



# Stand Out in the Job Market

How to create a compelling resume, cover letter  
and elevator pitch to help you land a job you love

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# Land a job you love

Most of us have crossed paths with someone who absolutely loves their job. They don't just like their job, they love it. When someone says they love their job, what they are really saying is they feel fulfilled at the end of the day. While they may not be able to put it into words, they feel that their job is one of the things they do in order to bring their *Why* to life; perhaps they even feel that they are part of a cause greater than themselves. And the fact that their job is more than a paycheck **is** the reason they love their job. The first step to finding a job you love is to identify what brings you fulfillment; what drives and inspires you. You must start with *Why*.

When we don't have clarity of *Why*, we tend to apply for many different positions, or perhaps worse, get stuck thinking we can only work in one industry because we have a specific skill set. We focus on *What* (our skills) rather than *Why* (what we believe). When we focus on skill set and salary alone, we may find ourselves having to fudge things a bit in order to make ourselves fit into the culture of the companies we work for. Bending to fit into a culture where we won't naturally thrive might land us the job, but we likely won't be going home feeling fulfilled. If you've felt this way in the past, you're not alone. 80% of people don't feel fulfilled by the work they do.

There is an alternative. A way to wake up everyday inspired to do the work we love. When we have clear sense of *Why* and can clearly say it to others, we can better judge the environments, individuals and kind of companies that inspire us. Armed with that knowledge we have to be disciplined to only apply for jobs that are more likely to leave us feeling enriched. In the long run, you may be applying for fewer positions, but the likelihood of you landing a job you love is much higher.

If you've completed the [Why Discovery Course](#) or you feel like you have a good sense of your *Why* and the concept of The Golden Circle, feel free to skip Section 1, "Introduction to the Golden Circle" and jump right into Section 2, "Why are you writing a resume anyway?".

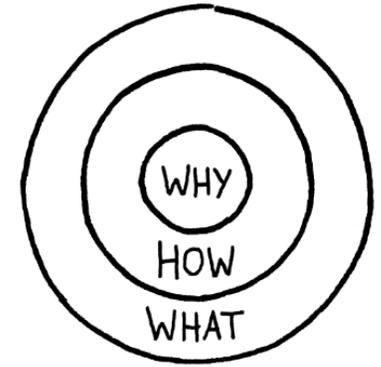
## Consider this

The job search and hiring process is all about clear and consistent communication. It's very important that the things you do and the things you say you actually believe.

Whether you're writing a cover letter, sending a thank you note or sitting in an interview, the place to start is always with *Why*.

# Introduction to The Golden Circle

Why are some people and organizations more innovative, more influential and more profitable than others? Even among the successful, why are so few able to repeat their success over and over? In studying the leaders who have had the greatest influence in the world, Simon Sinek discovered that they all think, act and communicate in the exact same way – and it's the complete opposite to everyone else. Sinek calls this powerful idea The Golden Circle.



The Golden Circle

Most people can explain What they do; some can explain How they do it; but very few can articulate Why. Our Why is the overarching purpose or cause that drives us when we are at our best. It's what inspires us to get out of bed in the morning. You're more likely to land a job you love when each step in the job seeking process starts with Why and follows the pattern of The Golden Circle. Let's define the terms:

## Why – Your purpose, cause or belief

Very few people can clearly articulate Why they do what they do. The Why is not about making money. Making money is simply a result of your Why. Your Why is bigger. No matter what you do, your Why is what inspires you to take the actions that bring you fulfillment and lasting happiness.

## How – The actions you take to realize your Why

Once you know your Why, you must identify your Hows. These are your natural strengths, the actions you take or the guiding principles you live by that allow you to be at your best.

## What – the results of putting your Why into action

Whats are the tangible representations of what you believe; your career, the positions you've held and the work you do. Whats are always measurable. They are the proof you are starting with Why.

