



Cardinal Talent

Talent Newsletter September '08

We hope this first edition of Cardinal's newsletter finds you in good health & spirits and ready to take on today's challenges. The current world economic climate evokes great challenges for us all. Although times may seem turbulent and fearful just now, great opportunities are born out of difficult circumstances!

If your issue is searching for the right role or the next contract then the article below **Securing success** may help. Should you be running a business, you may need to create structured reflection time for yourself or your team. Coaching can create valuable and effective thinking space in relatively short bursts of time. Blocks to problem-solving, for instance, can be resolved and methods can be learned during a session, typically 30 – 90 minutes.

We can offer support in the form of coaching, cv reconstruction, psychometric assessment or related solutions to assist your business to make improvements.

Looking to recruit? In this first **Talent roundup**, we have a strong selection of both permanent and career interim operations professionals on offer. If you're tempted, please note our reference and call me on +44(0)1484 687 587 or +44(0)7831 476 818. Or drop me a line on mel@cardinaltalent.com

We look forward to hearing from you on any of the above, with any general feedback or if you wish to not to receive this communication in future. Thank you for reading and very good fortune over the next month,

Best wishes

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Talent roundup

A pragmatic and insightful **lean manufacturing practitioner**, with an extensive and proven track record in change management. An effective leader and communicator, who has developed significant improvements in supply chain, operating systems, manufacturing and quality teams using lean thinking. Qualified to postgraduate level in manufacturing management, sector experience includes construction, medical devices, automotive, packaging and plastics. Looking for a permanent manufacturing management position within an hour's drive of Milton Keynes.

Ref:LMP0908

A **highly successful professional** with over 20 years proven experience in **multi-national public and private sector companies** including automotive, aerospace and machine tools manufacturing. Has a proven track record in manufacturing management at a senior level using **lean thinking**. Experienced in business coaching, mentoring, recruitment and psychometric assessment. An excellent communicator with considerable knowledge of managing operations, change and business improvements. A degree qualified **Chartered Engineer**, educated to postgraduate level in manufacturing management with an impressive CPD record looking for a senior consultancy role.

Ref:HSP0908

Securing success

The current state of the world economy probably means there will be more of us chasing fewer opportunities, so distinguishing yourself from the competition is more demanding than ever.

How can we ensure every interview counts towards success? Elementary preparation holds the key to success but may seem too obvious an answer, so what more can be possibly learned?

As someone involved in people development, I am always sorry, and often amazed, to learn of perfectly competent, well-briefed senior candidates spoiling their chances of a successful engagement because of a momentary lack of awareness, like a slip of the tongue leading to an inappropriate disclosure i.e. the blurring out of an unhelpful story or example.

Sadly these incidents are not isolated and other common interview faux-pas include:

- arriving late to the interview or not turning up at all;
- not answering the interviewer's questions;
- not saying enough;
- showing no interest in the role whilst being overly interested in the rewards package;
- negative body language and/or behaviour.

The upshot is that there are less opportunities for all – the candidate, the recruiter and the client! Trust is hard won and easily lost, as time is wasted, patience wears thin and pressure mounts to find the right person.

I'd like to think most of these faux-pas are caused by anxiety. It's my firm belief that confidence and appropriate behaviour under pressure are helped by **sound preparation**. So, if you minimise the chances of events under your control going

A **self-motivated professional interim manager** with 21 years experience in operations, change leadership, business turnaround, sales policy deployment and world-class manufacturing. Proven track record in interim management using **lean manufacturing techniques** in both service and manufacturing sectors including chemical, retail, lighting, oil & gas, tools and waste management. Proficient in process optimisation studies with success through efficiency savings. An effective communicator with analytical skills, able to manage and influence cross-functional teams through coaching and mentoring. Degree educated and postgraduate qualified in manufacturing management with CPD record and experienced SAP R3 implementer.

Ref:SPIM0908

An **accomplished professional** with extensive **lean manufacturing** experience in wide ranging sectors, including telecoms, electrical, retail, automotive, construction and technology. Adaptable and resourceful **change agent** with organisational, interpersonal, communication and decision-making strengths. Offering skills in procurement and supplier quality, project management, management training & development and process improvement. Educated to degree and postgraduate level with postgraduate qualification in manufacturing management. Interested in either an interim or contract position, preferably two days per week.

Ref:AP0908

A capable **industrial manufacturing operations manager** with 20 years experience of cost-down change management in business systems, process, manufacturing, contract service, maintenance, projects and engineering. Sector experience includes electronics, aerospace, transportation, general engineering and building products. Experienced in change management with the ability to lead teams through culture change employing lean techniques and offering skills in operational management, project management, process improvement, technical management and logistics. Educated to post graduate level in manufacturing management and to degree level in Production Engineering. Seeking a permanent senior role located from Yorkshire to Central England.

