

THE JOB SEARCH PUZZLE

With the arrival of fall, many PGA Professionals will be turning their sights on seeking a new position and going through the job search process. As part of the process, it is common and understandable for many job seekers to focus most of their time and attention on their resume and cover letter. However, while these are certainly important components, there are many other factors, much like fitting together the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, to being invited to an interview and being selected over a quality field.

The key element that many candidates overlook is identifying and solving the 3-4 puzzle pieces that the employer feels are absolutely critical. Just as every PGA Professional is unique, every facility is unique with its own history, culture, strengths, and challenges. Therefore, each employer will weigh puzzle pieces differently. Below is an illustration of some key components that employers may use to differing degrees in deciding who they interview, and ultimately who they hire:



Resume & Cover Letter – Is your resume content targeted to the job and the facility? Is the information presented in a logical and easy to read format? Have you included specific accomplishments that are relevant to the job you are seeking? Does the cover letter connect with the employer and pique their interest? Are the cover letter and resume free of spelling and grammatical errors?

Interview – Do you know the format for the interview and who will be interviewing you? Have you prepared for the questions you may be asked? Do you know the do's and don'ts of interviewing? Are you prepared for a telephone interview?

Portfolio – Have you prepared an interview portfolio with information that illustrates your unique qualifications, targeted to the position and presented in an easy to follow format?

Research – Prior to sending your resume and/or interviewing, have you researched the job so you are knowledgeable about the facility? Do you know the employer's key issues, needs, and priorities?

Network – Have you utilized your network of contacts and references to learn about the facility, promote your candidacy, and help you get your foot in the door for an interview? While it is true in every industry, it especially valid in golf – employers interview and hire people who have a strong support group who are eager to promote them.

Geography – Are you within the geographic region where the employer is willing to consider candidates for an interview and possible relocation? If not, how can you overcome this hurdle?

Perception – Do your resume and work experience create the right perception of you in the eyes of the employer, based on what they are seeking in candidates? Are you an experienced Head Professional or an up and coming Assistant? Are you perceived as a teacher, player, business oriented, strong manager, innovative promoter, etc.? Do you have a private club background, or will you be viewed as a public course professional? If you don't fit the employer's perceived model, how can you change their mind?

Cultural Fit – Do you fit the culture and environment of the facility, community, region, clientele, etc? If not, is this the right job for you?

Education – Does your level of education match the employer's requirements or preferences? If not, can you make up for this through your experience and a history of continuing professional education?

In addition to the above factors, most employers are also looking for some level of experience in the following areas, based on their needs and priorities, along with evidence of quantifiable accomplishments or a proven track record:

- **Operations / Business Management** – Supervising daily operations, coordinating activities and events, managing the merchandise concession, handling business functions, etc.
- **Customer Service** – Providing excellent service and creating a great golf experience for your customers.
- **Staff Management** – Hiring, training, managing, developing, evaluating, mentoring, etc.
- **Finance** – Developing and managing budgets, maximizing revenues, controlling costs, understanding basic accounting principles, providing financial and operational reports, etc.
- **Technology** – Ability to use golf operations and POS applications, Word, Excel, e-mail, database and contact management, website development, social networking sites, etc.
- **Marketing / Player Development** – Developing and implementing programs and activities to increase rounds, participation, memberships, customer base, create new players, etc.
- **Teaching / Playing** – Providing instruction programs to all skill levels, coordinating junior golf programs, playing golf with members/customers, playing competitively, taking teams to Pro-Ams, etc.

Don't hesitate to contact me if you would like to discuss your own job search strategy, or for assistance with any PGA employment services.

Dick Bradow is an Employment Consultant for the PGA of America and a PGA Certified Professional. He can be contacted at (502) 458-2002 or by e-mail at dbradow@pgahq.com.