



JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES

Tips for Business Aviation Professionals



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MINDSET STRATEGIES



How to Land a High-Level Business Aviation Job

By Sheryl Barden

So, you're looking for a high-level corporate flight department job. Preferably a directorship or some other position of authority. And, you're wondering how to best position yourself so that you end up on the shortlist.



With nearly 50 years of hiring experience in this very complex field, API has accumulated quite a bit of knowledge that I'm happy to pass on to prospective aviation "hirees" at the leadership level.

The overarching thing to remember is that no two companies are alike; each one has different hiring philosophies.

This means there's no "one-size-fits-all" checklist that you can rely on. Once you accept this premise, the good news is that there are several things you can do to prepare and position yourself for the job, regardless which company has the position open.

Following are strategies to land your corporate flight department role:

1. Know your audience

It's critical to know who's interviewing you and what their role and decision-making profile is, both in the company and in the hiring process.

If your first screening interview is with an HR representative, he or she might not have a lot of specific knowledge about the aviation department.

So, when they ask you questions such as, "Tell me about your leadership style," it's important to share vivid, anecdotal examples to help them better understand your functional style in aviation.

Instead of saying, “I have an open-door policy,” describe a scenario or two that demonstrates how effective you are and how you measure that effectiveness. An example might be, “I try to be as approachable as possible. But let me tell you what that translates to on the job.”

And then you might share a story about how much it pays to walk the hangar floor every morning and speak to each person individually.

Letting the rep know that you always remember something about every member of your team, or that you embrace a philosophy of real one-on-one connectedness, will go a long way toward communicating your leadership philosophy—much more so than responding with mere generalities.

2. Highlight your education

It’s typical for job seekers at higher levels to de-emphasize their educational achievements, especially as time moves on and their work experience multiplies.

But, because many maintenance professionals, pilots and aviation directors make well into the six figures, a four-year degree is much more of an expectation than ever before.

In many cases, hiring authorities are placing greater emphasis on advanced degrees and professional designations, such as a CAM or an MBA.

As you likely know, college degrees are becoming more of an expectation—regardless of industry—especially for senior-level leaders who command higher salaries.

It’s important to understand that a corporate HR department creates hiring requirements by comparing staff members who are at the same salary grade. For example, an aviation director might be compared with a director of finance who might have earned a CPA and MBA, as well as a bachelor’s degree.

Sure, I know many successful directors today who are running flight departments without college degrees. But in the future, it’s going to be much harder to land a leadership role without one.

Someone in their 30s today who doesn't have a degree will likely have a far more difficult time advancing into a leadership position in the decade ahead.

3. Match your values with theirs

One of the most significant reasons corporate flight departments hire API is to help them match qualified candidates based on their personalities and values.

Getting hired into a leadership position isn't as much about your flight hours and level of technical expertise as it is about the likelihood that you're going to fit in with their culture and move them forward.

Will you create harmony on your team? Are you a forward-looking thinker? Do you agree with the CEO and aviation reporting executive's leadership philosophies? Are you going to bring best practices? Are you a self-starter? Are you focused on "doing" and "managing" vs. "leading"? These are some of the things that we emphasize with our candidates and bring out of them to present to the hiring company.

Another values-related tip: look at the hiring company's website and read its mission statement.

- Does its management value the same things as you?
- What have you read about the company in the news?
- What have you heard from your peers?
- Do you know someone who works in another department? If so, what is their experience there?
- How does the company communicate with its staff?
- How do its employees celebrate success?
- What are the "unwritten rules" that you must adhere to?
- What's on their social media pages?

4. Do your research

In addition to the legwork listed above, try to understand what the business does and how aviation enables the company to grow.

How does bizav tie into the mission of the host company? If the company is public, check its stock price and history.

Read their 10Q and 10Ks, which are public information. Who is the chairman and who's on their board? What are the big issues they grapple with? How do they make their money?

One of our last leadership candidates shined above all others because he had made the effort to learn a significant amount of information about the hiring company through online research. He asked great questions during the interview. He was clearly engaged in their business rather than simply wanting to run aviation in a vacuum—and this fact earned him the offer.

If you take the time to think about these tips to help position yourself for a higher-level job in aviation, you'll find that when interview day arrives, you'll exude more confidence and put a better foot forward toward the job you're seeking.

Don't forget, too, that while we've focused our points specifically on earning a leadership role, most of the tactics we've recommended will help at any job level.

Climbing the Aviation Career Ladder

By Sheryl Barden

Nearly everyone in business aviation that we come into contact with here at API is “upwardly mobile” and looking toward the next rung of the career ladder.

The only alternative might be to those who are reaching out to celebrate their pending retirement.



Whether you're a captain looking to take a chief pilot role, a maintenance tech hoping to get slotted in as a supervisor, or a flight operations manager positioning yourself to be an aviation director, the benchmarks for these upward moves might be a little more challenging than you think.

As aviation recruiters, we hear from countless career professionals who tell us they're ready for a move.

But in reality, many aren't really prepared for it. Nor are they able to articulate their readiness and what experience they'd bring to their next role.

So if you think you're prepared to climb the next rung up on the aviation career ladder, think about your plan of attack and your “pitch.”

How do those making the decision to move you up perceive your readiness for that next big job? And what criteria might they use to decide if you're ready?

Work with What You Know

Let's start with the basics—how you got to where you are today.

One thing you must realize is that moving up the ladder has very little to do with how long you've worked in your organization.

So please don't expect an amazing promotion and compensation package to be dropped in your lap. Even with the aviation talent shortage, you cannot simply raise your hand and say "I'm ready" based strictly on your longevity.

It's all about actively demonstrating your readiness by selling yourself and your fitness for the position. You must also have a proven track record of managing/leading special projects on your own. You need to talk to the right people, in the right way and at the right time.

A word of advice: If you know in your heart and mind that you want more than flying or fixing airplanes, you need to verbalize your desires directly with your manager as well as your professional network.

Along with recognizing and understanding that important rule of thumb, there are also a few other aspects of upward mobility that you ought to know.

Here are a few tips if you happen to be job searching:

Know your environment

Talk to your mentor(s) and manager and get a sense for how he or she thinks you're doing. If you get a good review, let them know you're ready to take on more responsibility and more authority.

And, if your organization offers skip-level manager meetings, you may want to communicate your desires to your boss's boss.

Know your skillset boundaries

A great pilot or a great maintenance professional doesn't necessarily make a great team or department leader. The view is always "grand" at the top.

So if you see yourself as a future director of aviation or director of maintenance, you've got to love people, managing problems and working with your owner or corporate leadership team. (Here's another post to check out if you're ready for leadership.)

Know your mindset

If you're feeling burned out in your position, do something to take control of your situation and make a change. If you don't have a great attitude now, how is that going to change in your next role?

Know your (next) job description

Every leadership role within a flight department has a unique job description. If you're moving up within your current organization, what is required of you in the next position?

Once you find out, you'll need to demonstrate that you understand what's expected of you, and that you have the talent and skills to take on the new challenges.

Know yourself

One of the most important considerations to ask yourself is whether or not you think you can move from being a "doer" to a "leader." This goes back to a few suggestions above about working through people—not taking on everything by yourself.

Some people simply do not feel comfortable occupying a position where they have to delegate tasks and responsibilities to others. Leading people and processes through the fine art of delegation is something you might need to study and prepare yourself for.

If your leader is open to the idea, ask him or her for educational support, CAM certification, attendance at aviation conferences, the ability to volunteer on a committee and access to other preparatory resources.

Know your leadership philosophy

If you think you're ready to take advantage of our industry's talent shortage, it's important to know how you intend to lead and what your strategy might be for improving on the status quo.

Make it easier on yourself!

To sum it up, climbing the career ladder isn't simply a matter of stepping up rung after rung. There's a lot to consider and a lot of decisions to make at each level on your way up. And, as I've described above, there's also a lot of self-reflection and research that will better position you to take that next, all-important step. By taking into account some of the pointers I've set out, you can take some of the unnecessary burden off your shoulders, and ease your way to success.

Hangar-Hopping: Is the Grass Really Greener?

By Sheryl Barden

We've all heard the phrase, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence."

And it applies to some recent conversations I've had with both pilots and maintenance professionals who are thinking of leaving for the lure of money and/or a better schedule.

But is the grass *really* that much greener?



I'm questioning whether these aspiring individuals are taking ample time to actually think about their personal and professional goals.

Are they really ready to leave? Will the pros outweigh the cons? What are the long-term implications getting some immediate gratification? And what will happen when the market tightens up?

My good friend, Keith Shelburn, and I liken this job-hopping activity to "hangar-hopping."

Job-hopping is on the Rise

On the whole, job-hopping (moving around every few years) is on the rise. In business aviation, it's due in large part to an improved economy and the current, well-documented aviation talent shortage.

It's always wise to remember that, in general, the economy and jobs are cyclical. History usually repeats itself and—even in aviation—the tables will turn in due time.

From a jobs perspective, what might look attractive this year could be just the opposite in two or three.

A particular case in point is what occurred in 2009, just following the recession. The jobs landscape had altered dramatically in this industry and hundreds of others. And, as it happened, many of the “last feet in the door” were the first out—involuntarily.

If you jump from hangar to hangar in hopes of a bigger paycheck, you just might, in the long run, end up on the outside looking in.

From a recruiting perspective, you don't want to be overpriced for the market, or have a resume that says “it's all about me!” Job-hopping will definitely show a self-focus and lack of loyalty. And loyalty is a virtue that will never be “old school” in the eyes of a hiring manager.

Reasons for Hangar-hopping

As a former Fortune 100 aviation director, Keith has experience in employee attraction and retention.

As he explained to me, “While we might be on an industry hiring tear right now, things change. Market conditions, regulatory changes on pilot age, world events or even technological advances can quickly bring that to an end. We saw this happen in 2009. I'm not sure people are taking job stability into consideration for their ‘greener pastures’ search.”

He added: “We're seeing some defensive moves being made by employers to fend off poaching. If you're happy with your quality of life and your employer has a history of stability, you may want to consider that most large companies will eventually pay ‘market rate’ to keep their talent. Turnover is expensive. It just takes time for the salary surveys and internal compensation adjustments to catch up.”

He went on to explain that “jumping ship” could be a good move, but only if you've really thought it through.

One reason why we're seeing more job changing these days is because we don't have pensions and other factors to root us in one place like we did years ago. So it's easier to pick up our flight bag or toolbox, and move it to the hangar next door. But, attractive as it might seem, I'd be very careful to fully investigate the company and the culture I'm planning to move to before I do so.

Another reason is that members of the millennial generation have a lot of different motivations for either remaining in one job or moving to another.

Today, a 20-30-something puts a tremendous amount of value on his or her free time. Their assessed quality of life is a big factor in making the move or staying. And, again, sometimes that promise of more free time might look great from the outside, but in reality might not be all that it was cracked up to be.

Watch for Red Flags

One friend of Keith's took a job with a lot of promise for free time at home. He was mainly focused on the promise of how few days he would be away from home. But, as he quickly discovered, the amount of time he was going to be gone was severely understated.

Keith went on to explain, "Due to ever-changing travel requirements and staffing levels, employers can't always provide a clear picture of the position demands that affect your quality of life. This can make hangar hopping truly a leap of faith."

Another consideration is job skills. If you're looking to move up in terms of a bigger title and paycheck, make sure that you have the requisite skillsets. It's also imperative that you have the right boss at your new job, one who set you up for success with a proper onboarding process.

Greener Pastures at the Airlines?

Several former corporate pilots we've stayed in touch with who left for greener pastures have told us they are absolutely miserable. A particular case in point is the pilot I mentioned above, who left a solid corporate flight department to fly for the airlines.

He and I spoke recently and he told me:

"I am going to be doing the same thing, day in and day out, for the next 20 years."

"I'm just seen as a number."

