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Media Interview Questions & Answers

JOB SEARCH: THE TOTAL SYSTEM
TOTAL CAREER SUCCESS UNIVERSITY
With Ken and Sheryl Dawson, Authors

Introduction to the Authors

Why did you write and develop Job Search: The Total System?

It has always been our passion to help people around the world achieve their career potential. After a number of years in the career transition field, we realized that people needed a step by step process to effectively market themselves in their careers. JSTTS is the result of years of research and development of effective techniques to gain meaningful, challenging and rewarding jobs and careers.

What is unique about The Total System?

At the heart of TTS is the Cycle of Success. It begins with a positive attitude – setting your mind on your job or career dream and believing that you can achieve it.

Then we present a systematic process for achieving your goals. By linking each of the steps together in a meaningful and progressive way, you are able to build what we like to call psychological leverage. You are in command of your job search, confident and competent. Linkage enables you to be one step ahead of your competition and the interviewer. When you embrace the cycle of success you super charge your career progression.

What are the elements of The Total System?

The TS is more than a book. It is an entire learning system. Having started our careers in education and training, we approached the career transition process with the realization that people learn in different ways. We developed an audio program that is motivational as well as informational, a study guide for reinforcement and electronic organizer for implementation. All of these resources are available on the Total Career Success website with a host of resume samples, video lessons, sample forms, research links and other resources. All are linked in a systematic, easy to apply format.

Who can benefit from The Total System?

Over the years we have found that everyone seeking a job or career can benefit from the TS. It applies to every background and industry from the new college grad to executive because it is so comprehensive and the self marketing techniques are essential to success.

We have seen thousands of success stories from all walks of life who utilized the TS to advance their careers. Through the power of the internet we have finally realized our vision for the TS. Now every job seeker can easily access the tools they need to achieve their career dreams.

Market Conditions

When the economy is depressed, what should job seekers do?

The best thing to do is remember that you are concerned about the entire economy... you just want the right job for you. There are always opportunities to work even in the worst economy. If there is 6% unemployment, for instance, that means 94% are working. Always focus on the positives.

What should one do when their industry is depressed and laying people off?

A depressed industry can be the result of many factors – it could be a temporary situation such as we see in the real estate and financial markets, or a longer term transformation such as we see in manufacturing and especially in the auto industry where jobs have shifted overseas to cheaper labor markets. It is important to evaluate what is behind the down turn in your industry segment before deciding on a strategy. For a short term down turn, you may turn to contract opportunities until the market improves. For a long term shift in an industry, you may consider transferring to a new industry entirely or even a new career.

Career Change

How would one go about evaluating a transfer to a new industry?

The key is to evaluate your transferable skills to other industries. You must also consider where your interests are – what excites you? When you are passionate about an industry, you will be more motivated to succeed and stay with it.

Layoffs

When there are a lot of layoffs, people can really get discouraged. What do you recommend for those situations?

We have seen massive layoffs before, and it is no fun to face that kind of a market. But in *Job Search: The Total System* we present a success formula that we have seen work thousands of times. It relies on a positive attitude, a strategic approach to selling yourself, and the cycle of success.

Success

Tell me about the cycle of success.

There are 3 basic parts to the cycle of success:

- 1) is a positive attitude that we mentioned.
- 2) Is our concept of linkage – simply put every step of the job search must be linked. This is what we mean by a strategic approach to job search, not a haphazard approach.
- 3) Is building psychological leverage. Now that is not psycho babble, but it is the result of linkage. In brief, you are prepared for every situation as a result of linking the steps of your search, gain confidence and build momentum as you implement your job search.

Most people understand the importance of a positive attitude, but how do you maintain it when you are worried about paying the bills?

Once again *Job Search: The Total System* can help you keep focused on what you can control and actually increase your control of the job search. For instance, when you have success drafting an “A+” resume, you feel positive and confident to approach employers. When you receive positive feedback on your resume and what you offer an employer, that builds more confidence to make the next contact, to interview and so on. It is a little like the self fulfilling prophecy – you create your own positive attitude and build your own expectation of success.

Differentiating The Total System

***Job Search: The Total System* is now in its 3rd edition. What is enduring in the system?**

Quite simply it is the fact that it works! We have thousands of testimonials and success stories to prove it and many are on our website at www.tcsworldwide.com

Lots of things have changed in 20 years since your first edition – what has changed in your new edition of *Job Search: The Total System*?