## Consider this

Every single organization, even our career, functions on three levels: What we do, How we do it and Why we do it.

If you don't yet know your Why, we have some resources at [StartWithWhy.com](http://StartWithWhy.com) to assist you.

For The Golden Circle to be most effective, to truly inspire, we must remember two things:

- 1 – Order Matters: Simply having the Why buried in there is not enough. We must think, act and communicate from the inside-out of The Golden Circle. We must start with Why
- 2 – Balance: All three levels of The Golden Circle must be in balance. This means you must have clarity, discipline and consistency.

### Clarity of Why

- Purpose, cause or belief
- The Why is the single driving motivation for action

### Discipline of How

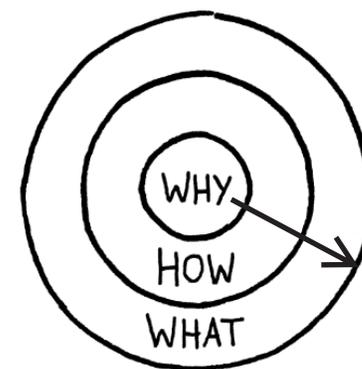
- Values or guiding principles
- Hows are the specific actions that are taken to realize the Why

### Consistency of What

- Tangible proof or results
- Whats are the tangible manifestations of the Why

Most people define themselves by What they do – trade stocks, study Byzantine art or fight for human rights worldwide. But these are simply the tangible examples of something deeper – a single passion that unites these interests or activities. We inherently know What we do is not enough so, in an attempt to distinguish ourselves, we explain How we do what we do; perhaps by pointing to particular experiences, skill sets or who we know, for example; all in an attempt to stand out from the crowd. The problem is, it rarely gets us the results we want.

Operating from the outside-in of The Golden Circle, by starting with What or How, does not, in reality, distinguish us. Worse, it often forces us to pay more attention to outside forces in order to determine who we are or why we do things. We may become obsessed with our competition or begin to fret over what we lack (a Master's degree, enough work experience, a high enough salary). When we tie our happiness, who we are and what we believe to the whims of the outside world, we feel unstable. We are not at our best. That's where the Why comes in.



The Golden Circle

Want to learn more?

If you want to learn more about the Why and the concept of The Golden Circle, check out Simon's talk on [TED.com](https://www.ted.com) or check out his book, [Start With Why](#).

When we operate from the inside-out of The Golden Circle **we** determine how the market perceives us. Being able to clearly state our **Why** allows us to explain the reasons we choose to do the things we do. We live in a tangible world. The only way people know what we believe is by the things we say and do. When we know our **Why**, we can choose to do and say the things that reflect what we believe.

When our Golden Circle is in balance, meaning all three levels (**Why**, **How** and **What**) are given equal weight, each as important as the other, the combination becomes like our fingerprint. It is our identity; now and forever.

## Where does the **Why** come from?

We are all products of our upbringing. The **Why** is found by looking back at the experiences we had growing up.

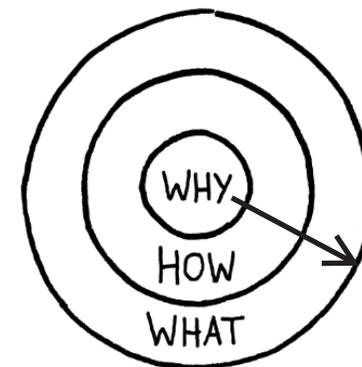
Our family, teachers, hobbies, jobs and other experiences are all contributors to the formation of our **Why**. Growing up, there were times we naturally thrived and things we naturally did well. Those natural abilities manifested themselves in different ways and the key to finding **Why** is to identify those patterns.

When we look back at our early and adolescent years and clearly identify the situations and people that were present when we were happy and did well, we see a pattern emerge. This pattern becomes a recipe for future success. This recipe allows us to repeat our success by placing ourselves in the same kind of situations and circumstances that allowed us to do well in the past.

