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Preparing for Transition

Job hunting

At some stage, every full-time service person comes to the conclusion that it is time to move on. You are about to make one of the biggest decisions of your life, so, before you do anything - think about it! Don't be driven by the raw emotion that sometimes affects us all during our careers, especially when things are not panning out the way you think they should. Remember, you are giving up a career that has trained and nurtured you for some time, perhaps even decades, and your job has been secure. ***The outside world offers no such guarantees!***

So, without labouring the point, just make sure you have made this **big** life changing decision with your head - not your heart - and most importantly your family is supportive. Many a good service person has regretted the decision to leave. Experience invariably shows that nothing outside is going to offer the same camaraderie, adrenalin rush or job satisfaction that a military career offers, nor will anyone necessarily be there if you 'fall over' - you'll be on your own in the world - **for the rest of your working life**. Leave because you're happy to do so and are prepared for the outside world. Be ready to market yourself and most importantly to be patient. ***And don't be afraid to ask for help!***

* What job?

You may be fortunate and have a trade or occupation that is easily recognisable to the outside world. However, many in the Services have jobs that are completely alien to the outside world and 'may' appear to have little or no application to the outside world. If this is the case you then need to decide: ***What job is right for me?***

This is a very difficult question, particularly for those who have joined the Services from an early age without the benefit of experiencing permanent civilian employment. The best advice one can give is to *'suck it and see'* and don't be scared to try something completely different - you may just be pleasantly surprised. I know I was.

* How do I get a job?

Service people, as a rule of thumb, tend to underscore their skills base and the thought of having to market themselves is completely new and can be daunting, particularly when one has been used to those types of decisions being made for you by the system. The first thing you should do is think about what your skills base is. In other words, what have you learnt and experienced in the Service that can be used on the outside?

Print out your PM Keys/training history and you will see you have completed both theory and practical work to gain any qualification. Military jargon and acronyms confuse employers and, rather than seek clarification of what it means, you run the risk of not being short-listed for a job, simply because the employer has no idea what you can or cannot do and someone else's resume makes more sense!

So, try and break down your skills into hands-on, supervisory and management categories and what you have achieved through those skills, like promotion or postings. Communication skills are very important and you should think about examples of how you have needed to communicate both verbally and in writing.

Use extracts from your performance appraisals to highlight how you can work in at team or carry out supervisory roles and so on. Don't be backward in listing any items that have brought you kudos or recognition. **Job hunting is all about putting yourself in front of the pack.**



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* **Developing a CV/Resume**

Remember a CV or Resume is **you on paper**. The employer relies on this piece of paper to get a snap shot of your ability and whether you're worth an interview. Put forward a crap resume and you'll be waiting for a job for a long time. I strongly recommend you firstly work on developing your resume.

There are numerous sites that can give you examples of resume layouts. Basically, the Employer doesn't want War & Peace nor your life story since kindergarten. They want to know what you can offer to them?

If you're contemplating a career in the public sector you may be required to address selection criteria (SC). It is most important that in these cases you just don't write one sentence under the SC, you must clearly articulate by giving examples of how you meet that SC. Remember, in public sector employment you are not only competing from outsiders but also other public servants who are adept at the innate challenges of addressing SC and remember what I said previously, public sector jobs can take months to fill. So you must be patient and be prepared to cope while you await an outcome.

* **Self-promotion**

Marketing yourself comes down to two things; how you look on paper, i.e. your CV or Resume and how you sell yourself at interview. You can't be a shrinking violet in the job market. As alien as it may be to most of us you must be prepared to speak of your qualities in a convincing manner. Remember, your competitors for a position will be!

* **Job interviews**

Job interviews are nerve wracking. Please don't think you're alone if the thought of having to sit down in front of complete strangers to sell yourself is akin to jumping out of a serviceable aeroplane. It is daunting and should never be taken lightly. You will have anything from five minutes upwards to show this employer that you're the person for the job. So, if you're lucky enough to make a short-list for an interview, do some practice. Get someone to ask you questions that you think may be put to you and get used to listening to your own voice praising your skills. You may feel like a bozo but, like doing anything well, it's all about preparation.

* **Where do I start to look?**

The internet provides a great pathway to employment. By simply registering on the many job seeking sites that are available you can be provided with a complete range of employment. However, many government jobs are only listed on state government web sites and although all jobs are listed always ring up to see if anyone is acting in the job and how long they have been acting in the role, you can then decide whether it's worth going through the process. Remember, the public services are notoriously slow in filling positions, some take many months and then are open to appeals.

* **Location, location, location**

Everyone wants to live in the best places, which invariably makes it all the more difficult to get a foothold in suitable employment. Also, remember facilities for your family are most important and is the atmosphere conducive to bringing up kids? Check out a place thoroughly before putting down your roots. Peruse the local paper for crime and general whinges about infrastructure etc. Do your homework or you may find yourself moving within a short period of discharge and footing the bill.

* **Contacts**

Think about someone who may be able to give you a leg up in finding a job. The old axiom of 'it's not what you know, but who...' is relevant for job hunting. Use every contact you can muster.

* **Summary**

The above has been a précis putting forward some brief thoughts on the mechanics of job hunting/transition. If you do find yourself unsuccessful in any job always seek feedback as to why you missed out and take heed of what is said. **Importantly, don't get depressed when you're unsuccessful**, only a small minority ever get the job they want first time around.

If you're not prepared to be resilient and patient then you're going find the transition process very difficult indeed.

Dependent on feedback, it may be possible to offer workshops to give in-depth advice and tutoring on the job hunting process. Please let John Jarrett or myself know if you're interested in such a workshop being conducted or any subject regarding transition to civilian life you want covered.

If anyone wishes any advice or has questions regarding job hunting and transition please feel free to contact me at: chris@youngdiggers.com.au.

GOOD LUCK!

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