



Positioning Yourself In The Market

No matter how great the leader or the team, if they don't find each other nothing will change.

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When you're exploring new employment, whether in an active or more passive fashion, take the time to think through your experience and how you want to position and present that information in the most effective way to potential employers. Time invested in this area will greatly improve the chances you'll land interviews and receive offers.

While resume formats, structure, and interview practice are important, the underlying question you need to answer is "What value have you created in previous positions?" Answering this question will, by extension, communicate the value you can potentially bring to a new organization.

As executive recruiters and search consultants our goal is to help our clients identify and engage people who have created value in the past, and who have a high probability of translating that experience to our clients' contexts.

We've put together a few thoughts and 3 steps we hope are helpful for you in positioning and communicating your experience as you explore new career possibilities. This information will help create a foundation on which you can build your resume, present your background, and talk effectively with potential employers.

Step 1: Catalog Your Experience

For the purposes of this exercise let's broadly categorize your experience into four areas:

Value Created

- Achievements, accomplishments, money made, money saved, quality improvements, etc.

Categories

- This includes specific industries (e.g. EdTech, AdTech) and categories or domains of experience (e.g. SaaS, B2B)

Function

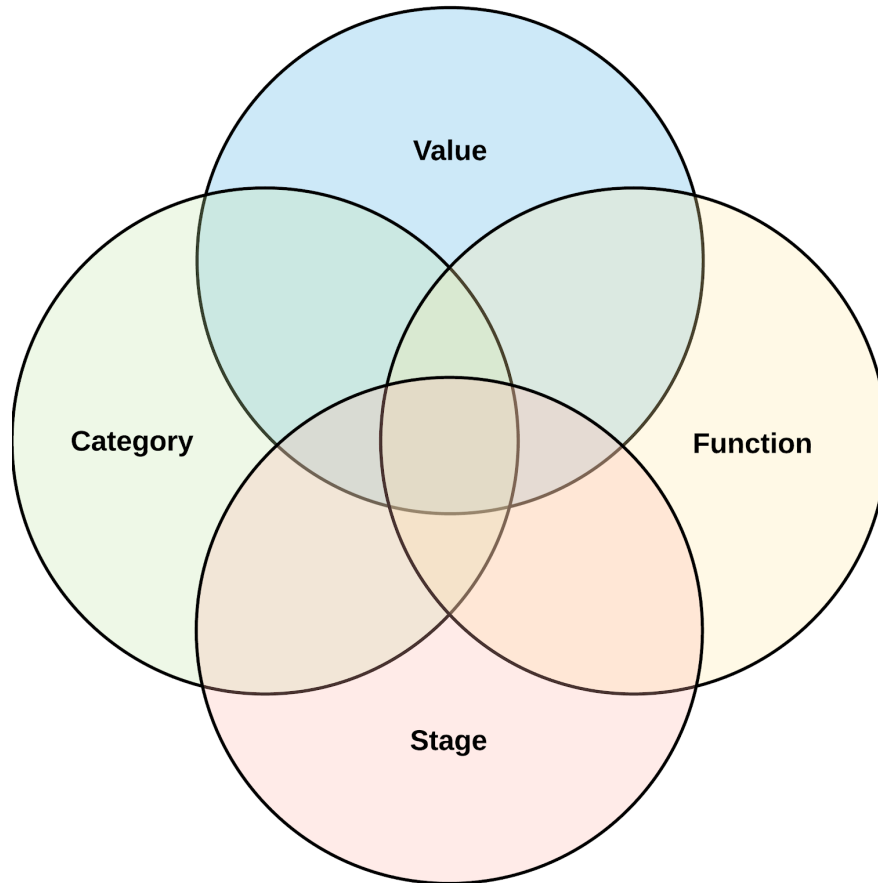
- This includes your functional area / roles (e.g. Marketing) and your associated hard and soft skills.

Stage of Organization

- Seed, Startup, Growth, Mature, etc.