"I don't know anyone. There's no team camaraderie."

“There’s no creativity, control or problem solving.”

“I just show up and drive a bus.”

Why and When to Look

So, what should you consider before you stick your toe in the water and make a move? To answer that, you might try to tally up what you’re leaving behind. But remember: you’re not going to find utter clarity in every category you consider.

So ask yourself:

- How solid is the ground underneath me at my current job? If it is solid, that should have significant value.
- Do I know my “must-haves” and can I see clearly that all are accounted for?
- Will I be making more money? And if I believe so, am I sure? Have I read all the small print?
- Have I read through the total compensation package, which will include salary, 401K, long-term incentives and maybe a signing bonus?

Regarding compensation, management and career experts at thebalancecareers.com share an interesting stat. That is, employee benefits, including health insurance, retirement plans, vacation and sick leave, and life and disability insurance can represent up to 30 percent of your compensation package.

It’s important to take the time to review what you’re offered. Make sure it’s what you and your family need at this stage of your working life.

Following are a few pointers, if you’re buying into the lure of greener pastures:

- What is the cost of living if you relocate? How would a move impact your lifestyle (e.g., if you move from, say, Texas to Northern California, you cannot replicate your sprawling 4-5 bedroom home lifestyle).
- How much time do you have before your start date?
- What’s your schedule and vacation outlook?

- Is there room for growth?
- If this job supports a single individual or family, will the job “outlast” me? Or will I likely be looking for a new job later in my career when the market landscape is significantly different?
- What’s the cultural fit? Based on what you know, do you seem to like the people you’ll work with? What are their expectations of you?
- Why do people leave the organization you might join?
- What is the travel schedule/flight plan, and would that change as a result of a merger or consolidation?
- What are the perks?

Look Before You Leap!

So our main message here is to really think about what you’re getting into. And what you’re leaving behind. It’s good to remember that, no, the grass isn’t always greener.

And do pay particular attention to what your resume says about you to prospective employers. Will it say, “I’m a great employee that is here to get a job done and be rewarded for my hard work?” Or will it say, “I’m out for myself, trying to find the biggest reward.”

That may sound old school, but it’s still sound advice. It doesn’t mean stay at your job for life, but it does mean to try and architect a *strategic* career, and not an *opportunistic* one.

There are some significant differences in working for a corporation vs. a high-net-worth individual vs. a management company. And while a corporate aviation role might not be as lucrative, it’s often much more stable with less turnover. One thing’s for certain, I’m seeing a lot more retirements coming from corporate flight departments than from management companies.

Tips for Aspiring Millennial Bizav Professionals

By Sheryl Barden

Every generation has a label: the post-World War II “baby boomers” were followed by the “Gen-Xers,” with all the expected categorizing attributed to that segment of society.



The generation that followed them, however—called the “millennials,” (1980 to roughly 2000) is a truly unique and fascinating one, because its members happen to be the first generation to have used and relied upon technology almost exclusively. They are the generation that grew up with it in school, took it to college and now use it in the workforce.

For millennials, everything has been digital. That’s especially true when it refers to members of their ranks landing their first or second job.

Technology very likely enabled them to find a job posting online, email their resume, research the hiring company via Google and LinkedIn, and maybe even conduct an initial interview on Skype and send an email or text message to follow up.

The importance of this generational “slice” becomes most apparent when you look at global workforce projections.

According to BridgeWorks, in just five years, 50 percent of the American workforce will be comprised of millennials, and—even more notable—by 2025 they will account for 75 percent of the global workforce.

Millennials are, as they might themselves say, “totally connected,” mostly because there’s never been a time in their lives where they didn’t have cell phones and/or their successors, “smart” phones, at their disposal. Owning and using one is mostly second nature to them.

And using them for job seeking, as we well know, is a very different process from what their parents had to do to find a job. In fact, when we

take a look at what the process entails today, it couldn't be very much more different than the preceding generation's.

Gap of Understanding

What's surprising in many instances, however, is to see how millennials are discovering that certain industries—business aviation among them—often take a more traditional approach to hiring. Business aviation managers sometimes employ and rely on tools, techniques and protocols of preceding generations to fill their open jobs and staff their companies. As a result, millennials might need to lean a bit on members of their parents' generation for guidance, advice and even financial help.

But you might ask why more traditional recruiting techniques still apply in business aviation. It's a great question. One reason is that business aviation is often managed by tenured aviation directors from the Baby Boomer generation. Many members of this group still might not be as accustomed to as much computerized communication and social media.

Based on API's experience, these hiring managers are much more used to jobs and jobseekers being referred via word of mouth or the referral of a friend—not by applications to a posting on the Internet. It's true that for the Boomer generation, there's still a lot of handshaking and backdoor communication that occurs in order to get deals done.

For millennials, it might be hard to relate to someone who operates in this manner, instead of relying on the cell phone in one's back pocket to serve as a networking tool.

It's good to remember that we all embrace what we're all comfortable with, based on what we've been taught. We might tend to gravitate toward someone who operates similarly to the way that we do.

Someone who's been managing business aviation for 30 years might not easily relate to a 28-year old with a newly minted type rating who believes he is ready to move up to captain tomorrow. The Director will likely ask, "What has this kid done to cut his teeth? He doesn't understand how aviation works!"

The “Me Generation”

One thing that characterizes the millennials is that there’s often an air of “it’s all about me” associated with their generation.

If it’s true, it’s not entirely their fault. In my view, millennials are a product of an ultra-nurturing culture, one in which parents teach their kids that everyone is a hero and everyone deserves an accolade or a trophy. As a society, we think that our children can do no wrong and can achieve anything imaginable. Unfortunately, this way of coaching and preparing our future leaders hasn’t proven to be easily translated in the workplace.

Here’s a supporting viewpoint from author Ryan Donegan, who shared these wonderful insights in a Huffington Post blog:

As a member of this so-called entitled and whiny generation, I’d like to address this idea with a simple answer: We are.

But we did not develop these traits without the assistance of the generations who forged the path before us, laying down the groundwork for the development of us ‘Gen Yers.’ It was simple. We were told to stay in school: we did. To get our high school diploma: we did. To graduate from college: we did. We were ingrained with the notion that the key to financial security and success was education and hard work. So we developed dreams, and we followed them.

The problem is, the country wasn’t actually ready for an entire generation to actually do what was asked of them. No longer was a college education and hard work the ticket to success; and now, rightfully, my millennial generation is . . . unemployed and frustrated.

Considering this, the best advice I can offer young business aviation professionals today is to stay low on the radar. It’s important to be relatable to other generations, including the one coming up from below them known as “Gen Z” or “Gen Edgers.”

And I agree that parents should advise their kids to still practice some of the “traditional stuff.”

Here are some pointers:

1. Be prepared

Recognize the generation gaps—think about the people to whom you’re reporting, and remember that they probably typed their resume on a typewriter, focused on eye contact, and built person-to-person relationships, with an emphasis on family and personal interests.

2. Be presentable

Be mindful of everything, from the nature of your email communication (no emoticons or excessive exclamation marks) to your dress code (wear a suit) and your eye contact.

3. Be patient

Speak slowly, be cordial and wait until the hiring manager has finished talking—otherwise you might come across as off-putting. Patience in the corporate aviation job market will pay off—there’s often a lot of red tape involved and offers don’t happen overnight.

4. Be hungry

This means be willing to do whatever you can to get the job. It’s not about saying “Here I am and I’m going to counter 25 percent more on the offer.” Counter offers are not generally working in the pilot ranks of business aviation (or other industries) and can backfire, leaving you without *any* job offers.

5. Be coachable

Even if you do well in the interview, you’re still competing against other candidates. What will set you apart is your presence, humility and ability to follow through. That’s why it’s important to send a follow-up email the day of your interview, as mail a more formal, handwritten note.

6. Be relatable

As someone interested in technology or new ways of being productive and efficient, you can teach people in a positive way without being condescending. You can also show people that you’re interested, willing to learn and have respect for the way things have always been done in the past.

No matter your generation—by virtue of your age, whether you're looking for a job or just looking to fit in—it's vitally important to always take the long view.

That is, look a bit outside yourself and try to understand the methods and motivations of those you come into contact with on a daily basis. Regardless if you happen to be a millennial, a Gen Xer or even a baby boomer, keeping an open mind is a policy that cuts across every generation.

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES



12 Things to Do While You're Unemployed

By Sheryl Barden

Imagine arriving at work on Monday morning and being told that your job has been eliminated due to recent budget cuts. What's the first thing that comes to your mind? Does panic mode set, in or do you stay cool as a cucumber?

Who is the first person you call—aside from your significant other—an industry colleague, a former coworker or an industry recruiter, such as Aviation Personnel International?



If you ever find yourself out of a job, the best advice I can offer you is to stay *focused* and take *action*.

It's very likely that you've done nothing wrong—there are all sorts of reasons for being let go. But, remember: employers *do* hire the unemployed. It happens every day.

I'm here to tell you honestly that it's not an easy process. The good news, however, is that there are a lot of things you can do to help yourself and your situation when you find yourself unemployed.

Tips for the Unemployed:

1. Update your information

Is your resume and LinkedIn profile current? There's no time like the present to update your professional documents. And be sure to pay attention to details like grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Plus, remember to use key words when writing about your skills and experience (e.g., Airline Transport Pilot, Airframe & Powerplant, Certified Aviation Manager).

It's more helpful to employers and recruiters who use electronic scanning devices to screen and rank candidates.

You'll also want to customize your resume for each job you apply for, and include specific words from the job posting. Do this and your resume will come up higher in employer searches.

2. Do your research

What are the companies that you'd like to work for? Make a "top 10" list and visit every company's website so you can read about its mission/vision/values, products and services, leadership team, locations and industry news.

If a potential employer is publicly traded in the U.S., you can download the company's Form 10K and 10Q, which provide a wealth of strategic information on the firm's financials, competition, products, etc.

3. Talk with a recruiter

Utilizing a specialized recruiting firm is a no-cost career development opportunity that is a tool every business aviation professional must keep in his/her back pocket.

Apply online as an API Registered Professional™ (apiaviation.com) and share your credentials with us. There's no fee. Things may change in your life, so we always want to have a current profile in our database to contact you if and when an opportunity arises.

4. Network

Visit API's office in San Francisco or meet us at a business aviation event, attend your local NBAA regional meetings every month, register to attend NBAA's annual Business Aviation Exhibition & Convention.

5. Be humble

Look for coaching/mentoring opportunities and listen to objective advice from your family, friends and mentors.

6. Take a class

Are you “current” on your technical training? Could you use some professional development in areas such as management, finance/accounting or leadership? There are many scholarships available for aviation professionals. Just do a quick online search and you’ll find terrific opportunities for training, some of them free of charge.

7. Volunteer

Our industry is chock-full of opportunities to get involved. Talk to organizations like the National Business Aviation Association, Women in Corporation Aviation, Flight Safety Foundation, Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association or a local/regional pilots group.

Surely you can find a role that will enable you to participate from home while expanding your network.

8. Take a contract assignment

Many pilots and flight attendants go down this path at one point or another; it’s nothing to be ashamed of. In fact, it’s a great way to network and show companies that you’re willing to do whatever it takes to keep your skills current.

According to Andy Teach, the author of *From Graduation to Corporation: The Practical Guide to Climbing the Corporate Ladder One Rung at a Time*, “If you do a great job, even if it’s for a temporary job, whoever hired you is more likely to recommend you for a permanent position.”

9. Google yourself

It’s important to research your first and last name using the three most popular search engines: Google Images, Google Web and Google video.

What do you see that might turn off a recruiter or hiring manager? Make sure that there are no unflattering images, videos or social media posts.

10. Know your current events

If you’re not already subscribing to NBAA Weekly Update, Aviation International News, Business Jet Traveler, Aviation Week and other business aviation trade magazines and newsletters, start now.