When we use our **Why** as a filter, we can make decisions more easily, know what will allow us to thrive and avoid what won't.

## Learn more

Learn more about how the market perceives us. Check out the [Celery Test](#).



The Golden Circle

## Leadership

When our **Why** is clear, when we are disciplined in **How** we pursue it and when **What** we do is consistent, the outside world understands our **Why** as clearly as we do.

And when that happens, more and more people are inspired to follow. And that is when you know you are a leader.

If your Why isn't crystal clear, use the exercise below to get you thinking about it and how to express it:

try this! ↘

A good Why statement has two parts. To \_\_\_\_\_ so that \_\_\_\_\_. The first blank is the contribution you make and the second blank is the impact of your contribution.

1. Think about three or four of the **specific** experiences in your life when you were at your best. What made you so successful or happy in those specific examples?

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2. If you were to tattoo one verb on your body, what would it say?

To \_\_\_\_\_

3. If everyone in the world were to \_\_\_\_\_ (the verb you'd tattoo on your body) what kind of world would it be?

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4. If they build a statue of you after you die, in one sentence, what will the plaque say?

He/She \_\_\_\_\_

5. Complete the following statement:

I wake up every day inspired to \_\_\_\_\_

so that \_\_\_\_\_

(hint: the verb you'd tattoo on your body + the impact you have on others – #3 & #4)

Still not clear on your Why? Check out the [Why Discovery Course](#).

## Examples of Why

To inspire people to do the things that inspire them so that together we can change the world. - Simon

To propel positive change so that others can live a more fulfilled life. - David

To support and encourage others so that they can revel in who they are. - Kim

## Heads up

If you're planning on doing the exercises contained in this guide on your computer using Adobe Reader, please remember to save your document as you go so you don't lose your answers when you close the application!

## Did I get it right?

How do you know if the Why is right? You may have a physical response (goose bumps or welling up). It's important that it feels right. If you can't state it perfectly, that's okay. Sometimes it takes some time to find the exact words that really inspire you.

# Why are you writing a resume anyway?

For many, a resume is one of life's necessary evils. We're forced to attempt to convey who we are, what we're capable of and that we're qualified for a job in order to get an interview (or at least be considered for one) ... all on one single page of paper.

An inspired resume, one that starts with Why, equips a company to hire us not just because we're qualified for the position but because of who we are, because we belong at the company. Being able to clearly communicate what we believe and being able to demonstrate our natural strengths is what makes a Why-driven resume. **These** are the things that make us stand out.

This guide is designed to help you adapt your existing resume into an inspiring document that more clearly shows who you are. It will help you create a resume that not only stands out, but most importantly, can mean the difference between landing a job, or landing a job you love.

The sample resume, cover letter and elevator pitch in this guide are just that – samples. They come from a real Why U community member. However, they're not meant to be a template that will apply to every job function or title. The specific information used, including the Why, applies to that individual. Rather than focusing on the content of the samples, focus on the concepts outlined in this guide which are universally applicable to any Why-driven resume, cover letter and elevator pitch.

Simon says 

“Fulfillment is a right not a privilege. We all have the right to be fulfilled by the work we do.”

Consider this

Every resume on the planet communicates the same thing: what we've done in an attempt to prove some level of qualification for a job.

But the fact is, simply writing about our experiences and what we've done doesn't convey who we are. We are not defined by our jobs. We are defined by our Why, whether we realize it or not.

## The rather obvious truth

Now, if you just skimmed through that first part because you want to get to the point and pound out your resume so you can plaster it all over the Internet, put on the brakes for a moment and review a few important facts in the right hand column.

Does starting with Why guarantee you the job? Of course not. If you are completely unqualified, the Why won't help. And sometimes it's not you. Maybe the company that's considering your resume doesn't share your values and beliefs, in which case you likely wouldn't be a good fit, anyway.

