
Minutes and Notes of our August 24th Meeting

St. Joseph the Worker Job Networking Club
St. John's Catholic Church, 1055 Hughes Rd., Madison, AL

Job Club Website:

www.stjohnbchurch.org/jobclub/jobclub.html

08/24/10 12:30 pm

Guest Speaker: Dave Sadlowski

Subject: Critical Moments of the Job Interview

- General Information for Newcomers -

- Maureen Chemsak is the Convener for the group.
- The Job Club has been meeting since September 15 last year.
- We completed a three-part resume workshop this Spring.
A sample chronological resume and a sample functional resume is on the website as a model:
www.stjohnbchurch.org/jobclub/jobclub.html

Sample Chronological

Resume: <http://www.stjohnbchurch.org/JobClub/Presentations/Sample%20Chronological%20Resume.pdf>

Sample Functional

Resume: <http://www.stjohnbchurch.org/JobClub/Presentations/Sample%20Functional%20Resume.pdf>

- The job club has a lot of volunteers.
- The usual format for our meetings:
 - First half hour: Introductions and Announcements.
 - Second half hour: Presenter.
 - Third half hour: Refreshments and Informal Networking [each week different job club members volunteer to provide refreshments].
- Each week during introductions, in addition to newcomers, we like to have three returning Job Club members do their "Two-Minute Elevator Speech," a short advertisement about what type of work they are looking for and a summary of their skills and experience.

- Getting together face to face once a week is important for networking, so you are not just at home glued to your computer. Job club members share information, provide emotional support, help with resume, cover letter etc..
- By a recent count, we have 333 job seekers who are active members of our networking group. Additionally we have more than 40 helpers who contribute in various ways. We are a networking group - we work together on a real-time basis to keep our members informed. Most of our members did not know any of the other members before joining our group, and collectively we can gather and disseminate a wealth of useful information about job opportunities and helpful tips.
- 70-80% of jobs are not advertised in the paper, or on the internet.
 - You find jobs that are not advertised through other people.
 - Identify places you would like to work and if you have limitations, like if you don't have a security clearance, then identify companies who would hire you as you are.
 - Your networking contacts are friends, family, neighbors, friends of your children, friends from church, former employers, former co-workers.
- Go to job fairs to make contacts.
- Some of the companies represented at job fairs are not actively hiring but it is a chance to get your resume in.
- Go to Community Resource Fair for the same reason: to get connected.
- VBC events: go to the vendor area which is typically open to the public.
- People get jobs in a doctor's waiting room, waiting in line to pay a bill, waiting in line at the grocery store - every time you are waiting it is an opportunity for something to happen.
- If you hear about a job, e-mail it to Maureen and she will send it out.
- St. John's parish graciously provides the meeting place and coffee, without charge.
- We don't collect any fees or dues - we are an all-volunteer organization so we would like you to pay back by bringing refreshments once every 4 months or so.
- There is a sign up sheet - check the refreshments table or see Isabel Abiseid.

Some of the Job Club Volunteers:

- Dave Fledderman is the Job Club interface with St. John's church. He manages the information that is posted to the Job Club website [www.stjohnbchurch.org/jobclub/jobclub.html] - which is part of St. John's church website. The website is a wealth of information - the website has detailed information, key presentations, workshop information, and a list of upcoming speakers. If you miss a meeting you can find out what has been said. The website is active, it is updated weekly. While there are a host of e-

mails sent to members each week, these are not posted to the website because the information is outdated very quickly, so be sure to sign up to receive the e-mails.

Dave coaches people on resumes. He worked for 36 years as an Army civilian, the past 18 years on Redstone Arsenal and spent more than 30 years as a supervisor and selecting official.

There is a resume book maintained for reference upstairs at St. John's church. Sometimes employers who see the Job Club sign on Hughes Road stop by and ask to review any available resumes of job seekers. Dave coordinates entries in the notebook. You must sign a release form for your resume to be included in the book. See Dave for a release form, fill it out and return it to him. Any time you have an update to your resume and would like to replace your old one, provide your new resume to Dave and ask him to replace it. You do not need to sign a new release form each time.