When you're up-to-speed on the current topics in our industry, you'll be better informed about who is hiring, what trends are happening and you'll be able to be more conversant on these topics in your interviews.

11. Follow up

Be persistent and patient with recruiters and potential employers. Call or email to follow up every few weeks or months. And, if you do speak with someone on the phone or in person, send an email or—even better—a handwritten thank you note. It will make you stand out from the crowd.

12. Be realistic

Keep in mind that the hiring process often takes four months from start to finish. When you do start getting interviews, people might ask you, "What have you been doing since you've been unemployed?" Discussing your current situation can be tough but try and stay positive. Having a great answer to this question is key.

Make sure to tell them about your focus on volunteerism, professional development, mentoring, attendance at industry events and knowledge of the inner workings of our industry, as well as any contract assignments you've undertaken.

As you likely know, most people don't get jobs overnight. The job search process takes time and persistence. Jobs don't fall out of the sky. Remember, however, that you can expect to get out of the process what you put into it.

How to Stand Out Amid a Talent Shortage

By Sheryl Barden

There's little doubt we're in the midst of the long-anticipated talent shortage. And this shortage applies to nearly all disciplines within aviation—be they in maintenance, pilot, cabin crew or leadership. Its widespread impact affects Part 91, 135 and 121 operations alike.



Simply put, this situation is very good news for aviation job seekers. But it's not great news for employers.

In fact, some of the biggest brands in business aviation are struggling to find the right cultural fit. In a 2016, Business Aviation Insider article, I discussed the lack of qualified, professional aviation candidates:

"Before, you'd post a job and you'd be flooded with quality resumes in no time. Today, the resumes are still coming in, but there is less potential in those candidates."

The fact that we're seeing less-qualified candidates for our client projects, though, is, once again, good news for those who are qualified. This is your time to stand out and shine.

Passive Aviation Job Seekers: It May be Time to Move

For those who are employed and find themselves happy and/or content in their current role, now might be the best time to consider making a move.

Why? Because as a "passive aviation job seeker" you're more attractive to employers, precisely because you're in a position to be more discerning about career moves. As such, you're only going to make a change for a truly compelling opportunity, which often results in longevity.

So what should you do, even if you're not actively looking? For starters, consider your ideal role. Take the time to reflect on your wants, needs and qualifications. What would you be doing if location, money and title were no issue?

Next, update your LinkedIn profile and resume with your latest awards, achievements, training, education and references. Update your API Registered Professional™ profile, too.

Then review the market at your own pace for opportunities that may be a fit for your future. Is there anything that sparks your interest? Do you have the qualifications, and are you truly prepared for those roles? If so, you just might be motivated to start taking steps toward a move.

A word of caution: I'm always surprised by the number of aviation job seekers who feel they're ready to seek out a leadership position, yet they haven't taken steps to advance themselves and prepare for such a role.

It's important to remember that tenure alone doesn't automatically equate to successful leadership.

- To set yourself up for a leadership role, consider getting involved in the industry by:
- Earning your CAM certification
- Volunteering for additional collateral duties within your current organization
- Engaging with your local regional group and network with peers in leadership roles

Active Aviation Job Seekers: Step Up Your Game

If you're actively seeking employment, be mindful not to interpret the talent shortage as a "sellers" market. Although the demand might be high, the caliber of talent required is no less.

And this is not the time to become complacent or lackadaisical in your job search. Active job seekers must be diligent about composing informative, succinct and well-written resumes. You have to be discerning in your pursuit, and research the companies to which you would like to apply.

Although it might be tempting to blanket the market with your resume, it's a far more effective strategy to identify opportunities that would be a fit for and benefit from your skillset, and then apply only for those. Channel your energy into presenting the most competitive package to those employers.

Battling Burnout?

The Grass is Greener (Sometimes)

If you do happen to be a dissatisfied aviation employee, the grass truly can be greener on the other side. So now may be an enticing time to test those waters.

But as I mentioned earlier, just because there's a high demand for talent, make sure you're not feeling overly confident. Job dissatisfaction—coupled with overconfidence—can be a recipe for even further unhappiness in the future.

It's natural to want to make compromises and be easily “wooded” by prospective employers when you're dissatisfied. But it's likely that we all know an acquaintance or colleague who swapped one ill-fitting job for another.

If you're disengaged at your current place of employment and aren't feeling assured about your future, you have to be even more conscientious and deliberate in your search.

Ask yourself: “Why am I dissatisfied?” Be honest when reflecting on what might be your own culpability for being disgruntled. Other questions to ponder: “Is there something I need to change? Have I become negative? What do I need to change going forward? Is my job really the problem?” If you answered yes, to some of these, what aspects of your job do you find unfulfilling? And what might you do in your next professional role to overcome this?

It's important to truly reflect on these questions before seeking out new employment. After all, prospective employers will easily sense any negativity you might be harboring. That means you must reach some state of contentment before turning that searchlight on.

To sum it up, despite—or perhaps because of—the impact the talent shortage is having on aviation employers, it might be the perfect

opportunity to make a move. Especially the gainfully employed passive jobseeker, the unemployed and/or merely dissatisfied aviation professional.

I'd like to leave you with one last bit of advice: Remember that "fit" is important for both you and your future employer. After all, business aviation isn't about planes, "It's all about people™."

Ultimate Guide to LinkedIn

By Codi Quick

The most popular social media tool for business, LinkedIn (linkedin.com) is still proving itself a great tool for a variety of reasons—networking being the biggest one.

In a sense, LinkedIn is becoming like a “digital business card” for professional people everywhere, replacing the printed ones that no longer make it into our desktop Rolodex.

This means your LinkedIn profile is your first impression, digitally.



While you might think of LinkedIn as a job-search tool, the best reason to use it is to manage your growing network. It's also great for researching, communicating and exchanging ideas.

Because it's such a powerful part of your personal brand, we came up with this Ultimate Guide to LinkedIn for aviation professionals

Here are 11 “DOs”:

1. DO add a recent professional photo

Spend some money on a professional headshot that shows what you look like now (not from 10 years ago or the last time you were at a wedding).

Your photo will be the first impression that everyone, including recruiters, will see. It should be a headshot (from the waist up), and in it, you should be dressed to impress in business attire (or a uniform, as the case might be).

If you know of a budding photographer who will do it for free, great! If not, plan to spend around \$100. At API, we encourage all of our candidates to do the same. When you take yourself seriously, everyone around you will, too.

2. DO use LinkedIn as a personal branding tool

If done right, it can offer proof that you're a serious, credible professional in your field.

Consider this networking platform as your online handshake with your business aviation network. And, just like keeping your photo current and professional, be sure that the content you post is first-impression-worthy, so that you stand out in a positive way.

Be sure to use keywords that people in your industry are typically searching for.

3. DO update your headline

If you're like most people, you just use your current job title and company as your headline, but this is a missed opportunity. Your headline might be the only part of your profile that a recruiter or hiring manager looks at.

It's important to create one that's professional, not cheesy or confusing, but also one that captures your uniqueness. Include the what, who and how, and also add proof that you are who you say you are.

LinkedIn even gives you helpful suggestions with their "show examples" button, or their "see what other users in your industry are using" option.

4. DO ask for recommendations

LinkedIn provides a really convenient means of asking your LinkedIn connections to write something on your page about your professional qualifications—a little testimonial of sorts. If you're job hunting, this can be really valuable and help offer third-party verification of your skills and abilities to potential employers.

It makes sense that a hiring manager prefers to recruit someone who has been recommended by another professional in the field. This is similar to the references you'd provide a potential employer.

5. DO write meaningful recommendations for others

If you're asking others for an endorsement, be sure to reciprocate. Write meaningful recommendations for the people who are doing so for you.

Best of all, write something unsolicited and heartfelt for someone else, even if they didn't ask you. After all, giving your current or past colleagues meaningful feedback in the form of a recommendation can go a long way.

Bonus: Recruiters and hiring managers can view your recommendations for others (on your profile and theirs), and they likely will pay attention to what's being said.

6. DO sweat the details

LinkedIn has a nifty "wizard" that guides you through the process of adding content—and the more complete your profile is, the higher a score you'll receive. Remember to never "fudge" the truth.

If your resume does not line up with your online profile, it will raise questions. So go ahead and add company logos from your previous work history, and use the section to update your skills and interests as well as to follow companies that you're interested in.

Having logos on your profile for your past workplaces and college alma maters gives your page a "pop of color," and can help break up the page amid a sea of content.

7. DO quantify your milestones

We encourage you to write short, succinct descriptions of each company you've worked for and your role within those companies.

Focus on the positive impact you've made in your past roles. Use bullet points to quantify your value to the company (e.g., the revenue impact on a program you might have implemented, etc.).

Use acronyms (e.g., SMS, FOQA, and IS-BAO) and check spelling, grammar and punctuation. Have someone else look over your LinkedIn profile and critique it like they would a resume on paper.

8. DO sign up for LinkedIn Groups

The bizav community on LinkedIn is widespread, and it's easy to find some large professional groups or organizations that you can join.

Doing a quick search brings up a long list, including "Aviation Professionals" and "Business Aviation Network," to name just a couple. You don't need to follow them all. Just find a few that you really want to

actively engage in. Having a couple of active groups that you actually participate in is better than joining 50 that you don't.

9. DO mention your volunteerism

Sometimes, networking through volunteering is a great way to meet people in the industry. And, at the same time, you're helping to further a valuable organization that does meaningful things in your industry.

10. DO add your resume

Some might say it's better not to include your resume on your LinkedIn page, so that if a company or recruiter is interested in you or your skills they have to contact you and request it from you directly.

But do make sure to include it and it ends up being easier on a hiring manager, who can quickly scan your resume and your profile to make sure you're the right fit.

It can help save your valuable time and theirs, by helping everyone decide if a position is right or wrong for you. Just be aware that anyone can look at your resume once it's uploaded, so make sure you've removed any personal information, such as your home address or cell phone number.

And last but not least is our eleventh tip:

11. DO use LinkedIn to grow your network.

Remember, this is a powerful tool and probably one of the best, most effective ways of networking. And, on top of all that, its basic package is free!

On behalf of our team, we encourage you to dedicate some time to updating your profile prior to attending networking events like NBAA's BACE. Similar to offering a contact your business card, your online "virtual" business card is one of the first impressions. So make it count!

P.S.: Before you start updating your LinkedIn profile, go to your "settings" control on the top right, then to your "privacy" controls, and turn OFF your activity broadcasts. This will keep everyone from seeing each and every change you make in their feed.

Networking 101: It's Not Just About Who You Know

By Sheryl Barden

When it comes to business networking, some say that it's all about "who you know." But I respectfully disagree.



Contrary to some people's beliefs, good networking isn't necessarily about who knows you, how many industry events you attend or the size of your Outlook contacts and Facebook following.

Instead, I find that networking is about investing in others and committing the time needed to develop and maintain your relationships.

It's also about creating new connections and not just resting on the contents of your LinkedIn profile or "Rolodex."

How to Build Your Business Network

If it's true that nine times out of 10 we'll get our next job because of our network, then why do so many of us push networking aside—as if it's something we'll get to when we have time?

Just like eating well and exercising, we won't accomplish much if we don't have a plan.

Following are seven ways to help you get the most out of networking.

1. Know your communications style

One of the keys is to understand what type of networking will put you in the best light. Your success isn't determined by *where* you network, but how well you communicate and follow through.

Remember that it's okay to talk with people one-on-one and follow up by sending an email or handwritten note. And, if you are naturally gifted at

working a room, take full advantage of this strength. Introduce introverts to others. Raise your hand in committee meetings. Ask to be on a speaker's panel. And *"lean in"* as Sheryl Sandberg says (she's the author of *"Lean In"*).