What it does mean, is that when you're invited to an interview, you're able to focus on what really makes you the right fit, rather than having to "compete" on qualifications that most, if not all, of the other applicants have too.

When we start with Why, we are more likely to appeal to someone on a values and beliefs level, not just on qualifications. This is the basis for trust to exist. Trust does not come from a list of qualifications on an eloquent resume. Trust is a feeling that emerges when we surround ourselves with others who share our values and beliefs. Great leaders and great companies know that people who trust each other make better teams.

## some facts

1. Over 200 million people around the world are looking for employment.
2. Tens, if not hundreds or thousands of other applicants want/need this position.
3. It's very likely that some of the others applying for the job are better qualified, have more experience, or know someone within the organization.
4. Nearly every resume will be an uninspiring list of accomplishments and qualifications.
5. Nearly every resume submission will result in a disappointing email to the applicant.
6. If your cover letter and resume start with Why, facts 1-5 don't matter!

# Write a compelling resume

Our focus here will be on content, not format. Choose the right format for the position based on your experience and qualifications. Novelty for the sake of appearing different from other candidates may not be authentic and may not be consistent with who you are. In other words, don't put your resume on green paper if you're not a green paper kind of person. The idea is to inspire someone so they call you because they want to know more about you. Be proud to be you, with all the strengths and challenges that come along with that. Present yourself as you really are.

No matter what format you choose, certain basic resume elements remain fairly consistent and this guide will cover these general sections:

- **Objective/Summary**—This is generally found at the top of the page and provides a brief overview of yourself
- **Experience**—The ever-present list of past employment along with your accomplishments and achievements
- **Skills/Qualifications**—Other things you bring to the table
- **Education/Training**—A brief history and background of your academic journey

Your resume should provide a glimpse of who you are. It will look and feel different than most other resumes, so be confident in the message you're sending. When you actually believe the things you say and do, you begin to find people who believe what you believe. When you surround yourself with people who have similar values and beliefs, trust emerges.

Trust is a remarkable thing. Trust allows us to rely on others. We rely on those we trust for advice to help us make decisions. Trust is the bedrock for our success and the success of those around us.

## Consider this

We recognize that writing a resume that starts with Why is unconventional and maybe even a little uncomfortable. You'll notice that we encourage you to write a little more personally.

The fact that your resume will look and feel different means it likely won't get lost in the pile. And that's a good thing!

## Remember

Remember, you won't land a job with a resume, but you can land an interview. A resume that starts with Why can even guide the direction of the interview.

Every good relationship, including business relationships, is built on trust. Whether personal or business, relationships are between people. Approach your resume writing with the intent of communicating with another human being you're hoping to build a relationship with. It's like going on a date. We want someone to like us for who we are, not just for what we do.

## Learn how to go from What to Why

Next, we'll show you an example of transforming a standard resume to a Why-driven resume and provide an exercise to help you get started creating your own.

On the following pages you'll find two versions of the same resume:

Version 1 – Standard resume with comments

Version 2 – Why-driven resume

Based on your experience your resume may be more than one page, but remember to keep it concise and relevant to the unique contribution you can make.

Simon says 

“Remember, everyone applying for the job will be similarly qualified. What you've done is not enough to stand out. Give a flavor of who you are.”

Compare

Notice the difference, not only in the wording, but in the way you feel as you read the before and after versions of the sample resume.

Put yourself in the position of a recruiter or hiring manager.

# Allison Carver

Communication • Organization • Customer Service

1

Motivated, organized individual with a track record of meeting deadlines, following through on projects and providing first-class customer service. Strong communication skills and multi-tasking abilities, along with a willingness to perform many tasks, going above and beyond required expectations.

## Qualifications and Technical Proficiency

2

Professional and positive attitude

Effective communicator

Detail oriented

Self-starter

Goal motivated

Highly productive in the use of Office

Proficient in conversational French

## Professional Experience

International Translation Service – Irvine, CA: Project Manager 2010 – Present

Manage the different projects from start to finish, including customer interactions, project scope definition, price negotiations and submission of the translation.

