the data to prove it.
- ◆ How do you sell or service your customers? On price, on customization, value-added, just-in-time? Is the sale consultative, order-taking or services? Show the methods clearly.
- ◆ Give examples of successful sales and failed ones, too. Case studies are great ways to tease out the needs of the hiring manager and watch for buy-in of your approach to the business.
- ◆ If you’re presently not working, provide candid, accurate reasons for your departure from your organization. Be forthcoming with accurate details without badmouthing or second-guessing management. Remember: Hiring managers may side with other hiring managers. Show regret for the departure, but focus on positive phrasing. Supplying vague answers or blaming someone or something raises suspicion.
- ◆ Always close. Ask for the job, ask what the next step involves.

LOOKING GOOD FOR THE INTERVIEW

- ◆ Late for the interview? It'll be a struggle right away.
- ◆ Dress for the part. Look like the job your interviewing for. It's better to be overdressed.
- ◆ Check the basics: Are your shoes shined? Have a nice pen? Crisp shirt? Fresh haircut ? Briefcase/portfolio neat and spiffy clean? Got Gum?--Stick it under the seat.
- ◆ Car washed? Coke cans and wrappers cleaned out? (The manager may want to go to lunch in your car, or someone may see you pull in the lot.)
- ◆ Documentation neat and crisp? Bring Resumes.

REFERENCE LIST TO HAVE AVAILABLE

In order of acceptance and believability:

- Ex-boss
- Former or current customer
- Former business peer
- Aunt Mary or Uncle Frank
- Mom
- Spouse

RESEARCH TO BE DONE PRIOR TO INTERVIEW

- ✓ Google yourself to see if you're in any "situations" or listed as part of events that may be difficult to explain.
- ✓ Google and review just two issues of industry newsletters, magazines or journals and you'll know 75% of the major issues, challenges, and competition in that industry.
- ✓ Newsletters, industry magazines, journals, trade show directories are gold – dig for them.
- ✓ Identify industry trends, challenges and newcomers.
- ✓ Product or service acceptance or challenges...Uncover secrets.
- ✓ Become a test pilot: Test, eat, break, burn, throw, or watch whatever the company makes, sells or services. Tell them of your experience and give good detail.
- ✓ Call customers, vendors, partners to learn about the sales cycle.
- ✓ Explore culture, pace, selling methods and reputation.
- ✓ Find a former employee and interview that person.
- ✓ Annual Reports and the 10K, if public, are loaded with data.
- ✓ Websites: review every link, click and clank.
- ✓ Google, LinkedIn, Facebook, etc. will give you good insights to their industry – find secrets and current data to bring to the interview.

EXTRA CREDIT

CREATE A DYNAMIC "STRATEGIC PLAN" FOR THE INTERVIEW

- ◆ Demonstrate your ability to think profitability and tactically. Design and bring the three, six, nine and 12 month plan of action you'd follow if hired, based on your research.
- ◆ Show how you plan to immerse yourself in the job and learn it, based on what you found in your research. This shows forethought, initiative, creativity, and saves the hiring manager time. It shows you are self-motivated and don't need hand-holding.
- ◆ No time to do a full-blown plan? Create an abbreviated one with assumptions and sequential time lines based on your current job. Win points by showing the effort.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

- ◆ Why is the position open? Are there any surprises you should know about?
- ◆ If a expansion position: Why now, why here, what created the need for additional staff.
- ◆ Focus on issues related to their top three or four big projects, challenges, problems, or customers that need to be dealt with right now. Talk business issues and problem solving.
- ◆ Ask to see the 12 month plan you and the manager will work under – your strategic plan could be the blueprint.
- ◆ Ask what the current superstars do, say, or where they came from.
- ◆ Question whether your current contacts could be viable leads.
- ◆ Draw a pie chart and ask the manager to fill in the blanks with regard to travel, number of clients, revenue streams – anything to get assumptive dialogue going.
- ◆ Ask what the next step is to secure the job.
- ◆ Ask for the job – even if you're not sure you want it. Remember: we don't know if a scout's at the game.

