



The Dream Job.

Are you ready if it Knocks on your door?

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You are happy in your job. But let's face it. It's a job. A means to an end. But what if your dream job was right around the corner. What if an employer was proactively seeking their next superstar and that star was YOU? Would you be ready?

Here are some ideas on how to prepare yourself, fine-tune your personal brand and be job ready when your dream position comes knocking:

1. **First things first – your CV.** If you're content in your current position (or even if you're not), it's likely you haven't touched your resume in a while. But it's time to blow the dust off and spruce it up. The resume is often your key chance to get your foot in the door. What does it say about you? Is it current? Are your most up-to-date volunteer and projects represented? What about ongoing education, presentations or additional training? Take some time with this one. Ensure the resume reflects you and your experience accurately.
2. **Social media can make or break you.** Gone are the days of separating your social and professional world. Employers are actively reviewing social media tools their candidates are using. A recent CareerBuilder survey stated that nearly 40% of all hiring managers are screening candidates based on their online personas – and nearly 70% of those candidates were ruled out due to questionable personal content online. Review your social profiles and delete any inappropriate photos or language or complaints about your current job or employer. Are your accounts representing a well rounded, polished professional with strong communication skills? Now is the time to manage your virtual reputation.
3. **Stay connected. Your references should be your biggest fans.** You've probably provided their contact information over the course of your career, but when is the last time you had a conversation with them? Are they aware of your current employment situation? If it's been awhile, it might be time to re-evaluate who you are providing as a reference. Are there more current or relevant contacts that can speak on your behalf?

Update your list. Give them a call. Make sure they are ready and able discuss your background and experience.

4. **Be prepared to discuss your individual or team accomplishments.** It's easy to get wrapped up in the day to day of doing your job, but when is the last time you reflected on your successes. Could you name a few if you were asked? It's time to take stock of the individual positive contributions you've made in your roles. Make a list. Identify the outcomes. Have you led successful teams? The same is true of this scenario. Can you speak to successful team outcomes? Be prepared to do so. Future employers want to know that you've demonstrated successes throughout your career.
5. **Strengths vs. Weaknesses (or Opportunities for Improvement). Everyone's got them.** Not unlike identifying accomplishments, being asked to articulate strengths and weaknesses is common in the interview process. Yet many interviewees have a difficult time pinpointing these areas. Be prepared to discuss them. In addition, have examples ready. Interviewers want proof. Can you validate these areas? How have you utilized your strengths or overcome your weaknesses? How do you, in fact, know these are true areas to highlight? While it's not easy to expose some of these vulnerabilities, most employers value this level of transparency and self-awareness.
6. **Continuous Improvement. It's not just a cliché.** What are you doing to 'improve' yourself, meaning, what is your professional development plan? How are you expanding your skillsets? Too many candidates rely on their employers to provide and resource their professional growth. For many organizations, this simply isn't a focus. Or they are cutting or shrinking these budgets. It's time to recognize that gone are the days of employer-funded or directed growth and development. Be intentional. Own your career path and growth plan. You are in charge of your development, not your employer.
7. **Be proactive.** You probably have a job description. Do you follow it closely? Do you draw a hardline on tasks outside of your job? Or are you open to expand your skills outside of your defined role? An individual who is willing to take on additional responsibilities becomes a more desirable candidate every time. Not only does this approach highlight someone who is a team player, it also illustrates someone who is proactive, seeking to better themselves and their organization.
8. **When opportunity knocks, open the door.** You may have few chances in your life to change your trajectory. Don't miss them.

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