2. Keep an electronic "Rolodex"

Gone are the days of keeping a big stack of business cards on your desk. If you like paper, that's okay. Just make sure that you also scan them into your computer and back them up to the "cloud" or to another computer. And don't forget to review your contacts every so often to ensure that they're up-to-date.

3. Put it on the calendar

For those aspiring to fill a leadership role, networking should be at the top of your list. It's also an activity that should be a part your weekly routine. Make a plan and put a reminder on the calendar.

4. Build a networking log

People in sales have a network log—it's called their customer relationship management (CRM) system. But what about those in business aviation who aren't attached to their desktop and sophisticated applications? My advice is to carry a small notebook, use the notes section in your Outlook or type notes onto your tablet.

Whatever the DIY tool, don't forget to log an entry for whom you spoke with, the time and date, and a reminder what you talked about. Then put a note on your calendar to follow up.

5. Use LinkedIn

This is an incredibly powerful social networking tool—IF you use it. Consider LinkedIn as your "virtual" Rolodex, as it can help you connect online with contacts instead of exchanging business cards.

Just like your resume, it's important to keep your LinkedIn profile current—even when you're in a "passive" job search mode (i.e., you're not necessarily looking for a new position). LinkedIn helps you learn more about our industry, see who knows whom and search for "keyword" terms.

Speaking of keywords, in addition to listing your professional licenses, education and skills, use keywords to describe your experience

(e.g., Certified Aviation Manager, IS-BAO-certified, NBAA member, A&P and Chief Pilots Roundtable) that might positively influence recruiters and hiring managers.

Though API doesn't use LinkedIn as our primary resource for recruiting talent, we do use it to view profiles of our existing candidates as a way to ensure that your "online" and "offline" profiles match.

6. Use a personal touch "offline"

Despite our growing reliance on all things digital, most of us in business aviation are still fairly "old school." That is to say we understand the power of making connections in person and over the phone. At API, we always tell our candidates to make an effort to write notes and reference their conversation or meeting with some interesting tidbit (not a generic statement). The key is to personalize your communications in order to build deeper relationships, which is hard to do via email.

7. Network with a recruiter

Just as you maintain friendships, it's important to stay in contact with your recruiter. Your career is in your hands, so it's up to you to tell your recruiter when you've left a job or are considering a change.

When I hear from a candidate every few months, I tend to develop a bond with that individual. And you can bet that he or she stays "top of mind" when new job search opportunities come our way. So if you're an API Registered Professional, now is the time to update your online profile and put a reminder on the calendar to check in.

One Caveat

Just like almost everything in life, remember to proceed with moderation. You might risk rubbing people the wrong way if you go "gangbusters" and overdo it by reaching out to everyone on your contact list in the next two weeks.

Think of networking as a methodical, long-term process, one that requires an action plan if you want it to become a habit—again, just like eating healthy and exercising.

Networking 101, Part II: How to Take Action

By Sheryl Barden

As you likely know, any plan is only effective when you combine your desire, ability and acquired knowledge and put them into practice.

And that takes some work and commitment.

The following tips will help you take action and make your business networking plan payoff:

1. Get out of the hangar

Many people are perfectly comfortable sticking close to their core group of friends. But “networking” isn’t about staying in the comfort zone your friends and regular co-workers might offer.



By doing so, you’re likely to miss the chance to meet hundreds—if not thousands—of smart, talented aviation professionals that you see from a distance every year.

For instance, you never know whom you’ll meet at an FBO pilot lounge, a regional NBAA forum, at the restaurant on the field or at the local pilot group.

One way to network with people that share similar interests is to navigate through the NBAA member directory. There is a WEALTH of information on this site!

If you’re looking to join a standing committee, check out NBAA.org for ideas. You may find a forum in which you and your peers can discuss what’s happening and take away best practices to your team.

2. Network at work

Do you have strong relationships with your team, your manager and others who work for your company?

When you get to know the people you see even more often than your family (and then, if you happen to go separate ways, hopefully stay in touch with), they'll be much more likely to help you (or you help them) if you're ever in need of a favor, reference or referral.

Go beyond the flight department to get to know other people in areas of your business, such as Accounting and Finance, IT, Travel Services or Security.

If it's possible (and appropriate to do so), see if you can gain access to your reporting executive and learn what his or her world is like. When you meet others in your company, you'll make a name for yourself and also become more capable of honing your business skills.

3. Don't wait until it's too late

The reach and power of a human network is such that it just might be of service to you when you least expect it. And yet it's common for people to wait until they absolutely need one to start building it. By then, it might be too late. It can be awfully hard to tap into an underdeveloped network and—let's be frank—no one likes the smell of desperation! My biggest advice is to start with it now and identify people whom you should connect with to help you in three, five or seven years.

4. Work on your approach

Having social graces and maintaining professionalism definitely come into play when building relationships. Remember that, first and foremost, people are more willing to help those they like, trust and respect. And some might even be willing to help someone that they've never met—especially if they get a sincere message that shows respect.

For example, say that you're looking to learn more about a company or job opportunity and see someone's profile on LinkedIn. Perhaps they used to work for the company you're researching. Maybe they can offer advice or connect you with someone with valuable insight.

It's OK to invite people into your network and ask whether they would consider being a set of eyes and ears for you. Be sincere and ask, "Would you consider being a part of my professional network, because I happen to really respect who you are and what you do."

Treat them with dignity and you'll be more likely to get positive results because it shows that you're serious (not just connecting for the sake of

connecting). And always thank people who've helped you, and, by all means, ask how *you* might be able to help *them*.

5. Practice makes perfect

Maintaining strong relationships takes work and effort—especially if you want to develop long-lasting respect and trust.

If you're not sure how to network professionally, practice in your local community and with your family. If you volunteer as the soccer coach, talk to the other parents. Network at church or at the grocery store. If there's a phone call that you've been putting off for a long time, put it on your calendar and dial that number. Think about how you follow up and follow through.

Put your Plan in Action Today!

Now that you have an “arsenal” of helpful pointers, the sky's the limit! It's time to first create a plan to build your business network and then put it into positive action.

The worst thing you can do is to procrastinate and put off doing what you know will give you a lot of positive career momentum and leverage.

Here at API, we admire the true business aviation professional who plans, organizes and executes his or her career-building with focus and finesse—so become that person!

3 Cover Letter Basics

By Sheryl Barden

The cover letter (or cover email) remains a vital part of today's interview process.



While the boring, old, impersonal “to whom it may concern” cover letter may indeed be a thing of the past, the personalized, well-written, professional cover “email” or letter is still very much alive and well.

The Value of Cover Letters

A resume, and its accompanying cover letter, represent your initial “handshake” with a potential employer. These documents show how you (the aviation candidate) choose to communicate. If they're done well, they can easily help you stand out from the crowd.

So, if your letter is the first impression with a prospective employer, what exactly should go into it?

Here are three cover letter basics:

1. Personalization

Let's say you were meeting a hiring manager in person for the first time. You would never shake hands and say: “Nice to meet you, to whom it may concern.” That would be bizarre! So why would you make the very same outdated and impersonal salutation in your letter?

Thanks to a plethora of online resources like LinkedIn and NBAA's Member Directory, it's fairly easy to find the names of corporate HR recruiters and/or the aviation hiring manager. It pays to take the extra step and research his or her background and a bit about the company, so you know the titles and addresses of those to whom you're sending your letter.

2. Packaging

Whether it's an email or a hardcopy, your letter should be customized, professional and a bit formal in its composition and tone. Remember, it's a business letter so use a more structured format (e.g., no indentations).

When sending an email, be sure to convert both your resume and letter into PDFs. That way your content will never be edited or appear differently on a screen, and, secondly, it's less likely to contain an unwanted virus.

If you're mailing a hardcopy, give some thought to coordinating the paper stock with that of your resume, and check to see that you're using the same typographic fonts and styles throughout.

3. Messaging

Your cover letter should be compelling. It should make anyone want to turn the page (or open another document) to see what's in your resume.

Overall, the content should reflect a high-level view into what you've done during your career, which is what we always recommend for our outplacement candidates who are looking for new roles.

- **Paragraph 1:** Explain why you're writing. In as few words as possible, you should convey why you're reaching out. Tell your targeted respondents what role you're applying for, where you learned about it and who referred you, if anyone.
- **Paragraphs 2 and 3:** List your qualities. Next, talk about the most distinguishing qualities that you think will make you competitive. Demonstrate that you've done your research on the company and know the basics (e.g., its industry, locations, longevity and aviation operating profile).

In this mid-section, you need to be able to articulate why the hiring company should consider you. For example, you might be a good fit because you're originally from their location in X city and that you have family there, because you have X,XXX hours and extensive international operations experience, because you wish to lead a team and implement best practices, because you're available to support your group long-term and perhaps help them in areas that they haven't been exposed to, or any number of other good, solid reasons.

- **Paragraph 4:** Focus on time and place. Tell your respondents where you're at from a timing perspective (e.g., Are you available right now? In a month? Before the start of the next school year?). Also, make sure they know how to reach you via phone and

email. Or better yet, let them know when and how you will next be reaching out to them.

With all that's been said, it should be apparent that cover letters remain one of the most important introductory tools you can use to help you position yourself at one of the most critical job-seeking stages.

You might have all the experience, talent and charisma in the world when you're "one-on-one" in a live meeting, but at that point when you're being vetted by the value you offer on paper alone, your cover letter is a way to put your best foot forward.

So, in closing, never dismiss the cover letter as being "old school." Craft one with care and distinction, and ensure that it tells a story—YOUR story.

Tell Your Story:

9 Resume Writing Tips

By Sheryl Barden

There's no way we can ever overemphasize how important a properly written resume is to anyone's job search. How your aviation resume reads—the story it tells about you and your experiences—will always be vital.



In this blog, we'll share resume *writing* tips—what to say and what not to say. Plus, how to best tell your story for the audience you're seeking to impress: the business aviation recruiter and/or hiring manager.

Write the Perfect Resume

1. Hire some help

If they're good, professional resume writers are worth their weight in gold. They know their business inside and out, and can offer you invaluable assistance putting your story together in a comprehensive, credible manner.

Consider shelling out the few hundred dollars that it will take to hire a professional resume writer; it can make all the difference in the world. The writer's job is to elicit all the important information from you.

Among a host of other questions, they'll ask you: What were your accomplishments? What are you most proud of? They'll get you to quantify your experience in ways that will make it stand out to potential employers.

2. Summarize your qualifications

This important summary section will be at the top of your resume, in lieu of the "Career Objective." Make sure it's written chronologically and straightforwardly.

In this section, when spelling out what your goal or objective is, don't use vague statements like "My goal is to become a professional pilot." Listing

that very general, generic type of goal for a job in an aviation organization is simply wasting space.

3. Perfect your “Professional Experience”

Beneath the header, “Summary of Qualifications” you’ll need to create a “Professional Experience” subsection that lists (in chronological order, starting from most recent to oldest) your relevant professional experience. Create a section under each employer that is a short, e.g., a four-to-five-sentence description of the company you worked for and your role within that company.

Focus on the positive impact you’ve made in your past corporate roles. Use bullet points to quantify your value to the company. Always look for the correctness of little details, such as acronyms that aren’t spelled out (e.g., SMS, FOQA and IS-BAO), and make sure to check for grammar, punctuation and spelling. Have a trusted colleague review and critique your resume before sending it.

4. Be concise and compelling

Your “Professional Experience” section should provide a short one-to-two-sentence description of your responsibilities for the roles you list, followed by several of the most important milestones or achievements you’ve garnered.

Don’t make it too long, because you will surely be asked about your history when and if you make it to the next step: the job interview. Reserve a longer explanation for that occasion. The same thing is true with a listing of your specialized training and education. Keep it very “big picture” so the recruiter sees enough to be intrigued, but not so much as to be put to sleep!