QUESTIONS NOT TO ASK

- ◆ Don't discuss compensation – it's way too soon. Sell your value till the offer letter comes in the mail. Then you can negotiate from a powerful position.
- ◆ Don't discuss compensation. (Incase you missed it the first time.)
- ◆ Don't ask about company car styles, 401K, insurance, carpet color of your office or health club stuff. Focus on what's in it for them if they hire you.
- ◆ Do I have to learn how to use a computer?

POST-GAME INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP

1. Always write a thank you letter. Always.
2. Send an email right away. Ask for the second interview.
3. Keep it short, to the point and reaffirm your skills and ability to do the job.
4. Sign it with a strong signature. No dinky scribble – mean it.

ADDITIONAL TIPS ON INTERVIEWING FOR MANAGEMENT POSITIONS

Potential managers need to address different issues. Cultural fit, personality and leadership styles, image, taking a product to the marketplace, selling cycles, profit margins, P&L responsibilities, field experience and travel requirements all play into how the company envisions you fitting into the organization.

Here are a few ideas for making a strong impression and finding out what they need:

- ◆ Do thorough research on the culture, personalities, and reputation of the organization. Find out about involvement in charities, colleges, and community events.
- ◆ Get a well-rounded viewpoint of the operation. Speak with vendors, competitors, or ex-employees. The person who held the job previously can be enlightening. (And it's not hard to find out.)
- ◆ Read just two issues of industry periodicals and you'll know 75% of the major issues, challenges and competition in that industry.
- ◆ Find common ground to dovetail your experience into their product/service mix. Spreadsheets, compare/contrast, margins, etc. will help answer those concerns.
- ◆ Create a potential customer list and compare your current customers. If your current customers can lead to fast business, great. If not, show a "strategic plan" to identify new customers.

- ◆ Prepare a chart that shows your past direct reports, compensation designs and incentive programs (that worked and failed), sales quotas, sales training and evaluation plans, forecasting data and the like. Proof of your value and vision creates confidence in the hiring manager.
- ◆ Enter the interview with the attitude of “This is what I do now.”
- ◆ Interview with a collaborative mindset to lock on to the “Team Concept” with the interviewer.
- ◆ Ask tough questions. Make the executive explain a position, not defend it. Show respect while demonstrating perceptiveness.
- ◆ Don’t discuss income until an offer is made. Sell value first and foremost.
- ◆ Ask for a plant or office tour. Let the hiring manager experience your comfort with a leadership role and let them see others unrehearsed reactions to you.
- ◆ On the plant tour, find areas of similar applicability to your skills and common ground customer potential. Ask questions with confidence. Smile at the workers. They may work for you soon.
- ◆ Follow up with a firm and convincing letter. Stress similarities and compatibility with your strengths and experience.

NEGOTIATING THE EMPLOYMENT OFFER

- ◆ Sell your value first.
- ◆ Discuss money only when the offer has been presented. u
Consider the whole package, not just base salary.
- ◆ Explore options other than guaranteed base or bonus dollars. u
Discuss benefits at the very end.
- ◆ Leverage and time are on your side if you're currently employed.
- ◆ If unemployed, securing an offer within 15% of previous income is a successful deal.
- ◆ If the job is outside your industry or expertise, an offer equal to, or slightly less, is a successful move.
- ◆ Never ask: Can I first discuss the offer you've just given me with my spouse? (Even if you have to.)
- ◆ Don't resign from your current company till the deal is signed.
- ◆ Two weeks notice is the maximum to give your ex-employer.

SUGGESTED READING

Supplemental business reading is a mandate for business professionals at the top of the leader board. So, here's extra credit homework for the omnipresent students in the mix. This list covers a broad range of topics including skill development, interpersonal awareness, current business challenges, and personal development. A good percentage of hiring managers will ask what you're currently reading.