Generally speaking, you're most attractive to a potential employer when you sit in the middle of the venn diagram below as it relates to their company and a position they're recruiting for. This is especially true when you've solved problems in the past that are the same or similar to their current challenges. However, there are plenty of cases where you may be highly attractive to an employer in one of the other areas of overlap.

Step 1: Catalog Your Experience



1a. Set aside some time to go through each of your previous positions and/or projects and list out the Categories, Stages, and Functional elements for each one.

Step 1: Catalog Your Experience

1b. Next, review each position and write out examples of the value you created there.

Some questions to help prime your thinking in relation to value:

Did you...

1. Increase revenue or sales directly or indirectly through your efforts?
2. Increase market share?
3. Identify a new market?
4. Create new products?
5. Create new value for clients or customers?
6. Define strategic objectives or approaches?
7. Improve the quality of a product or system?
8. Save money for the organization directly or indirectly through your efforts?
9. Increase productivity, efficiency, effectiveness, or save time?
10. Identify new opportunities or missed problems?
11. Create consensus across teams?
12. Adapt to difficult changes effectively?
13. Turn around a project or initiative?
14. Win awards or receive industry or company recognition?
15. Implement / Establish methodologies, systems, or approaches?
16. Recruit key staff or build new teams effectively?
17. Mentor / Train team members?
18. Develop key partnerships?

Step 1: Catalog Your Experience

Examples of statements that communicate value:

- Grew revenue 157% in 1st year and 211% in the 2nd year while keeping industry leading churn, LTV and CAC
- Defined and implemented a new scalable technical architecture that allowed the company to grow 117% over a 3 year period
- Successfully launched new Cloud Solution for on-premise product (First year sales of \$249K vs. 1-year sales of \$14K with predecessor solution)
- Implemented new digital marketing programs that Increased marketing-generated sales revenue by 282% year-over-year.
- Implemented critical business systems and processes for hiring, internal communication, ERP, billing, and sales including implementations of Salesforce, ZenDesk, Marketo, Zenefits and NetSuite
- Co-invented new technology for X, awarded United States Patent in September.
- Led initiative that led to a 50% reduction in infrastructure costs related to product environments with no up-time impact (99.99%)
- Presented at industry conference X on behalf of company Y
- Developed B2B channel partnerships with 3 of the top 5 market share leaders in industry X

Whenever possible, you should quantify your results in terms of numbers, percentages, dollars, or whatever key metrics would resonate with a potential hiring executive or manager.

For areas of experience that are more difficult to quantify, try to highlight where your work contributed to the success of your team or organization. What impacts or end results were achieved?

Step 2: Organize your information

The easiest way to organize the above information is chronologically for each position. However, depending on your area of expertise, it may be worthwhile to have a second section or document grouped by market area, technology, functional area, methodology, etc.

When you're building your resume, or practicing the examples you'll be communicating prior to an interview, you can use the "building blocks" you've created that are relevant to the particular position you're pursuing as a starting point.

Example:

Company X

Categories: SaaS, B2B, HR Tech

Stage: Growth from 10M to 125M, 40 to 250 FTE

Function: Product Marketing Management

- Conducted market and customer research to understand buyer audience and develop buyer personas and buyer journey map.
- Performed market segmentation and targeting exercises to identify the segments most likely to buy.
- Developed go-to-market plan, product launch plan, and solution playbook.

Value:

- Successfully launched new product with first year sales of 250K
- Increased revenue for existing product portfolio by 24% via improved value proposition communication for key segments

Step 3: Communicate your experience

There are lots of good resources available on how to build a resume or approach an interview. We've listed a few quick resume tips below. The above exercise should help you identify the "raw materials" you can use in those endeavors.

Your next step is to think about how to effectively communicate your experience as a story or narrative that's relevant to your audience. How are you going to help them achieve their particular business goals? What value can you potentially bring to them and their organization based on your personal mix of previous successes / failures, domain / industry experience, and skills?

In Summary

From our experience, we have found targeting oneself in terms of category, stage, and function allows a candidate to position themselves within the market. This positioning provides clarity and focus when identifying for new opportunities. Then when speaking in terms of accomplishments and achievements value added in combination these four elements determine our attractiveness to the hiring team.

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