No question that technology is the biggest change in the last 2 decades. We have added a technology update and we have put all the complementary resources for *Job Search: The Total System* on the membership area of our TCS website. Every part of the system is available electronically.

There are lots of resources on the web for job search on career sites and on job boards and other sites. So what is different about *The Total System*?

Most of the resources online are disconnected and in many cases contradictory in their advice. A job seeker can get confused pretty quickly about what is the best approach. With *Job Search: The Total System* and the *TCS University* resources, there is no confusion – all the resources are integrated, and they are adaptable to every person on the TCS website.

***TCS University* – that sounds interesting. Who is it for and what does it offer?**

The university concept comes from the idea that Total Career Success requires a process of educating oneself in the best techniques for job and career success. When you learn the techniques and apply them we guarantee you will feel like you have graduated to a whole new level in your career! It is not just for college grads however – anyone who is serious about their career can take advantage of TCS University membership.

What are the resources in *TCS University*?

In addition to the book, *Job Search: The Total System*, there are sample A+ resumes, there is an audio series which is informative and motivational, a study guide with step by step interactive summaries of each chapter, video segments, an organizer with over 32 forms, quizzes to test your knowledge, 100 tough interview questions with answers and many other resources.

Now that does begin to sound like a university of job search! But for someone who wants quick answers and has a short attention span, is TCS intimidating?

We won't pretend that *The Total System* does not require some effort to implement, but even for someone who likes their information in compact bites, like many college students used to instant gratification, I would challenge them to check out the interactive and systematic approach of TCS University. We have a number of college grad references on our site who have raved about the practicality of *The Total System*. The bottom line is, if you want a better job for better pay, it is worth the effort!

Career Advancement

What can someone do if they have a job but do not like it or have no where to advance in the company?

It is very important in today's work world to take control of your career. Ensuring that your skills are current in your field and industry, keeping your resume current, and keeping your network active are essential steps. If you decide you need to make a job change, you should consider what the most viable opportunities are before you begin to network aggressively.

That is a lot to think about and do. How can it be accomplished when someone is working full time?

Managing your time is essential for a successful transition at any stage in your career. Making a commitment to your career advancement is the starting point. Once you are committed, then setting aside the time will be much easier.

Assessment

What is the best way to know what direction to go in or what positions to target?

Self assessment is an ongoing process since one's preferences as well as the market place can change an individual's priorities. *The Total System* includes a self assessment which is excellent to revisit periodically. If you are considering a career change, TCS University provides a number of excellent formal assessments to guide your decision process.

That can be a formidable task to evaluate one's best options. What if someone desires coaching or counseling in this important area of assessment?

TCS University also provides coaching via telephone and email. Our professional coaches have years of experience and are trained in our *Total System* approach to successful job and career change.

It seems to me that confidentiality would be important to someone who may be currently working. How do you approach this?

No question that individuals may choose not to let their current employer know about their search for a new opportunity. This can be challenging when networking and applying for opportunities on line. The job seeker must use caution to let their network know that they are confidentially exploring new opportunities. In addition, it is imperative that the search be conducted off business hours. Many companies monitor email and sending resumes from one's workplace can be viewed as unprofessional. Be sure to use your personal email for such communications.

You maintain that The Total System is appropriate across organizational levels and career stages. How can one resource be so inclusive?

That is an excellent question. *The Total System* is indeed a process, but it is also flexible to adapt to a wide range of goals and career levels. Having used it in our corporate outplacement program for all levels, backgrounds and industries, we have seen clients apply it and succeed in their personal job and career goals thousands of times.

That is quite a track record! If someone is implementing *Job Search: The Total System* on their own, is it as effective?

We believe that with the book and the online interactive resources, anyone can apply The Total System successfully. However, if they desire support, our coaches are ready to offer support.

Resume

One of the areas that many people struggle with is their resume. How important is the resume with all these online applications that companies use?

We call it the drive wheel of one's campaign if that gives you an indication of how important we believe the resume is. When you consider that it is an integral part of each step of the job search you begin to realize why having an "A+" resume is essential.

There are a lot of resume types to choose from. How does one decide what to use for their situation?