3

Four Seasons Hotel – Los Angeles, CA: Server 2005 – 2010

Served in a first class dining environment focused on providing refined, courteous, professional and personalized service at all times. Communicated and up-sold the specials and beverages. Advised customers on wine and food pairing. Delivered and properly served courses in a timely fashion. Trained and supervised new staff.

Lakeside Voice – San Diego, CA: Staff Writer 2002 – 2005

Researched, wrote and edited two to four stories a week for various city awareness projects and events. Created and edited press releases and stories in conjunction with the public information office. Conducted weekly opinion interviews with the general public. Maintained a police log and reported on criminal activities within the city.

4

## Education

University of California, Berkeley

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Legal Studies, December 2000

1. Save the space! These things will come out in the Professional Experience section. Use this area to paint a picture of who you are, not just what you're good at.

2. While your qualifications are important, give specific examples that relate to your experience. Most of these qualifications and traits are expected. Show what you've been able to accomplish with them.

3. This section is a reflection of who you are and what you've learned, not just what you've done. Talk about what made you proud about the impact you had.

Give specific examples of contributions and accomplishments that pointed to a greater goal or purpose. How did your contributions make a difference, both to your own development and to the development of the organization?

4. What was it about your field of study that prepared you for the career path you chose? Talk briefly about what you learned. What specifically do you carry with you today?

1 I am the Lieutenant every General wishes they had.

I believe people are capable of incredible things...if they have the support they need. I am at my best when I get to provide support, build the structure and advocate for others to achieve their goals. This is who I am.

## Professional Experience

International Translation Service – Irvine, CA: Project Manager 2010 – Present

I take pride in providing structure and I love figuring out systems that make things go better.

- 2
- Introduced and implemented an automated billing system, which has increased on-time payments from clients and accuracy of translator payroll
  - Successfully negotiated a wage increase for a translator working on a rush job
  - Complete official translation of legal documents in Spanish and Russian
  - Match translation projects with qualified translators based on the individual's strengths

Four Seasons Hotel – Los Angeles, CA: Server 2005 – 2010

I worked hard to be at my best for the people I worked with and served. I helped those I worked with succeed, and I helped the people I served go home happy.

- Learned first hand what “customer service” looks like in a premier service organization
- Gained experience in managing high-stress situations with lots of moving parts
- Gained a deep understanding of food and wine by attending optional additional classes
- Learned the value of bringing my best to the service I provided

Lakeside Voice – San Diego, CA: Staff Writer 2002 – 2005

I showed up everyday to make a positive difference in the lives of others. I was able to bring important issues to light and spark community involvement around those issues.

- Served as the link between important challenges and their solutions within my community
- Wrote thought-provoking and action-inspiring articles regarding important social issues
- Contributed to a 15% increase in readership during my tenure
- Learned to push through resistance and challenges to reach a goal
- Learned and practiced effective communication with people of various backgrounds

## 3 Education

I have a great desire to connect with people. My Psychology and Communications courses taught me how to make those connections more effectively. Legal Studies gave me a framework for presenting information in a more organized manner. I gained an understanding and appreciation for structure and order.

University of California, Berkeley

Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and Legal Studies, December 2000

1. We replaced the boring list of qualifications and rather generic information with specific information, which gives a much clearer sense of who Allison is, not just what she's done.

Notice the feel of this introduction in comparison with the original.

2. For each job and position, we followed a pattern. You'll notice that everything ties into the statement that introduces the position (item #1). Everything supports her Why, which allowed her to thrive at the company:

- A statement about something Allison was proud of with regard to that position
- A specific achievement
- A specific success she was a part of or significantly contributed to
- Other duties and accomplishments

3. We made the connection between Allison's education and how it contributed to the strengths she offers.



## Experience

List the companies you've worked for below. Write a **specific** example of something you did or a project you worked on that you loved. What was it about each company or position that allowed you to bring your Why to life? You obviously left for a reason so don't feel like you have to try to make lemonade from lemons, but try your best to identify an experience where you thrived and were fulfilled even if it seems small.