5. Watch your “aviation speak”

Many corporate HR organizations know very little, if anything, about a flight department or the aviation industry as a whole. So rather than just saying that you have an “A&P,” spell out Airframe & Powerplant and list (A&P) in parentheses.

The same goes for ATP (Airline Transport Pilot) and CAM (Certified Aviation Manager), as well as many other acronyms that we use in our

industry. Some names, such as IS-BAO, are just too long, so consider your audience.

Another tip is to be specific when referencing your type ratings and mimic the spelling exactly the way it is on the back of your license. For example, write “G-V” and “G-IV,” with a hyphen and no extra space. One cannot always assume that an internal recruiter will know what a “GIV” means, if you happen to represent it that way.

6. Use keywords

Print out the original job description and make sure that, within your resume, you are touching on the relevant requirements for the position. Most importantly, customize your initial summary of qualifications so that it mirrors the ideal candidate for that job. If you’re a pilot, make sure you list your type ratings, flight hours and certifications.

HR recruiters are often given specific keywords to identify in a resume, e.g., “Chief Pilot,” “G550,” and “bachelor’s degree,” among many others. If these words do not turn up, your resume may very well end up in the circular file. In fact, since the overwhelming majority of resumes are submitted electronically, there is actually resume scanning software that will review your resume before it’s even viewed by a human, so be sure to include those keywords that are on the job description.

7. Separate “education” and “training”

As pointed out in previous resume-formatting article, it’s important to segment your education and training into separate sections. Education is about your post-secondary coursework (e.g., the degrees you earned) and any special awards and honors you’ve received, such as summa cum laude. Don’t worry about including the dates you graduated.

Then the training section is where you’ll list your initial pilot training and other aviation-related courses (e.g., Flight Operations Software (FOS) training, MedAire, NBAA Leadership, etc.) If you have a lot of technical training, attaching an addendum might be a good idea.

8. Make your references glow

The last part of any resume usually contains the standard template language of “References provided upon request.” Why would a company looking to hire you not want to see your references? Why make them have to ask you for them?

Something I’ve found to be compelling when I’ve participated in the hiring process are references that not only contain the name, title and contact information, but also a short quote from your reference—e.g., “Tom always gives 110-percent, regardless of the job at hand . . .”—that makes it a lot more human and impactful.

9. Get outside proofreading help

Again, your resume is your only opportunity to make a good first impression, and that one little typo could put a bad taste into the mouth of an aviation recruiter who happens to be a stickler for grammar. It’s important to get multiple perspectives, ranging from someone who might have majored in English or Journalism to someone who knows aviation lingo inside and out.

Ask your volunteers to not only edit your resume for grammar, but, as non-aviation experts, to give you feedback about its impact. Have them print it out to see if the formatting actually prints the way you expected it to. Then ask them to look for spelling errors and “readability” issues.

Effective Story Telling

Yes, you’ve demonstrated you have the core competencies and the education to fill the position, but so might 50-75 percent of the other applicants.

Is there a particular defining moment you can include that will make you stand out? Maybe it was being selected to serve on a NBAA committee, or that you took your flight department from Stage I to Stage III IS-BAO certification, or that you received industry recognition.

Once you’ve reviewed your resume’s readability—its story—with regard to all the tips I just shared, make sure you’ve told it in a way that’s going to be truly compelling to the person reading it. Good luck!

How to Format a Resume Recruiters Will Notice

By Sheryl Barden

It's often been said that you only have one chance to make a first impression and, when applying for a job, your resume *is* that first impression.

Think of it as your initial "handshake" with a potential employer.



Here at API, our role as recruiters is to read hundreds of candidates resumes every year. The ultimate goal is to determine whether their capabilities will meet the needs of the business aviation organizations we support.

Therefore, we need to be able to quickly scan a resume and locate the relevant information.

With that in mind, it's important to realize that it's not merely what your resume contains that will help you become a potential candidate; it's also how it's structured.

How a resume is laid out or formatted quickly tells us a candidate's story, and what he or she is capable of. It helps us answer the question, "Do you have the qualification to do the job—and do it well?"

As you may likely know, a resume is a marketing tool that should be "polished" and updated yearly—regardless of whether you're actively on the job hunt.

Contrary to a lot of people's thinking, resumes aren't only used to help secure an internal promotion or a new job—they're necessary if you're applying to speak at a conference or join a committee. Your resume content should also serve as the foundation for building and/or updating your LinkedIn profile.

Formatting is Everything

Below are some very basic resume formatting tips to ensure that your resume is readable and, most importantly, scannable. These are my personal recommendations—all with the goal that a HR recruiter or hiring manager will take notice.

- **Template.** Select a Microsoft Word resume template based on a chronological format (vs. a functional format), which is the norm in our industry. This means starting with your most recent employer and working backwards.
- **Margins.** I like to see a one-inch standard margin.
- **Page Length.** Resumes that are no more than two pages are preferable, so you have to be concise.
- **Fonts.** The font you use for your resume is more important than you think. Select a font that will open on any computer, and alter the template fonts as needed. I recommend using Arial or Times New Roman, as they are most commonly used in the business world. Whichever one you choose, make sure the font size is legible for reviewers of all ages (e.g., no less than 11 pt. for Times New Roman and no less than 10 pt. for Arial).
- **Photos.** Please reserve your headshot photo for LinkedIn or other electronic sites, but not for your paper resume.
- **Your Name.** Your first and last name should be in a larger font than that of the text, so it jumps off the page. And, if you've earned your Ph.D., MBA or Certified Aviation Manager (CAM), don't forget to include the appropriate professional designation(s) after your name.
- **Your Contact Info.** Directly under your name, list your address, city, state, zip code, mobile phone number and your personal email address (not a work email address).

We want to know the city where you currently live, so we can assess your ability to relocate, if needed. For example, if I live in San Francisco and I'm applying for a position in New York City, that's a flag. Not necessarily a red one, but I'm going to want to

know up front how geographically flexible you, as a candidate, will be.

- **Summary.** I'm always asked my opinion on whether I like to read an "objective" at the top of a resume. My preference is for a short, introductory paragraph called a "Summary of Qualifications" that highlights your background. (Again, more on this content-related advice in my next post).
- **Employment.** Beneath your "Summary of Qualifications" header, create a "Professional Experience" section that lists (in chronological order, starting from most recent to oldest) your relevant professional experience. Note that this section title sounds a lot more professional than "Work History."

Here are more formatting tips for the employment section:

- List the name and location of each employer in a different font, but be sure to format your fonts consistently (e.g., the name of every company should be in same font).
 - Include the employment dates, but not the months, unless you were only there for one year.
 - Create a section under each employer that is a short, a four-to-five sentence description of the company.
- **Education.** List the post-secondary schools you attended, the degrees you attained and any special awards and honors you earned. Examples of education include: Darden School of Business, the USC Safety Course, NBAA's Certified Aviation Manager and a Bachelors, Masters or Ph.D.

Note: It's *not* important to include the dates of your education, which is something we see only with very young, just-out-of-college candidates.

- **Training.** Here is where you should document your formal aviation technical training or professional training, such as leadership – or aviation-related training you received (e.g., FACTS, MedAire, international procedures or even a culinary institute).
- **Skills/Technology:** It's great to see language skills and/or any aviation-related skills or technology that you might have that could be relevant to the position, such as Flight Operations Software (FOS).

- **Personal Information.** At the bottom of resumes, we often see personal information included, such as “married with two kids, non-smoking, avid runner,” etc. I suggest leaving this line off because it may cause you to stand out *too* much. Leave personal details and interests for your discussion with the interviewer.
- **References.** To me, the line “References Available Upon Request” at the bottom of a resume is largely unnecessary, as it’s a given that you’ll be asked to provide references during the interviewing process. Just be sure that you have a nicely formatted list of references to deliver to potential employers upon their request. You should shoot for three professional references and at least one personal reference.

Once you’ve assembled your resume outline, it’s time to write the content that’s tailored to the specific position you are applying for. In our next post, we’ll focus exclusively on how to write your resume content.

APPLICATION STRATEGIES



Apply Online, Network or Use a Placement Agency?

By Jenny Showalter

The process of applying for your next aviation career opportunity has been turned inside out and upside down. We have the internet to thank for this! But, with all the improvements we enjoy, understanding the most effective approach can be daunting for aviation professionals.

While it may be easier and faster to apply online for aviation industry jobs, is it the most efficient use of your time?



Should you leverage your existing network in business aviation?

Or, would you have more success taking a longer-term approach and teaming up with aviation placement agency like API?

There are pros and cons to all of the above, and determining the best approach isn't always clear.

The answer isn't necessarily singular. Rather, it likely requires a blend of all of these methods when seeking a new job.

Define Your Personal Best Path

Here at Aviation Personnel International, we help each business aviation candidate identify their own personal "best path" depending on their unique goals.

Then, if it makes sense that we should partner with candidates over a longer time period, our API Registered Professional program helps prepare them to take what might well be one of the most important steps in their career.

One of the many benefits of working with an aviation placement agency such as ours is that we often learn about new job opportunities before they're posted online. In fact, API exclusively fills many of our high-end clients' projects, so they never need to be posted online.

Following are a few important guidelines for taking that all-important, potentially life-changing step to "package" yourself for the job market. (These are some of tips you should receive when you work with a specialized aviation recruiter).

Start Searching While You're Employed

If you're already in a solid professional job, it makes it that much easier to position yourself for taking another one.

Simply put, you're more attractive to prospective hiring managers when you're already employed.

So take a proactive approach if you think you might be wanting to make a change in the next six months to two years. Put out your feelers well before then. It's up to you to make the first move instead of waiting until an opportunity comes knocking.

In my role, I often speak to people who are out of work, and I can usually pick up on the sense of urgency in their voice.

Although it's sometimes unavoidable, it's much more engaging and far easier to speak with someone who's not meeting you from a position of uncertainty or desperation.

Work your Referral Network

It's critical to network when you're looking for a job because referrals are huge. Leads from within a job seeker's network represent 30-50 percent of hires in the U.S.

If you know someone who works at a flight department you're interested in working for, you have a whopping 70-80 percent better chance of getting a job.

That's right! If a current employee from your target company refers you, your chances improve five times from what they would be if you applied

“cold” to the company. This level of trust also comes as a result of working with API.

When we introduce candidates to our clients, it’s because we’ve taken the time to get to know them, learn about what motivates them, and understand their current job situation/job search. That way, when we discuss a candidate’s qualifications with our client, it gives the hiring company a sense that they already know the person. They trust our recommendations.

For the candidates who do get presented to one of our clients, we make sure that our client “sees” each individual—to observe them in a way they would never be able to if their resume was sitting deep within a pile of them on their desk.

Research Decision Makers

If you don’t have a personal connection and aren’t already working with a recruiter, you’ll need to conduct your own research to learn the names and titles of the likely decision makers. (Use online tools such as LinkedIn and your own network to help you find out.)

If you don’t happen to know someone on the target company’s team, try and learn as much about them as you can through an industry connection, acquaintance or by other means.

Dig into the Company Culture

Getting the right cultural fit is one of the biggest reasons our aviation clients hire us to make their placements. Well, that and the fact that we’re really good at what we do!

And if you’re wondering what we mean by a “cultural fit,” we’re referring to the close professional and collegial bond of flight department members and their prospective new hires.

Customize Resumes and Cover Letters

No matter which method you choose for finding a new job, you need a solid, professional, well-written resume on-hand.

Although API isn't in the business of rewriting our candidates' resumes, we do offer a lot of guidance and advice, as you'll see in these posts about resume writing and resume formatting.

If you choose to apply online, put in the time to custom-tailor your resume for each position. That way you know exactly what you've applied for and to whom.

Be sure to provide those "keywords" and phrases that you've picked up from the ad itself. For example, if your target company is looking for an "international captain," make sure to include that very phrase in your resume if it matches your qualifications.