- Ed Snow has government and commercial experience. He helps people get their resume to reflect exactly what they have done to accurately portray themselves to potential employers. He has been volunteering with the Job Club since last October and is one of our presenters.

Ed's advice: There are no generic jobs. You've got to be thinking about: what do you want to do. You can have 5 different resumes, each one focused on targeting a different type of job and highlighting a few skills in that area. A tailored resume will highlight your specific skills relevant to an open position and may help to get you called for an interview.

- Laneen Manchester: Recorder

Note from Dave Fledderman [Thanks, Dave]: "Laneen Manchester graciously serves us as the note-taker and Recorder for our weekly meetings."

- Yohanes (pronounced like the name Johannes) Suhartoyo facilitates new member registrations. He prepares and collects the registration form for new members, takes photos, and makes coffee. Yohanes is also a Chess National Master and is willing to coach children in how to play chess!

- Moses Nervis is both a job seeker and a trusty helper. He sends Maureen a lot of job announcements which are then passed on via e-mail to our members.

- Herb Hayes is a Retired Army Officer and has owned businesses before. He spent 47 years with the government, the first 20 in the military and the last 22 in Civil Service. Herb recommends that you remain on the member list when you get a job (even if you have her take you off the e-mail distribution) - please continue to help. Give Maureen information about jobs you hear about so she can send it out to the members. And again, don't forget about our club once you get a job.

Herb also helps with resumes. His focus is on commercial resumes, since getting into the government takes a lot of time and effort. For the short term, you really need a conventional or commercial resume.

Herb suggests that for the government you should stress good writing skills - use a few paragraphs rather than bullets. He will help with government resumes once you have a primary resume. Your resume must be two pages, no more.

Everything on the resume needs to focus on the job objective. Your resume should be focused on what the employer will gain by hiring you, not how you can benefit from working for the employer.

Your objective should not state: "Seeking an opportunity to demonstrate my skills..." or that "I want a decent job in..." or "I need a full time job with medical benefits so I can pay the bills..." or that "I want training in..." even though a good job will provide you with all of these things.

The employer is not there to give you an opportunity. You need to state specifically what you have to offer a company, not what they can do for you. State what you have accomplished in your previous work history, and do not just list the various duties you were supposed to perform.

- Isabel Abiseid volunteered to be the Refreshments Coordinator - see her to sign up to bring refreshments to a future meeting.

- Dave Sadlowski also helps with resumes and he has made several presentations. He led the three week workshop on resumes.

Announcements 08/24/10

- Lisa Mavrotheris provided refreshments today

- Chantaine is in contact with companies that have vacancies for business development managers and IT positions / mid-level software engineers. Call 256-797-8968.

- Note for someone with manager / director experience: Library is looking for a Director for their Foundation. Also Madison County is looking for a Civil Engineer to fill the position of Assistant to the City Planner. The intention is to groom the candidate into becoming the City Planner.

- Alutiiq ("A-loo'-tick")
Sandy Kirkindall is looking for resumes to fill temporary engineering jobs at Idaho National

Labs. They are also looking for a Fire Protection Engineer and a Program Manager for a contract with the Navy in Chesapeake, Virginia.

- Last week Maureen received e-mails from four members who have found jobs! One of the jobs was in California, another was in North Carolina.

- Lisa Mavrotheris recommends that you make your own networking opportunities. She is a member of the Wellness Center in Madison. One of job paths she is considering is in Wellness. She saw an announcement that Huntsville Hospital was giving a status briefing on the hospital in Madison. Lisa is a certified master gardener. She approached the speaker before the briefing who told her, "you need to speak with so and so and I'll pass your information on."

They are planning to provide horticultural therapy. They just opened a pediatric garden. They arranged a meeting with the Occupational Therapist who gave her a tour of the garden for the children.

The person who arranged the tour told her, "the group who has taken on this project needs task forces. We would like you to be on the task force."

Lisa concluded, "Maureen was right! Don't wait for opportunities to present themselves, make your own opportunities!"

- Maureen added: Make your own network in the field you are trying to get into.

- Job Club Member requested help from anyone using social networking for their job search: LinkedIn / facebook. He needs help setting up his site, "what do I need to put on the site? How they are doing the search?"