### Company #1:

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### Company #2:

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### Company #3:

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### Company #4:

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## Think about this

Who were the people and what were the circumstances that surrounded you when you did well? This is a great way to identify your Hows (the actions you take to bring your Why to life.)

For each company, think about things like:

What was your unique contribution?

How did you measure your success?

What was your favorite project? What about that project did you love? Be specific.

Who were the people you worked best with (clients or colleagues)? What traits did they have that resonated with you?



## Test yourself

How do you know you got it right? Here are a few things you can do to check your final product.



- Without looking at your cover letter, would someone still get a good sense of who you are from your resume?
- Does your resume give context for your accomplishments? Did you explain how an action you took (a natural strength) helped you achieve that accomplishment?
- Are you completely honest in how you represented yourself and your achievements? Exaggerating accomplishments may get you the job, but if that information really isn't a reflection of who you are and what you've done, you may suffer in that job eventually. Instead of exaggerating, provide context.
- Take a moment to put yourself in the hiring manager's shoes. With fresh eyes, read your resume again. Does it give a sense of who you are? Would you hire yourself?
- Invite someone else to offer their first impression of your resume. Did they offer generic compliments and opinions or were they able to learn something about you?

## Human vs. machine – a side note

Unfortunately, we live in a world where a lot of companies are using computers, rather than humans, to review resumes. While networking and building trusting relationships is more likely to lead to a job you love, we also realize that in today's job market at least part of your job search will involve online searches or submitting your resume to companies with whom you don't have a relationship. In these cases your resume will likely be scanned and "read" by recruiting management software.

Although the focus of this guide's content and examples are designed for a human recruiter, our goal is to help you ultimately land a job you love. In that spirit, we did a little research for you about how to navigate recruiting management software. We encourage you to do your own research as well. Here are some of the basic things we found:

- Consider preparing two resumes; one for humans and one for computers. That doesn't mean the information changes or that one starts with Why and the other doesn't. But it's a good idea to format the one for the non-human recruiter in a way that will maximize its effectiveness in that scanning process. The following bullets provide some ideas on how to do that.
- Determine keywords. Recruiting software scans your resume for keywords that match the criteria set up by the company's human recruiting manager. Think about reading through your resume and highlighting keywords that communicate skills, software and technology proficiencies, and credentials and certifications. If you don't find many, think about adding more where appropriate.
- Choose keywords that best match the ad. There's a good chance that the keywords a hiring manager is looking for will focus around the skills and requirements outlined in the ad for the position. Identify specific words or terms that strongly describe or represent the opportunity. Use those words and phrases in your resume, as long as they're truly representative of you, your strengths and your abilities.

## What a computer wants

When listing your work history, computers like to see company name followed by title, then dates and job description.

- Keep it simple. Spreadsheets, graphs, tables and other structural elements are not interpreted well by recruiting software. This version of your resume may not be as visually appealing to the human eye, but since you're trying to impress a computer, that's OK.
- Consider a Keyword Summary. Recruiting software scans your entire resume for keywords that match the criteria set up by the hiring manager. A Keyword Summary at the end of your resume will maximize your resume's effectiveness through something called keyword density. You may want to use the Keyword Summary to list all the keywords and phrases that you may not have been able to include in the body of your resume. It may look something like this (separate keywords with commas or periods):

Microsoft Office,project manager,management,facilitate,lean,MCSM,CAPM,SME,MBA,BA

You can also use your Keyword Summary to write variations of keywords. For example if one of your skills is training you could also include train,trainer,coach,coaching, etc. The more keywords you have, the better chance your resume has of making it through the filter.