A word of caution when using automated resume engines: These services will automatically send off your resume if it "matches" your experience with an online listing—possibly without you even knowing it. But your resume will be in a pile with hundreds of others and will be buried without the customization that recruiters are looking for. Instead, be selective about where you send your resume and send a tailored cover letter.

By the way, we love cover letters here at API. Why? If your customized cover letter is done well, it will catch our eye and garner your resume a closer look. In one recent example, a job seeker personalized his note to our President, Sheryl Barden, effectively saying, "This is who I am, this is what I'm looking for and this is what I can bring to a potential employer."

Communicate Successfully

Similarly, make sure your entire job posting response package—cover letter, resume and related documents—is on target. Use keywords, and be sure it doesn't have typos, misspellings, grammar problems and other errors. Use proper sentence structure, but try not to sound too stuffy or wooden. Make your response "relatable."

Here at API, our team wants each candidate to be able to communicate effectively, both verbally and in written form. Ask someone to proofread your response package. And, follow directions from your recruiter or hiring manager.

For example, if you're given explicit directions (e.g., "respond via email by putting the words 'International Captain Application' in the subject line"), and you don't follow them, what does that say about your follow-

through? It might seem like a small detail, but it can actually be quite telling for the recruiters evaluating resumes.

Use Social Media to Your Advantage

Social media, an almighty force in today's aviation job-seeking business, sits out there just waiting for you to tap into its power to help you fine-tune your job search.

But, like any tool, it has to be used correctly to avoid some potential pitfalls inherent in the medium itself. Take a look at our social media blog to help guide you toward some common-sense uses of the medium.

Remember, at API, we vet our candidates on social media before deciding if they're presentable to our clients. Ensure that you're who you claim to be without embellishing the facts (i.e., FAA license, A+P license, medical license, education, etc.).

And don't forget to maintain as visible a presence as you can, posting relevant information and inquiries on industry boards and group sites, such as NBAA Air Mail.

Again, the API Registered Professional program can open doors for you that you never knew existed, to help you stand out and increase your chances of being offered a position—the RIGHT position, the one with the potential to change your life.

New to Job Hunting? What You Need to Know

By Jenny Showalter

Lately, I've been hearing from a handful of aviation candidates who are new to job hunting.

Some of them feel like job-hunt novices, mainly because they've been at the same company for the past 10 years—and in some cases, even 20. Needless to say, the market's changed radically over that time period.

Now, as they report, they're either inspired to job hunt by sensing opportunity in the marketplace or they're forced by circumstances to seek out another prospect.

As I've been talking to them, they list the following reasons for their decision to see what's out there in the job market:



- Job burnout
- Professional and/or financial stagnation
- Changing life circumstances (for self or the aircraft owner)
- Flight department closure
- Aircraft sale

Dealing with Change

For a lot of these newly hatched job seekers, their entry into the job market has been surprising. Not only are they finding that the search process has changed, but they're also dealing with other issues, including:

- Feelings of loyalty to their current company and/or principal passengers.
- Mourning a job that, once upon a time, they thought they might retire from.

- Facing the possibility of needing to relocate to find work, after living and raising their families in one location.
- Being “rusty” when it comes to managing the job search process, because they’ve been out of the job market for years.
- Difficulty gauging their value in the current job market.

One candidate told me, “I don’t know what I’m doing. I’m like a fish out of water with this. I don’t know where to start.”

So just how does an aviation candidate begin job hunting?

Know What You Want

First things first: sit down with your family and jot down your goals—articulate the “why” and what you’re seeking.

Something like this: “My wife and I sat down and hashed it out; \$180K is our bottom line. I’m currently making \$220K, but I could go lower if need be, but to a minimum of \$180K. We’re ready to move here and here, but not here. And I want a schedule that allows me predictable time with my family.”

Update your Resume

One critical area that’s seen dramatic change is the resume-writing exercise. If you’ve only worked at one company for a decade, your resume will be shorter than others. And that’s OK. I suggest you include as many meaningful extra duties you’ve handled as possible, while using your loyalty and job longevity to your benefit.

Be sure to list your flight hours and type ratings front and center, and put dates and locations on everything. Also remember to quantify your accomplishments and how you met and exceeded your goals. Don’t forget to mention your professional development experiences.

Link Up with LinkedIn

LinkedIn is still a must-do for any serious job seeker, so keep your LinkedIn profile looking professional. Make sure you have a good head shot, and update the content with relevant keywords.

That way if someone is recruiting for a position you qualify for, you're sure to be found.

A key tip is to ensure that you check the box that says you're "open to new opportunities." (Most job hunters don't realize the box is available, but it happens to be one of things we check during background searches.)

Clean up your Social Media Profiles

If you've been out of the job loop, remember that social media is at the top of the list of recruitment tools. All your online profiles need to be reviewed and updated, because anyone hiring candidates these days will be conducting a Google search on your name. And, for better or worse, anything you've done or do online is bound to leave a trail.

Seek out Job-hunting Forums

There's a plethora of online resources where you can apply for jobs. Some are on Facebook, lots are on LinkedIn and there are several paid search engine sources. Even NBAA has a job search listing. (At API, we rarely advertise our recruitment projects as we are vetting every candidate in our database for the exact fit.)

Speaking of our database, are you an API Registered Professional™? Our candidate registration process is a great way to get you tuned up for a job search and transition. If you've got the skills, talents and character our discerning clients are looking for, you'll want to be top of mind with our recruiting team.

Networking

It's a small world out there, especially in our tight-knit industry. That means that networking is almost always going to be the way you find your next job.

It will either happen as a referral to a recruiting firm like API, or through a referral to a flight department. But however it happens, you'll likely land your next position via word of mouth.

Interviewing

Here are a few great tips:

- Research the company and the interviewer
- Be the best dressed in the room.
- Watch your body language.
- Be confident and relaxed.
- Go through a “warm up” interview process with API.
- Be prepared to have a lunch or dinner—even a car ride.
- Be alert and don’t let your guard down.
- Be yourself.

Tap an API Resource!

I can’t end this without saying how important I think API can be to the entire process of returning to the job market. Remember that we serve as a safe place where you can get thoughtful, caring answers.

And if you’re unsure of the job-search process and what’s changed, we can reassure you and support your reintroduction to the market and boost your confidence.

One of the most satisfying things for me is when a candidate says, “Win or lose, get the job or not get the job, I have learned so much and I didn’t have to do it alone.” That’s music to my ears.

Caution! Job Postings Ahead!

By Sheryl Barden

Here at API, we frequently get emails and calls from job seekers asking, “Did you see the latest job posting at XYZ Company?”



Sure, sometimes we know about the latest aviation job postings, and sometimes we don't. But, in any case, we offer a word of caution to candidates combing the “want ads.”

We try to point out that flight departments will, in fact, post a job online because they actually have an open position and are seeking talent to fill it. But others post them because they're required to.

For example, we recently worked with a company that posted an opening after they'd already determined they would hire an internal candidate. Per their corporate procedure, even though the job was taken, they were following their policy of having the “candidate” engage the normal application and hiring process.

In this example, there indeed had been a job to fill, but in reality it was already accounted for. Unfortunately, these sorts of external posting practices often create a frenzy in the job marketplace. This can result in discussions on social media forums (and through the grapevine) about positions that are presumably “open.”

Keep in mind that even the briefest of posts to a corporation's website gets immediately picked up by “web crawlers” and gets posted to multiple aviation job boards—and they never go away.

Perform Due Diligence

Is job posting a help or a hindrance to candidates? Sometimes it's both. The latter occurs when you start to notice certain companies that post jobs with surprising regularity.

Especially for a small flight department, in addition to the previous “corporate policy” issues, it can also be a red flag that there’s retention or compensation problems.

To make the most of these situations, one of the best paths—as always—is that of performing due diligence. There’s really no excuse for not being knowledgeable about a company you’re thinking about applying to, especially if it’s publicly traded.

As we’ve reported before, thanks to the web and professional forums like LinkedIn, there’s a treasure trove of great information about most companies online.

The exception in business aviation might be that there’s little material on flight departments run by high-net-worth individuals and families. But even in those cases, you can always engage your network behind the scenes to find out what you need to know.

Explore All the Angles

And talking about external candidates, if you happen to be one, you never know if your resume has been received and read, or even if it’s gone through a human or automated screening filter.

If it were me and I saw an online job posting, I would immediately apply on line, meticulously following the instructions.

Then I would back that up by sending a resume and a cover letter to whomever is likely to be the hiring manager, letting them know that I have applied online, but that I want them to have my information directly.

Doing so ensures that your information actually gets into the hands of the aviation department.

Use Your Resources

Did you know that at least 80 percent of the available jobs in the U.S. are not advertised? That is a whopping four out of five positions! That means your next position will be due to your being highly networked.

Maybe I'm biased, but a big networking resource is to seek out an aviation search firm like API, and become an API Registered Professional. One of the many benefits of working with a recruiter is that, due to their connections, agency professionals often learn about new job opportunities before they're posted online, if they are at all.

In fact, here at API, we often fill most open positions for our high-end clients exclusively. That means the roles are never advertised, or they're posted after the candidate has been identified.

Remember, Format is King

If you do follow the traditional path of answering calls for job candidates by submitting your resume, however, you should always keep in mind how important that first step is. In past blogs, we've talked in detail about how your resume is your "virtual first handshake" with your potential employers, so you ought to make the absolute best of it.

Properly formatting your resume—dotting all the i's and crossing all the t's—is essential. And there's a plethora of resume writing and formatting tips available on the web (including this one) that you should consult before you sit down to draft it.

With all of the foregoing advice and counsel, the cardinal rule regarding aviation job postings is and always will be to be prepared. There's never any substitute for educating yourself as thoroughly as possible beforehand. Be sure to take into full account all of the possibilities and that might either open or close a door to your future. Be cautious out there!

INTERVIEW STRATEGIES



8 Ways to Research a Company

By Sheryl Barden

A successful interview begins well before you find yourself sitting across from a potential employer, putting your best self forward. It starts with a lot of hard work and time well-spent to research a company you're interested in joining.



The good news is that, thanks to the web, there's a treasure trove of great information about most companies online.

The exception, in business aviation, might be that there's a dearth of material on flight departments run by high-net-worth individuals and families.

But—not to worry—you can always engage your network behind the scenes to find out what you need to know.

The bottom line is that there's no excuse to not be really knowledgeable about a company you're thinking about going to work for, especially if it's a publicly traded company.

Remember, as an interviewee, it's your job to demonstrate your knowledge and commitment to help the company meet its goals and exceed its clients' expectations. Convincing the interviewers that you can help them be successful in that endeavor ought to be your primary goal during the interview.

To assist you, below are eight effective tactics to not only help you sound smart and well-informed, but also to make sure that you'll attract the interviewer's interest.

1. Scour the company's website

Checking out the company's website is almost a no-brainer. Use it to try and learn what's important to the company's leadership team.

Find out if they're thought leaders in their industry. Do they effectively and succinctly address the nature of their business and tell you who their customers are?

You'll also want to use the web (and other resources) to research:

- **Products / Services** – How do they make their money? Are they well diversified? Are they a leader in their space? Are you interested in the product? Can you see yourself “getting behind it” and supporting it?
- **Leadership Team** – Who are the members of the senior leadership team? What about their education and background? Are they progressive and diverse?
- **Values** – Do the company's values align with yours? After all, cultural fit is an essential component of the hiring process for both you and the employer.
- **Clients/Customers** – Who are their customers? Where are they located? Is it a regional, national or international presence?
- **Social Responsibility** – Being socially and environmentally conscious is a great way for employers to attract customers and build a positive reputation, but it's also important to attract and retain employees! What types of charitable initiatives are underway (e.g., volunteer projects and annual fundraisers)?
- **Longevity** – How long have they been in business?
- **Media** – How are they portrayed in articles, etc.?
- **Blogs** – Don't forget to read through the company's blog posts. Are they actively publishing fresh content or is their blog stale and out-of-date?
- **Financials** – Check out the investor relations web page (if the company is public) to read their latest earnings report, annual report and financial statements. Is the company stable?