- Herb: LinkedIn is where you will put your career related information. Employers will use facebook against you to see that you have been out drinking....

- Maureen: There is a tutorial out there. In a future meeting we need to invite people in to talk about LinkedIn.

- Member Comment: LinkedIn people meet face to face at the restaurant at the Monaco from 4-6 on Monday Nights.

- Use LinkedIn to find connections.

- Maureen: The Job Networking club is on LinkedIn.

- Member Comment: There is also a book in the public library about social networking and LinkedIn.

- Dave Sadlowski: On facebook you can put a picture, and a brief bio. Don't respond to people's comments. That's it - you have to be careful.

- Herb Hayes: A picture taken with a phone has embedded in it the GPS location of where the picture was taken, so if you take the picture at home you are telling everyone where you live....

[from the e-mail]

- The speaker for the next meeting (August 31) is Glen Reese from the Civilian Personnel Office at Redstone Arsenal. Glen is a recruiter who works in Human Resources with the Garrison.
Subject: How to Apply for a Job on Redstone Arsenal.

08/24/10

Guest Speaker: Dave Sadlowski

Critical Moments of the Job Interview

- Dave has worked in a variety of fields [including some literal fields!] in an apple orchard, and installing gravestone headstones.
- He served 24 years in the Air Force, built a rocket launcher.
- He was a CFO in Florida.
- Also worked for the Marshal Space Flight Center.
- Now he is trying to build his company, Stellar Focus, that he started with a buddy in Portland Oregon. They started the company to assist companies in critical need times. They provide assistance with procurement, and high end consulting to corporate and government agencies. They provide first class support for proposals, RFP writing, etc..

- Critical Moments of the Job Interview: What is it?

It is not the actual interview itself.

Preparation for the interview is the most critical time.

Preparation will prevent nervousness.

- Number One: Be excited that you've got this interview!

They selected you for an interview from tens, if not hundreds, of people who have applied. Take

that in to initially calm you. Pull the resume and cover letter you submitted and read them - and know what you said to that person on the phone, e-mail, and any other communication.

- Pull out the job description. Line it up with your resume. Take any notes and embellish upon them. If there is a note in the job description that is not in your resume, take time to show on paper how you line up with that job description.

- Research the company. Try to drive [drill down on the internet] to the specific location that has the job. Sometimes you can get into that particular office. You may be able to find out who the president is and their bios as well as the company philosophy.

- Talk to all of your friends and associates about this, especially those who work there already. Find out the latest emphasis in that company. Does that person know the interviewer?

- Create a folder for that interview. You should already have a portfolio, but start a folder specifically for that interview.

- Maureen: For everything that you have on your resume, be prepared to give an example of a time when you demonstrated that skill.

- Herb: Prepare 10 questions that you want to ask. You may not ask all 10, but you are selling yourself, for example, "where do you see me fitting into this organization?"

- Dave S.: Write down your questions.

- Question: Do I take my folder with me?

- Answer: Yes, take your folder and Portfolio.

"I did this and this, and in researching further..."

The interviewer is impressed that you did a lot of work.

- Kathy: It is a two way street. They are not there to cut your head off. They are having the conversation to find out who is the best match.

- Dave F.: Do not ask, "How much are you going to pay me?"

Rather ask questions related to the company and how the work is done.

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- Question: Is it ok to ask what are my chances of getting this job?
 - Answer: Take notes during the interview. If there is something on your resume that doesn't fit real well, they might wonder why that is on there and how it fits in with the job.

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- You have to be honest. If you aren't and they find out later they may let you go.

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- The day of the interview, review all of that stuff again.

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- Check the news for any press releases on that company. They may be expanding and you need to know that - or - they may be going bankrupt....

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- Coffee, medications: Do what you normally do - unless it is something really bad.

Don't take something to calm your nerves. I have had people show up for an interview and they are not sharp. When you ask them a question there is a 3 second delay and you know that they probably took something.

Don't drink a lot of coffee if you don't normally drink coffee or if you normally drink a lot less coffee.

- The best thing to calm your nerves is to be prepared.

