

# Contents

Disclaimer .....	ix
Introduction .....	xi
Acknowledgments .....	xiii

## **Part One: Preparation**

Chapter 1. What Are You Looking For? .....	3
Chapter 2. How to Use This Book .....	9
Chapter 3. Criteria for Selection: An Overview .....	15

## **Part Two: Making the Choice**

Chapter 4. The Company .....	29
Chapter 5. The Culture .....	41
Chapter 6. Leadership and Working Styles .....	57
Chapter 7. Working Environment .....	71
Chapter 8. Benefits .....	89
Chapter 9. Compensation .....	109
Chapter 10. The Intangibles .....	123

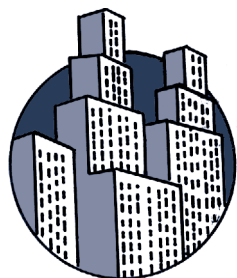
## **Part Three: Conclusion**

Chapter 11. Putting It All Together .....	143
Appendix A. Scoresheets .....	151
Appendix B. Sabbaticals .....	183
Appendix C. Self-Employment .....	187
Appendix D. Temporary Work and Temp-to-Hire .....	191
Appendix E. On-Line Job Hunting .....	195
Index .....	201
About the Authors .....	

Part Two

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# **Making the Choice**



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## The Company

**M**aking choices about what industry you'd like to be in and what sort of company is right for you within that industry can be overwhelming at first. A quick glance through the newspaper or surfing across various job listing Websites will let you know that your choices are almost endless. Choosing a new industry or honing the focus of your current career is a crucial first step in any job search; after all, once you make even that first choice—what kind of job you're looking for—the entire process seems more manageable. Then, you can throw away some of the pages of your newspaper. You'll be able to enter keywords in Internet search engines. You'll have a better handle on what it is you want to do. You'll even be able to create your own job.

### Choosing an Industry

*What industry is right for you?* The answer to this question, and the reasons for that answer, are going to be different for every single person who reads this book. And it's not as easy a question as it sounds at first. The answer may *not* be

something as simple as whatever industry you're already working in.

Do you like what your company does, but you're not happy with your job? You should then consider looking within your current field for other opportunities and for better opportunities. Are you tired of or bored with what you've been doing, or what your company has been doing? It may be time to consider a complete change to another field and/or another industry.



### HOT TIP

Think about those times when you were a kid and it felt like the world was yours for the taking. What was your dream job when you were ten years old? Fifteen? What did you want to do when you were in high school or college? Are you doing those things now? If not, why not? What would it take for you to pursue your dream job? Did you always want to be a firefighter? An architect? A public defender? A carpenter? What is it, exactly, that's holding you back now? What do you have to do to remove the obstacles between you and what you really want to do?



### How to Make Your Choice

*How can you choose an industry, a new field, a new career path?* Choosing a new job, or at least deciding what you want to look for, is as simple as marrying the skills you already have to the skills required in any given field. You will be surprised how many of the skills and abilities you may have thought were career-specific will actually transfer to a new job in a new field. Just as companies sell themselves to their customers, you will be selling yourself to the companies. Make sure they know that you have the combination of ability

and desire needed to work for them . . . and remember: in today's talent-short market, they're also selling themselves, as employers, to you. They need you to help them compete. Just as you can help them by being willing to learn a new skill set for a new job, they'll be ready to help you by teaching you and coaching you in order to help you fit in.

Don't shy away from a field or a job just because you don't think you have what it takes to work there. You'll never know until you try.

### Specific Choices

*What are you looking for in a specific company?* Once you've narrowed the field, it's time to start thinking about what you'll be looking for in an actual company. There are so many different kinds of companies out there, and so many different kinds of jobs within those companies, that you'll need to know exactly what you're looking for, as you begin contacting employers about potential opportunities. Knowing what you want from a company—and being satisfied with the company you choose—can go a long way toward finding happiness in your next job.

### Corporate Stability

*Are you looking for stability?* Most people are looking for stability in one form or another. Knowing that a company is financially stable usually helps employees gain confidence both in the employer and in the stability of their jobs—after all, most folks like to know that their jobs will be there for them next week and even next year.

Some people, however, are more interested in a risk/reward atmosphere, and may be looking for a start-up company or a struggling company. You might be looking for a situation where you could come in and make a difference right away, a situation where the issue of being stable is not as important as being able to take chances with the opportunity for

### REAL-WORLD PRACTICES

The employees of Bank of America participate in Team Bank of America's Volunteer Network, a program that's sponsored by the company. Through this program, employees have opportunities to engage in a variety of volunteer activities that make a difference. Some of the worthwhile pursuits include restoring homes for senior citizens, fund-raising for charities, helping at homeless shelters, and cleaning up the environment. Team leaders learn skills like conflict resolution, speaking, and networking. Because they're working side by side with senior managers from other divisions, when they take the initiative, they garner attention. Some team leaders have been promoted at the bank as a result of their demonstration of leadership abilities in the volunteer setting.<sup>1</sup>



### The Importance of Quality

*Is the quality of a company's goods and services a deciding factor?* Scandals over poor quality or shoddy services in corporate practices make the news every day, but we rarely hear about overly high quality or outstanding service. The quality of the widgets a potential employer makes or the value of the service it provides can be more than a deciding factor in a job search—it can mean the difference between feeling happy in your job and in your life as a whole or not. After all, if you feel good about what you're doing—if you feel you're making a difference—you will obviously be happier in your job.

If the inherent social value of what any given company does is important to you, make sure you fully research not only that company's products and services, but that company's past history as well.

**HOT TIP**

Check with organizations like the Better Business Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce in your town to find out about a company's reputation and past practices.

**SUMMARY**

We think that in your job search, you'll find it's never as simple as just choosing what industry you want or what kind of company you'd like to work for. There are so many companies out there doing so many different things so many different ways. It's vitally important for you to really think about what you want out of a company before you begin your job search. Consider everything that will be important to you personally and professionally before you begin, and make sure you have those needs and wants really refined—before you make your choice.

**ASK YOURSELF: Choosing a Company**

- What industry is right for me?
- What kinds of skills can I transfer from my current job to my next one?
- What do I really want to be doing? What do I want to be doing in one year? Five years?
- What have I always wanted to do? What's keeping me from that?
- Is there such a thing as an unrealistic career goal?
- How do I go about choosing a new field or a new career path? What is most important to me in looking for a new job?



## NOTES

Even though you're just getting started, we've provided some space here for you to make a few quick notes about your first impressions.

Which areas of your job search seem the most important to you right now?

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Which seem less crucial?

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Have you read about things you hadn't thought of before? Use the space here to jot down some initial ideas.

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*When you've finished reading the book, compare your wants and needs with these notes. Then you can use these first observations to ensure you haven't left anything out as you begin your search.*