2. Google their competition

Be sure to research companies that directly compete with your target company. Get to know who their competitors are and compare what they're doing online and elsewhere with the company you'd like to work for. And wouldn't it be impressive to a prospective employer if, during an interview, you were able to rattle off a summary of what their competition is doing?

3. Check out Glassdoor.com

Another web tool to use is this increasingly popular site, which describes itself as an anonymous workplace community that offers an insider's look at salaries, employee reviews and interview questions.

You'll find a lot of complaining by past employees, but the site can also show both pros and cons for that company. You can also identify salary expectations and prepare for interviews by seeing actual interview questions that were posed to other job candidates.

4. Research their industry associations

NBAA's member directory is a wealth of information for the business aviation industry. Is this employer a member and are they active within NBAA or other aviation organizations? Have they done interviews in industry publications? Do they give back to the industry by volunteering on committees?

If it's a healthcare company or a financial company you're interested in, for example, are they making strides in their vertical industry? Are they a leader in their trade?

5. Review their social media activity

- Are they active on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, Google+, YouTube, etc.?
- What are they posting about open jobs, customer service issues, product launches, etc.?
- How often do they communicate with their audiences?
- What's the nature of their company culture? What do their management team's LinkedIn profiles look like?
- Who do you know from the company that you're already "linked in" with?

- Are your interviewers' profiles on LinkedIn and what do they look like?
- What other positions are open?
- Are you "following" them to get updates on their news?

6. Talk to your friends, colleagues and aviation network

What does your network of associates know about life at the company? Have any of them worked there in the past? Can any of them give you insights into the company's culture?

7. Consult your API representative, if applicable

One of the best parts about working with an aviation recruiter such as API is that we'll help align you with the company's hiring objectives. It's our job to do a deep dive into the hiring company's culture before we send in our candidates, so we'll help you be prepared to know what to expect.

8. Know the key stakeholders and decision makers

Before each interview, it's important to know the key players (e.g., the people you'll be meeting with). During the scheduling process, ask your recruiter and/or the HR rep to share with you the names, titles and tenure of each individual that you'll be meeting with.

Bonus: See if you can find out their role in the hiring process (are they a facilitator, key influencer or a decision maker?). There may be many phases of interviews for each company, such as an initial phone screen with an HR representative, a one-on-one in-person interview with the hiring manager (your future boss), a meeting with a panel of leaders and/or a sit-down with the team that you'll potentially be managing.

Knowing the process and the players will demonstrate your attention to detail and commitment to the organization. There are many others, of course, but these eight tactics are among the most fundamental, tried-and-proven methods available today. Do you know some others that have worked for you? If so, we'd love to hear about them from you. Please reply in the comments section below . . . and happy researching!

Preparing Yourself for the All-Important Job Interview

By Jennifer Pickerel

Being the “new kid on the block” has its advantages. Especially because I just navigated my way through the very process of self-examination, research and follow-through that many of API’s candidates will need to engage as they market themselves, their skills and experience for whatever aviation position they’re angling to land.



So, while it’s still very fresh in my mind, I’d like to share with you some of things I’ve learned about the interviewing process and myself, which are applicable to most any interviewee.

Here are the five “big” questions I asked of myself, and what I did to prepare for the interview that has changed my career direction and—with it—my life.

Although these questions were a product of my recent experience, they are pertinent to anyone in a job-seeking endeavor, and I hope you find them helpful.

1. Who am I?

As odd as it seemed to ask myself this question, it turned out to be a terrific exercise in self-evaluation. So don’t avoid it—add it to your arsenal. The fact is, as you prepare to put yourself on the line as a candidate competing for a new job, you are definitely going to need to know who you are and, by extension, what you’re bringing to the table—good, bad and indifferent.

The question isn’t so much about the personal details of your life as it is the general facts about you: are you a parent, and, if so, how does this “leadership” role define your work ethic values? This personal fact gives potential employers an insight into your skills, your flexibility, and—in essence—where you’re coming from. Do you participate in athletics? Sharing my experience of competing in triathlons demonstrated that I’m goal-oriented and have interests outside of the office. Are you a

voracious reader? This hobby indicates your eagerness to learn well beyond your college years, and that you enjoy quiet time to yourself.

These are just a few examples of personal facts you might consider sharing if they pertain to you, or reflect who you seek to become as a professional.

2. How (and how much) should I research?

Conducting due diligence is really vital if you're serious about being selected for the job you're seeking, so plan to do your homework.

Before my initial interview with API's President and CEO, Sheryl Barden, I researched the company for several hours. I pored over the company's website, news articles, press releases, LinkedIn page and Facebook page.

These online resources helped me learn about API, its history, its successes and challenges, its philosophy, its staff, its position in the aviation industry and even what companies it considers its competition.

Not only did this step help prove that I'd done my advance research, it also gave me a certain sense of confidence that I wasn't walking into an interview blind—potentially vulnerable to getting “caught” by saying something that would let Sheryl know I didn't really understand that much about her firm.

Another important way that I prepared was by getting in touch with trusted colleagues and peers—people I knew that I could count on for their confidentiality, and who had a business and/or personal connection with the API team.

Luckily, I learned that the company has a stellar reputation within the exact same industry I'd been working in for 10 years. It was refreshing to hear that the brand is synonymous with success.

The bottom line? Don't leave any stone unturned in the research department!

3. What are some questions that I should ask?

During your interview, when the hiring manager inevitably turns to you and asks “What questions do you have for me?” you'll want to have a few in your pocket that convey your professionalism.

Another tip I'd like to share is this: "Your questions are only as good as your research," (which takes us back to tip No. 2!). Preparing a variety of questions shows your understanding of the company, the position and its requirements, and, lastly, your ability to digest and quickly evaluate what you've just been discussing.

If, for example, you know that the hiring company generated \$32 million in sales in the last fiscal year, and that it was up, say, 25 percent from the previous year, then that's something you might want to explore by inquiring, "What steps did the company take over the past year to generate such an impressive increase in sales?" You might follow that up by asking, "How aggressive are you year-to-year, and do you plan to grow at a similar pace in this fiscal year?"

Whatever your questions are, try and keep them in synch with the pace and flow of the interview. And remember, it's perfectly acceptable to ask questions throughout the interview. Just be sure to time them based on your sense for how formally or casually the exchange is occurring.

4. How should I follow up after my interview?

The importance of following up immediately after your interview can't be overstated. At the very least, send a brief, cordial email to your interviewer—no longer than the day following your interview—and let him or her know how grateful you are for the opportunity. I also highly recommend mailing a formal note so that you'll be top of mind within a week's time, when they get their mail.

Also, don't forget to follow up, genuinely, to thank others who might have intervened in your behalf to help you by providing you with information, or putting in a good word in for you. Remember that a little warmth and humility go a long way. After all, employers are not hiring a skill set; they are hiring a person.

5. How should I handle the question, "Why do you want to leave your current employer?"

People say that it's never good to wait until you're out of your current job before thinking about looking for a new one, but I, personally, was in the position of interviewing for a new job when I already had a very good one, at a great company, where I'd been employed for a relatively long period of time.

Still, I knew that the last thing I was going to do in my interview was to speak negatively about my former company or any of its practices. Thankfully, I didn't have those issues myself, but for anyone who might, speaking negatively about your employer (or, frankly, any topic), sends a giant red flag to the interviewer.

So, no matter what your current situation entails, you need to put a positive spin on your job-seeking rationale and be exceedingly diplomatic. Look for the answer within yourself: maybe you've been satisfied in your current position, but wonder where you'll be in five years' time. Communicating to a potential employer that you're thinking about your long-term future within the company is a solid indicator that you're operating with a broad, forward-thinking perspective—and that can never be considered a bad thing.

Job Interviewing

Do's & Don'ts

By Sheryl Barden

In this competitive aviation job market, a great resume can work to get you noticed. But it won't guarantee that you'll end up landing the job. There's a lot more that goes into job interviewing these days.

At API, what we find that what really set our candidates apart are their "soft skills." There are some great resume templates online that allow you to include your skills—not just your technical know-how.



Today's hiring managers want to know what differentiates you from the rest of the pack. They want to see that you're prepared ahead of the interview, and that you'll be a cultural fit with their organization.

That's why we're sharing a handful of interview "do's" that will help you stand out. And, on the flip side, we've also identified a few behaviors that will have the opposite effect!

The "Do's" of Job Interviewing

First up, here's what hiring managers are looking for:

Be prepared

Make sure you put in the time to understand the company you're interested in. That means doing your research well ahead of your screening interview.

Learn as much as you can about the culture and the business of the company. Where do they have offices, service centers, manufacturing plants, business partners and customers?

You definitely need to be familiar with some of the major players in the company. Find out the names of the chairman, CEO and president, as well as the names of some of the high-level executives.

Figuring out who the flight department reports up to is also a must. Checking out the company's website is almost a no-brainer. Use it to try and learn what's important to the company's leadership team. Find out if they're thought leaders in their industry. And determine the nature of their business and their customer base.

Showcase interpersonal skills

Some refer to them as “wooing skills.” Remember, we are in a people business—not a plane business. So work on the fundamentals. Interviewers like great eye contact and a great handshake. They also want to evaluate your excellent verbal skills. And you need to be able to show a level of confidence that tells a hiring manager you can handle the job.

Articulate business and leadership skills

It may be great that you have some solid educational degrees and a CAM certificate under your belt. But how do those achievements translate into your everyday business acumen? Can you think on your feet? How have you changed a process, improved a culture or solved a problem? The hiring manager is looking to hear if and how you made an impact.

Ask great questions

Keep in mind that interviews are a two-way street. But you do want to show up as a listener and let a hiring manager guide the interview. So pick and choose what you ask him or her.

Don't talk too much and be sure you're answering their questions. And definitely be cognizant of not talking over the interviewers or interrupting them.

The “Don'ts” of Job Interviewing

The preceding are some great, surefire ways to get noticed during an interview. Now here are things you **SHOULDN'T** do in an interview.

Interviewers don't particularly care for:

Name-droppers

You may be on a first-name basis with several heavy hitters, but you should never overdo it in your interview. Yes, you want to prove that you have a solid network of industry leaders, but don't be a name-dropper.

“Aloof” candidates

During your interview, don't come across as too cocky. Self-confidence is a virtue. But it has its limits: taking it too far may cause an interviewer to think you're arrogant. And never make them think that you feel they'd be lucky to get you.

Remember, this is a wooing game. You need to convince them to want you as much as you've convinced yourself you want them.
Indiscretion

As you know, we're in a private industry. We often travel to undisclosed locations and overhear business discussions. This means that we need to demonstrate a high level of professionalism and self-awareness during the interview process—and ultimately in the role itself.

Show your hiring manager that you'll be the kind of employee who doesn't play fast and loose with confidential information. And that you can follow the rules, earn and maintain trust, never cut corners and always keep safety top-of-mind.

Direct questions

Interviewing the interviewer is an art form that you need to give some serious thought to. Asking questions in the wrong way will send the wrong signal. Examples of what not to ask include “What is the work schedule like? Or, “How much time would I need to be in the office?” Or, “What's the salary?”

Instead, turn the questions around to make them focus on the interviewers and their companies. For example: “Help me to understand your process of scheduling—how does it work exactly?” Or, “What are your expectations of how much time pilots spend working in the hangar?” Or, “Help me to understand your work environment.”

Stay Informed!

The important thing to remember is that the process of preparing and interviewing for a job is in constant flux.

The key is to keep yourself up-to-date on what's working out there, and, as well, what's not working. The difference you can make for yourself may be a life-changer!