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- Dress for success: I don't have a lot of expertise in this area; however, make sure that what you wear is clean, neat, comfortable and conservative. Don't wear shorts, even if you are applying for a fitness job.

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- Be on time but don't be too early. Five to 10 minutes early is fine. Get to the parking lot 15 minutes early, wait 7-8 min then go in.

He once had a meeting scheduled for 9:00 and the person arrived at 8:20. He had another meeting at 8:00 and was already planning to leave the meeting early to meet with this person. Because he knew they were waiting, he was distracted during the meeting wondering if he should leave even earlier. Don't do this. It puts a lot of pressure on the interviewer.

- The first day of work, show up an hour early.

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- Question: colors
 - Answer: I don't care about the colors, women may disagree. But if you are sloppy....

- Maureen: Don't wear anything that makes you look unusual. Don't wear a very wild tie so people are looking at your tie instead of listening to you.

- Herb: If you normally wear unusual clothing, go back to conservative.

- The interview starts when you open the door to the building.
Be courteous. This is vital, but don't overdo it.

Say, "I am here for an interview for the ___ job. Where is that taking place?"

Don't say, "Gee that was great, Bama beat up on Tennessee yesterday...." or, "Wasn't Desperate Housewives great yesterday?"

- Be responsive.

Don't be distracted while you are waiting. Don't be on the cell phone when they come to get you and say to the interviewer or assistant, "I'll be with you in a second."

Be responsive. Put away anything that will distract you - computer, cell phone, etc..

Don't knock anything over....

- Smile, make eye contact.

Some people who are overly shy put their head down during the interview. When this happens he knows it will make it a job to get the interview done. It will be difficult to get the person to answer questions. He will have to try to draw the answers out.

- Wait for interviewer to initiate a handshake.

- There are formalities in the beginning. Let them talk first. This allows you to find out what they are thinking. Wait for them to welcome you in and say, "Have a seat."

Don't sit down first because they may not be planning to sit down.

- In different countries there are different customs and courtesies.

In Thailand there is a custom that you don't put any part of your body above the other person. He thought that was a good idea in general so he adopted that custom for himself.

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- When you listen to the interviewer, you get a feeling for what is going on with them. They have spouses and children. You need to be empathetic to that.

People ask pilots, when you are flying, aren't you nervous?
Flying a plane you are not nervous - you are too busy!

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- Allow the interviewer to finish questions and statements.

They may just be setting the stage for the question. Don't jump to conclusions and answer a question they are not asking, wasting precious time.

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- Don't manipulate the conversation to answer what they are not asking. Just answer the question.

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- Every interview is different. Be flexible and be prepared. Know that it will be different than any other interview and prepare for different questions.

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- They will typically start to talk about the job.

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- Questions they ask: Your job history.

Research the job announcement to see how your experience matches. They will be impressed that you took the time to show exactly how you fit with that job.

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- Questions they ask: What did you like and dislike about your previous job?

Try to turn the dislikes into a positive. Stay away from saying negative things about people. If there were difficulties with union communications state that, "we were able to work them out and I was proud of that."

If the candidate complains about people, as the interviewer you will be wondering if they leave your company will they be badmouthing you in the next company and the next job?

They didn't ask you to tell them everything you disliked, just one thing. Pick something you didn't like and describe how you made it better.

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- Questions they ask: What are your strengths?

Example: "I am flexible, and a good team player."

Say it convincingly with good eye contact.

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- Herb: Practice with someone else - do a mock interview. If you can, get a friend to work with you.

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- Questions they ask: What are your weaknesses?

Example: "I have been working for years on the reluctance to delegate because no one can do the job like I can, but I keep working on it because when you have too much to do you must enlist others to help."

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- Dave S. Example: I have been a CFO but I can't do spreadsheets. I work on that because at times you have to do those formulas.

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- Prepare ahead because you will get these questions and they are difficult.

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- Another person's answer was that they have a problem with shyness and they know it is critical to working with team members so they constantly work on it to overcome it.

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- Offer a solution, don't just give a weakness.

Don't say, "I can't write so I have given up trying...."

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- Questions they ask: What is going on with that break in your employment? [This is something to address in the cover letter as well.]