Freakonomics, Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

Superfreakonomics, Steven D. Levitt and Stephen J. Dubner

The Invisible Gorilla, Christopher Chabris and Daniel Simons

Blink, Malcolm Gladwell

Tipping Point, Malcolm Gladwell

Spin Selling, Neil Rackham

Creating Competitive Advantage, Jaynie Smith

Fish! Harry Paul, Stephen Lundin, John Christensen

Persuasion: The Psychology of Influence, Robert Cialdini

The Road Less Traveled, Scott Peck

Differentiate or Die, Jack Trout

Marketing to the Affluent, Thomas Stanley

Human Motivation, Robert Franken

Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, Stephen Covey

The Psychology of Winning, Denis Waitley

Seven Kinds of Smart, Thomas Armstrong

Management Challenges in the 21st Century, Peter Drucker

Chicken Soup for the Soul at Work, Jack Canfield, Mark Victor Hansen, Martin Rutte, Maida Rogerson and Tim Clauss

EAST WING WISDOM ON INTERVIEWING

- ◆ Take good notes and give accurate feedback.
- ◆ Take responsibility. Show the client you're serious through follow-up.
- ◆ Do your research. Be proactive.
- ◆ Most companies do drug screens.
- ◆ Practice your interview game. Rehearse questions, double check data and materials. Don't wing it... bring it.
- ◆ Talk about commitment and loyalty, not about your plans to start your own business in 2 years.
- ◆ Always close and ask for the job.

SPECIAL NOTE TO HIRING MANAGERS READING THIS BOOK

If you read this book and then interview candidates that do not deliver the documentation of their successes; have not done their research on your company and industry; their resume does not contain the information needed to demonstrate their skills--as we have shown how to do in this book—we suggest you don't hire the person.

You can find a better-prepared candidate. Business is too competitive today to take risks on unproven professionals that have not done the research and preparation to be the best. Naivety is not an excuse in the information age.

ABOUT THE EAST WING SEARCH GROUP

Since 1985, our retained clients are domestic and internationally emerging companies, mid-sized organizations and Fortune 500 corporations in a variety of markets including: media, consulting, healthcare, consumer packaged goods, packaging, plastics, medical products, information services, consumer and industrial products.

We specialize in sales, marketing and management search, placing senior and mid-level executives, director-level executives, as well as sales professionals throughout North America. We also employ an affiliate network of search professionals worldwide with the ability to find talent and opportunities in Europe, Asia, South America, the Pacific Rim, even down under, in Australia.

ABOUT RUSS RIENDEAU

Dr. Russ Riendeau is a national speaker on psychology in selling and leadership. The author of five books on human capital and career change strategies, as well as hundreds of articles and media appearances, he's also conducted over 90,000 business interviews. Russ started his first company at age five, selling re-straightened nails out of his red wagon to carpenters in his neighborhood, then worked as a homebuilder for nine years before going into executive search. He holds a BA, MA and PhD in psychology and founded the East Wing Group, Inc., a search firm in Barrington, IL., specializing in retained search for sales and management professionals. Russ is also an adjunct faculty member at Northwestern University's School of Continuing Studies and a member/speaker with Vistage International.

Russ@EastWingSearchGroup.com

ABOUT BRADY SPENCER

Brady founded North Bay Search in 2003 and specialized in Sales and Sales Management search in the Chicagoland Area. In 2006 he entered the healthcare arena as a provider of corporate health benefits. He has moved his family west and now resides in Fresno, California, where he continues his pursuit of bettering the world one insurance policy at a time. A graduate of BYU-Hawaii, with a BA in psychology, Brady and his wife are the parents of 3 children and an active volunteer in his church.

He can be reached at BradySpencer@gmail.com.

**For more information on our search practice,
please contact 847-381-0977.**

**East Wing Group, Inc.
135 Park Avenue, Barrington, IL 60010**



**EVERYTHING YOU WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT INTERVIEWING
IN 18 MINUTES!**

This *Insider's Guide* cuts right to the heart of what it takes to find solid companies and secure great job offers. Hiring managers can't afford to make mistakes in today's competitive market so make their decision easy.

You'll secure the job you desire if you know how to market your talents effectively.

Sharpen your skills with this fast and thrilling guide. Topics include:

- “Show ‘n Tell, Show ‘n Sell” tactics of interviewing.
- Creating a dynamic resume that “fits.”
- Discovering other career opportunities hidden in the corporate jungle.
- How to do impressive research.
- Designing a “12 month strategic plan” for the position you desire.
- Offer-killing questions (Yes, people still ask these).
- Demonstrate your sales and management skills immediately.
- Creating positive first impressions.
- Follow-up to post-game interview.
- Negotiating your best offer.
- Securing a management position.
- And much more!

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