Ref:IMOM0908

A dynamic and flexible **manufacturing professional with commercial and senior management** experience, reinforced with a post graduate qualification in manufacturing management and an excellent understanding of business improvement methodology. A true leader with a demonstrable track record of innovative thinking and exceeding set targets, in diverse environments coupled with a passion for business excellence and organisational development. A charismatic and empathetic communicator with keen influencing skills acquired through leading, mentoring and coaching. Sector experience includes electronics and aerospace. Looking for an Operations Director role in a dynamic global manufacturing organisation, aiming to lead the market through outstanding products, whilst working with an inspirational CEO and Board to deliver exceptional customer satisfaction and shareholder value.

pear-shaped on the day, then you stand a better chance of delivering a **successful interview**.

As well as preparing your appearance and dress (hint: **darker** colours are more powerful than **lighter** ones), researching the company, noting prepared questions, taking a copy of your CV, fine tune your mind using the following:

1.Devise, practise and learn a **short statement summarising your career**, its highlights and achievements to date. Start by asking yourself:

- How I see myself career-wise?
- What are my main achievements to date?
- What skills do I have to offer that the prospective employer needs to help improve their performance?

Refine the statement to **30 words in length**, rehearse and perfect. Use to answer the infamous question "tell me about yourself".

Use these thirty words as a lens – everything you say in the interview, should be an amplification of the statement. In this way you will **"quality assure" your output** and natural anxiety will be less likely to obstruct your performance.

2. A supporting strategy which helps, is to **keep sentences short** and your answers limited to 3 or 4 sentences. In this way focussing on the question becomes easier and you will be less inclined to ramble and get into hot water!

3. Do **anticipate questions** around any points of interest on your CV, such as career gaps or short periods of time in a role. There is always a positive way of explaining what happened. It's advisable to discuss any aspects which give you cause for concern or doubt with a coach or recruiter favourably disposed to you.

4. Anticipate and **practise** answering interview questions around competency, for instance:

- Tell me about a time when you had to pay attention to detail
- How have you improved a situation or process?
- What's the most creative thing you have ever done at work?

Expect supplementary, probing questions like;

- Why did you take that approach?
- What happened next?
- What was the result?

This is competency-based or critical incidence questioning. If you aren't already, I strongly recommend you build up your familiarity with the method, as it is being used increasingly by interviewers. Its primary function is to **help the interviewer find evidence of past performance**, because, *past performance is one of the best predictors of future performance*.

Enlist a coach or a buddy and practise with them, using the **STAR** process to structure your answers, as in the example below:

Question: Tell me what you did during your appointment at ABC Micros that you feel especially proud of?

Situation	<i>The context in which the action was taken.</i> The business was short of cash, so I decided to take a look at stock and work in progress. I found orders were delayed, customers were upset and deserting.
Target	<i>The target or goal being aimed for.</i> The idea was to reduce the level of stocks in the business, releasing cash and reducing chaos in the assembly operations, cutting overall delivery lead times by 50%.
Action	<i>The action taken by you.</i> I held daily reviews with the material controllers improving communication across the factories immediately. We then devised

Ref:MPSCM0908

Proactive and determined **operations professional** with considerable expertise in successfully implementing Lean Manufacturing and managing change. Goal orientated with strategic experience at operational site level & particular experience in labour intensive and unionised environments. Broad functional experience including manufacturing management, general management, business and product development. Sector experience includes mechanical, packaging, aero and electronics engineering. Degree qualified Engineer, educated to postgraduate level in manufacturing management, holding Chartered Mechanical Engineer professional status. Immediately available for either interim or permanent roles, with a bias for Northern England for permanent positions.

Ref:OP0908

electronic planning boards to supplement the ERP system and began to measure progress, in terms of improved stock accuracy, reducing WIP, faster throughput times.

Result

The results achieved through the action.

It worked out far better than planned! My initiative released £350,000 cash into the business within 4 months, we cut lead times by 60%, customers stopped ringing to cancel orders, and we started taking business again.

In summary, prepare by using the following steps to interview success:

Prepare a 30 word statement:

1. Learn to keep your answers short and focussed;
2. Anticipate questions concerned with perceived weak spots in your CV;
3. Practise and anticipate competency-based or critical incidence questioning;
4. Use the **STAR** process to structure & review your answers;
5. Ask a coach or a friend to help you practise and review interview questions.

So **preparation is the key** to securing your next assignment effectively, particularly in interesting times. As with regular exercise where muscle tone improves, regular work outs on interview practises and techniques will ensure increasing competence in anticipating and handling questioning. Increasing competence leads to increased levels of self-esteem, which in turn builds gravitas, more likely to inspire confidence in the interviewer.

Good fortune and may you thrive in interesting times!

In next month's issue:

How flow can impact our development
Coaching for transition
October's **Talent roundup**



Mel Armstrong is a coach & recruiter of business leaders. A degree qualified metallurgist and Chartered Engineer, with a post graduate Fellowship in Manufacturing Management, her main areas of interest are developing self awareness in business leaders and manufacturing and business improvement. She works closely with a number of private clients providing business support through recruitment, transition coaching, outplacement , psychometric assessment and career development.

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