20 Interview Questions to Nail

By Jenny Showalter

With so many critical changes occurring in the aviation industry—most notably the pilot shortage—we’re hearing more and more from our API Registered Professionals.

Many are telling us they are relatively happy in their current positions, but that they’re also curious about other available opportunities.



You can bet that the minute they begin entertaining ideas that the “grass might be greener” somewhere else, they’ve got at least a toe out the door.

If this happens to be a situation you find yourself in, it’s important to think about what you really want before you begin to interview.

Equally important, you need to consider the numerous questions that an interviewer might ask you during your interview. Below, you’ll find a list of my Top 20.

But first things first. Let’s figure out if a new job is really the right thing for you? Right now?

Determine What You Really Want

First, I recommend doing some soul searching. Ask yourself the following questions before you consider talking to an aviation hiring manager or recruiter. They will get you thinking about the *right* opportunity for you. (Not the next one).

- Is my family on board with a new job?
- If yes, are they willing to move? Is it the right time in my child’s (or children’s) education?
- What does my “dream department” look like? Is it big or small?
Am I a manager or key member of a small team?
- Am I experiencing job burnout or am I truly unfulfilled?

- Am I okay working for a managed aircraft operation, or would I prefer to work for an in-house flight department?
- Am I okay with flying to the same city pairs every week, or do I want to fly around the world?
- Am I content working as the sole maintenance provider, or, rather, as part of a team with resources at my fingertips?
- Would I prefer to have direct contact with the main boss, or report to a mid-level supervisor?
- What are my main motivators, what do I truly desire? Is it money, career growth potential, team camaraderie and/or to work for a great company brand, cause or individual?
- Am I willing to wait and only apply for positions that fit my strict criteria?
- Where in my negotiations am I willing to compromise?

Mental and Physical Interview Prep

Once you've answered all of the above to your satisfaction—and you're still considering a new gig—you should thoroughly familiarize yourself with the interview process and how best to prepare.

First, be sure to dress the part. (In an interview, you should never be the least dressed-up person in the room). It will never hurt if you overdress a bit—and if you're wondering what that means, I'm talking about wearing a business suit.

Along the same lines, even if you're a bit nervous—which is understandable—try to maintain a calm demeanor.

Pay attention to your speech mannerisms and try and control any tendency to say “um” too often, or ramble in your speech, talk too loudly or fidget in your seat.

Print and bring along extra copies of your resume, in case you want to address something in it, or if the hiring manager doesn't happen to have a copy handy. It just shows an extra level of preparation on your part.

Make sure your documents (licenses, etc.) are organized, neat and accurate. Be sure your spelling and grammar are correct.

As you refer to your past experience, have stories and descriptions of your accomplishments ready for each position—what did you do, what

was your role, what did you do beyond your role, why did you leave and so on. If you're an API Registered Professional, reread the autobiography you wrote for us to remind yourself of past accomplishments.

Be ready to speak to (or defend) any gaps in your work history, or other potential "red flags." For instance, your interviewers are going to want to know why you've had five jobs in five years, and you should be ready to address that question.

Be sure that your LinkedIn headshot is up-to-date and professional, and accurately reflects your current age and hairstyle. Recruiters and hiring managers will definitely take note if your photo is 20 years old, or if you appear to be in a tux at a wedding. (Spend \$100 to get a professional image taken; it's worth the money!)

Generally, be prepared to ask the hiring manager questions to indicate (first) that you know how to probe, and, (second) to make sure you fully understand the role.

20 Aviation Job Interview Questions

Ok. Now that you're mentally and physically ready for the IDEA of an interview, it's time to be sure you're ready to nail the interview with the hiring manager and land your new job.

Following are 20 questions that we suggest our candidates should practice before every interview. (Of course, there are more, but this is just to get you started.)

Think about your interview in terms of: Why am I here today?

1. Explain to the interviewer(s) why you're looking for a job right now, and why you think you'd be good at it compared to others. (If you happen to be working with us an API Registered Professional, we'll arm you with information about the company and hiring manager, so you can tailor and tweak your side of the interview to address relevant issues with the company and the hiring manager.)
2. What is your role in your current position? Summarize for your interviewer what your job is today, as well as other duties, aside from directly flying or working on an aircraft. Or, if you're not currently employed, talk about your most recent job.

3. Are you willing to relocate? In aviation, be ready to discuss where you're willing to move to, if that's necessary for the new position. (This directly affects your family, so you should not apply for jobs that aren't in the ideal location for everyone concerned.)
4. Be ready to talk about how and why you believe that your current skills will contribute to the accomplishment of the company's goals.
5. How do you handle working with different and/or difficult people? Have a story ready to share about how you work with people who have different ideas and mindsets than you do.
6. How do you go about continuing to develop your professional skills and knowledge? Talk about any outside training, seminars or educational opportunities you've pursued.
7. Do you know what your salary requirements are, and how you would engage in a discussion about them? Doing so might make you feel uncomfortable, but remember: it's best not to give salary specifics in the first interview. If you're pressed for a number, however, provide a range. Be ready in advance, so you're not caught off-guard.
8. You might be asked to offer your opinion of the qualities of a good leader and a bad leader. If you yourself are a leader, be prepared to address your leadership style and, as well, what others would say about you in that regard. If you want to be a leader, explain the type you'd like to be (and how you're currently developing yourself to eventually take on such a role).
9. What is your greatest achievement outside of work? If you bring it up, it opens the door for an interviewer to ask you something personal, without it being illegal. It's up to you how personal you want it to get.
10. Have an idea of what type of culture or environment you would thrive in. Are you comfortable with 50 percent flying and 50 percent collateral duties? Do you wear a suit and tie or a golf shirt? Are you expected to come into the office if you're not flying or maintaining the aircraft? Are you comfortable working with a high-net-worth owner or Fortune 100 executive? Are you familiar with a more formal setting and formal passenger experience?
11. What do you know about the company you're interviewing with? Be sure to research who you're meeting with and what the goals and visions are for the corporation. If it's a high-net-worth individual, there might not be much of anything online. But you've got to find out as much as you can before attending the interview.

12. Share your biggest motivators driving this job change—and rank them. Explain what you're looking for as it relates to professional growth, compensation, work/life balance, team environment, cultural fit, etc.
13. If your interviewer asked your colleagues to describe you, what descriptive terms would they choose and why? How would they describe your interaction with them and your general effectiveness in your work performance?
14. What was your most and least favorite job to date and why? You will likely be asked to describe something negative—be it shortcomings, limitations, faults or things you find challenging. Be sure you can identify something and explain how you navigated the issue.
15. What are your professional goals? What do you want to accomplish or achieve in the next five years?
16. What has been your greatest professional achievement to date?
17. What kind of oversight and interaction would your ideal boss provide?
18. How have you had to overcome a major obstacle that stood in the way of your accomplishing a goal or commitment? How did you approach and resolve the situation?
19. What are the three most important attributes or skills that you believe you would bring to the company if they hired you?
20. If you're already employed, be prepared to talk about why you're leaving your current employer. Your response will explain your values, outlook, goals and needs for the prospective employer. It will help illustrate if you're headed toward a more successful future or running away from an unsuccessful employment experience.

Whew! That's a lot to take in and process before you send off those resumes and start scheduling interviews! As you can see, this is a big commitment and it's worth the effort to "get it right."

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Sheryl Barden

President & CEO

An aviation industry recruitment and talent identification veteran, Sheryl is a frequent guest speaker for several aviation organizations. She is particularly regarded for applying her extensive background in employee search, screening and coaching to fulfill aviation recruiting and HR consulting needs.

To help API's clients attract and retain the level of talent they're seeking, Sheryl serves as a trusted advisor on HR-related matters, such as aviation hiring best practices and competitive compensation packages. As an aviation industry thought leader on employment issues, such as the aviation talent shortage and pilot professionalism,

Sheryl is a member of the International Aviation Womens Association (IAWA), Flight Safety Foundation (FSF), Women in Corporate Aviation (WCA), Society for Human Resources Management and the National Business Aviation Association (NBAA). She serves on NBAA's Board of Directors is Chair of the NBAA Advisory Council and, for six years, served on the NBAA Corporate Aviation Management Committee. Additionally, she's past president of the International Women's Forum of Northern California.

Sheryl holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Management with an emphasis in Personnel Management from Pennsylvania State University, and a MBA from the McLaren School of Business, at the University of San Francisco.



Jennifer Pickerel

Director of Client & Candidates Services

Jennifer Pickerel brings 15 years of business aviation industry expertise to API. Her proven track record of understanding clients' needs—combined with her unique ability to inspire confidence and build relationships—makes her an integral part of API's aviation recruiting team.

In her role as Director, Client and Candidate Services, Jennifer works directly with API's client hiring managers to identify their professional and cultural needs and matches them with highly vetted, qualified candidates. She also helps strengthen API's relationships with its long-term clients and assists in business development opportunities.

Prior to joining API in 2015 as Director of Candidate Services, Jennifer served as a Senior Account Manager for MedAire, an International SOS company, where she gained significant leadership experience, developed key business relationships and honed her exceptional communication skills.

Jennifer is a member of the NBAA Maintenance Committee and is also a member of the Minnesota Business Aviation Association, the Pacific Northwest Business Aviation Association and Women in Corporate Aviation. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from the University of Nebraska.



Jenny Showalter

Client Services Manager

Jenny brings more than two decades of aviation experience to API, a time during which she has achieved wide industry recognition for her exceptional customer service expertise.

Formerly API's Candidate Services Manager, Jenny Showalter now focuses on client service delivery as our Client Services Manager. She assists Jennifer Pickerel and Sheryl Barden with project management—everything from the intake of a new search project, to candidate

identification and selection, to the offer and placement of a hired candidate within a Part 91 or 135 flight department.

Prior to joining API, Jenny served as the Executive Director for the Florida Aviation Business Association (FABA), and was also a member of its board of directors. For 18 years previously, Jenny served as Customer Service Manager / Director of First Impressions for Showalter Flying Service, her family's third-generation fixed-base operation. Responsible for many business areas, including service, sales and marketing, she assisted with the various needs and requests of flight departments, flight crews and passengers visiting the Orlando area.

Jenny is a member of FABA and its board, as well as a member of the National Business Aviation Association, where she serves on NBAA's Local and Regional Groups Committee. She is a former decade-long member of the NBAA Schedulers & Dispatchers Committee, and was the committee's Chairwoman from 2007-2008. Jenny is a graduate of Rollins College in Winter Park, Florida, where she attained a Bachelor of Arts degree in History and Spanish.



Codi Quick
Business Manager

Codi Quick collaborates with API's recruiting team and candidates throughout the API Registered Professional™ application process, by providing seamless technology, pre-employment and communication support.

As Business Manager, she's responsible for working on various projects related to operations, technology, logistics and process improvement. She also works with client hiring managers to coordinate candidate presentations, and ensure a smooth hiring process.

Codi has vast experience as a business manager and communications specialist, having led many organizations through their start-up, survival, turnaround and growth phases.

She double majored in Business Administration and Communications, and holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from Ashford University.

ABOUT API

In business aviation, it's not about planes: **"It's About People™"**

For nearly 50 years, Aviation Personnel International has been exclusively providing people-based business aviation recruiting solutions.

Our industry longevity, experience and specialization truly sets us apart. API is the longest-running business aviation recruiting firm serving the hiring needs of business aviation and private aviation.

A woman-owned and operated company, we offer the broadest portfolio of pre-vetted, passive job seekers as well as outplacement support and aviation consulting for hiring managers and HR professionals.

We consider it a privilege to help organizations build high-performing business aviation teams, and then to help shape the careers of the aviation professionals who comprise those teams.

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Benefits of API Registered Professionals:

Exclusive Aviation Career Opportunities: Expand your network and increase your exposure to a wide array of unadvertised aviation career opportunities with today's top aviation employers who come to API with exclusive openings.

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