- Remember your cover letter. Recruiting software isn't just for resumes! Think about using important keywords from your resume in your cover letter too.

So there you have it; a few basic ideas to get you thinking about your alternate resume. A lot of great resources around this type of resume can be found online. Keep in mind that this guide and the examples within it will focus on a resume designed for a human recruiter.

## Build personal relationships

Computers generally filter out 80% - 90% of resumes. Only those with the most keyword matches make it to a human for review.

# Write an inspiring cover letter

We tend to focus all our time on our resumes, forgetting that the cover letter is often read first. Our cover letter is a powerful way to tell something about who we are and provides some nuance that a resume can't capture.

Before you write your cover letter, you must be clear on the reason you want the position in the first place. If salary and benefits are a big motivator, that's not necessarily a bad thing, but that's not the final answer. Money and benefits are results of the work you do, but they do not put you on a path to finding a job you love. What is it about this position that will allow you to utilize your natural strengths? Does this position allow you to contribute to something greater than just doing a good job?

If you feel that defining the reason you want a particular position or job is daunting, use the following questions to get some clarity. Consider going through this exercise with someone you trust (perhaps a close friend or family member) who can offer a different perspective and ask follow-up questions. If you've been through the Why Discovery Course or have a good sense of your Why, incorporate it into your answers!

1. What specifically is it about this position or this company that resonates with you? What do you **love** about it?
2. Are there elements of this job that you would do for free? If so, what are they and what is it that makes you feel so strongly about those things? (We don't expect you to work for free, but if there are things you would do for free, odds are you **REALLY** want to do those things. In other words, you have passion for those things. This is important to know.)
3. Can you imagine working at this company for the long haul or is it temporary? If it's the former, it's a good indicator that it's a job you'll love.

## Consider this

Many employers consider the cover letter as a writing sample. Clarity and simplicity are key.

## Find the commonalities

Figure out what it is about the company you're applying to that inspires you.

If you don't know, do some research. Find out what the company stands for and identify the common values and beliefs that you share.

try this!



## Elements of your cover letter

### Start with Why

It's likely that the recruiter or hiring manager will read at least the first line of your cover letter, so make it a good one. Rather than jumping right into the details of the position you're applying for or the skills you have that qualify you for the job, tell them something about who you are and what you believe.

### What makes you a great fit?

What is it about you that makes you a fit for the position and the company at large? What is it that YOU bring to the table that no one else can.

### Keep it human

All too often we get stuck using the same dry, yawn-inducing language, hoping that big numbers and percentages will do the talking. Proof of our accomplishments is important, but remember we're human, not machines. Think of it as writing a letter to someone you'd really like to meet.

### Don't be afraid to stand out

Write about the difference you (and hopefully the company) want to make in the world and how you see your partnership making that vision of the world a reality.

## Learn how to go from What to Why

On the following pages you'll see two versions of a cover letter. We'll do the same thing we did with the resume.

Version 1 – Standard cover letter with comments

Version 2 – Why-driven cover letter

## Consider this

It's not only about qualifications (your Whats) here. A lot of other applicants will meet the checklist of qualifications.

What is it about you that is a good fit? How will the way you show up everyday, no matter what you're doing, fit the need the company has?

Hint: This is where your Hows come in.

Allison Carver  
(626) 555-4297  
acarver@email.com

Dear Sir or Madam:

1 I am writing in response to the advertisement you posted on craigslist regarding the open project manager position. It would be a pleasure to meet with you so that I might demonstrate how my abilities fit your needs precisely.

As you'll see from the enclosed resume, I am proficient in a variety of computer software programs. I am experienced in handling general office duties and answering phones cordially and courteously. My extensive customer service experience and my background in the restaurant industry developed my multi-tasking and time management skills as well as my ability to adapt and learn quickly.