Example: "For 10 years I worked part time jobs working around my family's schedule. Then I was a stay-at-home Mom by choice and it was very rewarding. Now I need full time work."

If you volunteered state that. If you were a caregiver state that. Don't say you have been doing "nothing." Be honest - don't make up things. Prepare, then it is real easy to come out and say those things.

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- Questions they ask: What major challenge did you face and how did you handle it?

Example: "I built an Avionics test facility in an open area in high bay from the ground up. With documentation I was able to pull together from some of the equipment I built an avionics lab including fire control. When I was finished it worked. I took it from dust to a fully functional lab."

"The most rewarding thing I ever did was saving someone's life."

Excellent - write that down and you will be much more prepared.

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- Job Club Member comment:

Try to cover the three aspects: what was the challenge, state what you did, and what was the result?

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- If there are 50 people with the same qualifications, the company is trying to determine which applicant will fit in best with the team.

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- How do you finish up the interview?

Say you are interested in the job.

If you want the job say so.

If you don't want the job just say, "Thank you very much."

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- Be prepared to fill out an application.

Find what they typically ask on the application and bring that information with you.

Herb: References, contact information. They may want to hire you on the spot so be prepared.

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- The interview does not end until you leave the property.

Be careful in the parking lot. Have your head on square the whole time. You may get a call on the way home with a follow up question.

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- Send a thank you note. e-mail is good because it is quick, but follow up with a thank you note by snail mail - if I get a note a few days later it reminds me of him. Even if I filled the position, I may know another manager who needs these types of people.

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- Awkward / illegal / improper questions

The manager needs to run list of questions by HR before asking them in an interview.

One Job Club member was uncomfortable in an interview with the question, "Where does your child go to school?"

[It seems like a neutral question but it can be awkward. Possible answers are the name of a specific public school, but also a private school, religious school or even a home school - or even that I don't have any children. It can be a fishing expedition. The interviewer may draw different conclusions based on the answer.]

Maureen: When you are asked an awkward question you have three choices.

1) You can answer the question.

But if you answer the question it can lead the interviewer into follow up questions that you really may not want to answer.

2) You can refuse to answer - and probably not get the job.

3) You can refocus the interview: "I know we don't have a lot of time, I really want to use this time to talk more about the job" or "that is an interesting question, can I ask how this relates to the job?"

The fact that you hesitated or asked another question may cause the interviewer to realize that the question was awkward.

• Job Club Member comment: A question about hobbies was used against him in an interview for a job in a call center. He answered that he liked spending time in the great outdoors. They said, "I don't think you can sit still to work at a call center." He replied, "I understand what you are saying" and went back to the resume to remind them of his qualifications: He taught three-hour classes, and spent an equal amount of time on paperwork that goes to the state.

• Dave F.: He conducted many interviews. The last question he asked was totally unrelated and off-the-wall, usually:

"Why do you think there is fuzz on a tennis ball?"

He would get a host of different responses.

He would do this first of all to get them to relax, and to show their flexibility, and to find out if they have a sense of humor.

He got a wide variety of responses. Some people would laugh, others would get incensed.

Your response says something about you.

Be prepared for off-the-wall questions.

There is a physics answer to that question, but that was not really what he was looking for.

If you refuse to answer you have a problem with being able to roll with the punches.

• Member question: When do you call back?

Answer: If they are making a decision tomorrow, call tomorrow. If next week, wait 3 days. Do not call every day, but show interest. Do not pester.

- Prepare, prepare, prepare -
I can't stress that enough.

- Don't forget to express your desire if you want that job.

- If they stressed something in the interview make a reference to it in your thank you note.

- Question: What do I say in the follow up call?

Answer: "I was interviewing x times with so and so and I am checking to see if you have filled the position. Do you have everything you need in order to make the decision?" or "Is there anything else you need from me?"

- Member comment: Thank them for the interview then lead into those questions.

- Member comment: I ask them, "If I am not chosen please tell me."

Answer: Don't plan on it - these people are really busy. They may have had 20 interviews and they have more tomorrow and more the next week.

- Maureen: On September 14th, 21st, and 28th we will be doing mock interviews and talk more about interviews.

- **Next week's presenter will show us how to apply for Federal jobs.**