It is simple with The Total System – we recommend just one format for most situations: a 2-page chronological resume that is accomplishment based.

So what would be an example of a situation that would warrant another type?

If someone has been out of the work force for many years, such as someone coming out of prison, then a functional resume may be appropriate. That does not mean the individual can avoid telling a potential employer their situation.

I can see your point. But why are you so set on a chronological resume?

Employers want to know what you did where. The chronological resume enables you to best communicate your accomplishments in relationship to specific employers and your years of experience.

You mentioned that the resume relates to every step in the job search. How so?

The resume development process is part of one's assessment process as you consider your skills, competencies and strengths. You want to be sure to include all of them that are relevant to your next career target. Also, the resume should be validated by your references. The resume is integral to networking and of course highly useful in interviewing. So you see, it is the drive wheel of one's campaign.

Job search as sales & marketing

That is an interesting term of job search – campaign. Why do you call it that?

Well, job search is a marketing and sales process and so thinking of it in terms of a campaign is ideal.

What are some ways that it is like a sales campaign?

One of the key elements of a successful sales campaign is to have a sales strategy. In this case the job seeker is the product or service. So first defining your unique features and benefits through the resume development process is essential. Having excellent sales collateral materials in addition to the resume, such as cover letters, reference letters, and documentation of your skills and projects is also important. We call this the "tool kit".

What is the next step after you have the tool kit together?

Identifying your target market is the next step – to whom are you going to sell yourself? Of course, this depends a great deal on the market place for your skills and competencies. So taking time to research the market and the potential opportunities is very important.

Networking & Lead Generation

Once you know what industry and jobs you want to target, how do you actually find the jobs?

This is where networking and lead generation techniques are crucial to success. The Total System presents dozens of techniques, but more importantly provides a strategy and practical plan that can be adapted to any job seeker's goals.

What are the top techniques for networking and lead generation?

One vital technique is to go beyond internet listings. So many job seekers want to just paste their resumes up on job sites and apply to company websites, thinking that is the easy way to find a job. It may be easy, but as with most things in life, the easy way is not very effective. It isn't that NO jobs are gotten with a passive approach, but the *best jobs for the best pay* are found through networking.

Can you give us an example of effective networking?

One of our favorite stories is of an individual who was at his club and found out about an opportunity in the whirlpool! That is not the norm but it does indicate that you can network anywhere with anyone. Some of the greatest leads can come from the most unusual sources. That said, you should have a strategy for networking with a list of high, medium and low priority companies and contacts and systematically call and follow up with them. The Total System provides a step by step process for networking and lead generation.

Interviewing

Once you get the interview, how do you prepare?

Well, you do not want to wait for the interview to begin preparing -- that is for sure. We list the 100 tough questions in The Total System, and you should begin preparing for interviews as soon as you have read the book and come to the chapter on interviewing! Our belief is that you can not over prepare for interviews. In addition to preparing the tough questions, once you get an interview you should research the industry, company and job thoroughly, as well as the interviewer if you can find some information on that person. In our internet world, that is usually fairly easy to do.

Negotiations

So once you get an offer, what then?

I'm glad you asked, because a lot of people think the job search is over with an offer! But once you have the offer, you must negotiate. Now you are in the driver's seat and the table is turned. They want you and now is your opportunity to ensure that you get the best compensation package.

When the market is tight can you still negotiate?

Certainly it depends on the position and the pool of talent, but in most cases you can negotiate not only pay, but other benefits such as vacation, performance bonus and other things depending on the company and your situation. When you are in a field that is in high demand, you may be able to even negotiate a signing bonus. Our chapter on negotiating helps you evaluate these factors and includes a list of negotiable benefits to consider.

Once you come to agreement on the offer, is there any other advice you would give?

Be sure to get it in writing and do not close out your networking until you start the position – we have seen offers rescinded for various reasons, so you want to keep things active until you start the job. Then you can let your network know you are placed with a thank you letter.

Preparing for Your Future Job Search

Do you have any closing advice?

Once you have a new job, keep your resume current and your network growing because invariably you will need to activate it in the future. I can not tell you how many clients have said, "I thought this would be my last job or company for my career," only to learn that it was time to move on to a new opportunity. Whether your transition is planned or involuntary, preparation is essential to a successful change.