

Five Important Tips for Exploring a Newly-Created Position

You have been invited to interview for a newly-created position that sounds potentially attractive. How do you determine whether the position is right for you? You won't know unless you remember these five important tips:

- 1. Why was the position created?** What is the business case? Did some other executive or department previously perform the work required in this position? Why is it being taken from them? If no one did this work in the past, is the position nothing more than an extended consulting assignment necessary to meet an urgent deliverable that no one else has time to do? Who is its champion? What appears to be the long-term (5 year) value of this position for the company?
- 2. Does the company have a well-written position specification?** Are the hiring executives able to clearly define the purpose, responsibilities, goals and requirements for the position? A poorly written description may indicate that they haven't sufficiently addressed the strategy and purpose for the position and are unable to define successful performance. Without knowing that, you are unable to determine whether it fits your passions, goals and expertise. What items appear at the top of the specification? They may or may not be the top priorities, but how many items include tasks that leverage your talents and passions?
- 3. How many interviewers are involved in the hiring process?** An excessive number of interviewers and interview appointments may indicate a management team that is bureaucratic, unsophisticated and incapable of making timely decisions; whereas too few participants could leave you politically unprotected should your sponsor leave the company. Write down the names and titles of everyone you meet. Ask to see an organization chart that illustrates where your position would fit in relation to your interviewers. Do the titles of the people you interview seem necessary to the hiring decision? How many interviewers are potential competitors for future promotions?
- 4. Do all interviewers agree on the necessity and goals for the position?** See Question 1. If your position is being created at the expense of someone else's, you need to know it. Not all interviewers may agree on the need for or the duties and goals of a new position. This will give you valuable insight into internal politics. You must uncover this during the interview process or accept an offer at your own peril. Test for cultural fit with each interviewer. Your best defense is preparing yourself in advance with a set of questions to ask each interviewer that will allow you to test for inconsistencies. Any negative gut reaction is probably

valid. After the hire, you can't win over anyone who appears to be a political opponent during an interview.

- 5. Ask intelligent questions concerning position goals, specific duties and priorities.** Don't leave all the decision making to the company by letting them grill you and don't try to impress your interviewers by merely building your questions around some business information you memorized from their Web site. Letting your interviewers direct the meeting conveys an impression of disinterest and passivity. You must genuinely understand your own value, skills and accomplishments and must have prepared a focused set of questions that drills down to the specific goals, deliverables and responsibilities of the position. If those requirements match your passions and strengths that should be the only reason you accept the position. Accepting a newly-created position with an impressive title and great compensation with a high-growth company is a fast trip to disaster, unless you fit culturally and the job meets your own career requirements and goals.

This list by no means includes all the steps necessary to interview successfully, but it offers guidelines as to how to prepare you to interview for a position that is newly created. Do your homework, but don't spend all your time visiting a prospective employer's Web site and networking with company alumni and potential sponsors. It is more important that you prepare the right questions for your interviewers to allow you to compare job content and goals against your own values, strengths and passions. This will help you to determine whether you are interviewing for the job of your dreams or a career nightmare.

© Copyright, January 2006, Edward J. Pospesil

Ed Pospesil, the founder and Chairman of TENG, LLC, has thirty years' experience in IT executive search.

This and all previous TENG Newsletters may be found online at <http://www.theteng.org>

Ed Pospesil
Chairman
Technology Executives Networking Group' LLC
<http://www.theteng.org>
President
Edward J. Pospesil & Company
Information Technology Executive Search
221 Driftwood Lane
Guilford, CT 06437-1922
www.ejp.com
Voice: 203-458-6566
Fax: 203-458-6564
Mobile: 203-640-1580

This e-mail and any attachment contain information which is private and confidential and is intended for the addressee only. If you are not an addressee, you are not authorized to read, copy or use the e-mail or any attachment. If you have received this e-mail in error, please notify the sender by return e-mail and then destroy it. Thank you.