2 What my resume does not reveal is my professional demeanor and appearance. In a business environment, these qualities are of the utmost importance in dealing with clients as well as co-workers. In me, you'll discover a reliable, detail-oriented, and extremely hard-working associate; one who will serve as a model to encourage other staff members to demonstrate the same high standard of professionalism.

If you will contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx, we can schedule an appointment.

Sincerely,

Allison Carver

1. Remember to start with a statement of who you are. This shapes their first impression of you. You only have a few seconds to capture a recruiter's attention. Start with a statement that shows what you believe, rather than telling them what job you're applying for.
2. While it's certainly OK to highlight some of your qualifications and accomplishments, be careful not to make your cover letter a laundry list of skills you have that most, if not all, other applicants possess.

Allison Carver  
 (626) 555-4297  
 acarver@email.com

Dear hiring manager,

1 I believe that people are capable of incredible things when they have the support they need. Every great vision is achieved one step at a time. I love being there for every step of the way. I provide the support, build the structure and advocate for others to help them achieve their goals. I am the Lieutenant every General wishes they had.

This is who I am. This is when I'm at my best.

2 When I saw your ad on craigslist, I was energized after reading the description of the position because I felt that the qualities you are looking for are a great fit for some of my natural strengths. Because I'm highly organized, I tend to manage projects with lots of moving parts quite easily. I also enjoy helping people solve problems and feel I could implement some of the skills I've learned from the customer service interaction I had in my last job.

I noticed that there is some pretty specialized training necessary to thrive in this position and I want you to know that I'm up for the challenge. I believe that if we're not moving forward, we're moving backwards. The more I understand, the better I'll be at helping others achieve their goals.

3 Please find my resume enclosed. I'm eager to contribute my knowledge and skills to a company that is working to make a positive difference in the world.

I look forward to speaking with you.

Sincerely,  
 Allison Carver

1. We chose to begin with something a little unconventional to clearly articulate Allison's Why. By telling them what she loves, why she gets out of bed each day, we hoped to inspire the reader to find out more.

2. We focused much of the cover letter on Allison's natural strengths – her Hows. We wanted to give a sense of who she is as a person, not simply what she's done in the past.

We also identified a possible fit between who Allison is and how she would be able to contribute to the company's success.

3. We left the specifics of Allison's achievements to her resume, since that's its purpose.

We included something about the type of company that is ideal for Allison. It's not just about a company choosing you, it's about you choosing the company as well. Finding a good fit is important for both parties.

try this! ↓

A Why-driven cover letter follows the pattern of The Golden Circle – Why, How, What (though we try to save most of the What for the resume). This exercise is designed to help you write your cover letter in a way that conveys who you are and what only **you** can contribute.

### Why – The essence of who you are

Rather than viewing your cover letter as a very formal introduction, try writing as if it were a personal letter to someone you really want to meet.

What are the most important things about who you are that you want this person to know? When are you at your best? In the space below, write an introductory statement about who you are and what inspires you.

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### How – The way you work

Once you've clearly stated who you are, the next section of your cover letter should display the natural strengths you bring to every situation. By articulating your strengths in relationship to several of the requirements stated in the job posting, you will show what makes you a good fit.

If you don't have a clear sense of your Hows, use the next exercise to get a sense of the actions you take when you're at your best. If you know your Hows, skip to page 30.

### Allison's example

I believe that people are capable of incredible things when they have the support they need. Every great vision is achieved one step at a time. I love being there for every step. I love to provide support, build the structure and advocate for others to help them achieve their goals. I am the Lieutenant every General wishes they had.

This is who I am. This is when I'm at my best.

try this! ↓

This exercise will give you an idea of the roles, circumstances and environments in which you naturally thrive. Think of specific moments in the past when everything just came together.

Compare three jobs or projects that **felt** like a great success; that you **loved**. Be very specific about a particular project or job, not a type of project or job.

## Job/project #1 \_\_\_\_\_

1. What role did you play in this job or project?

---

2. What was the environment like (workspace, stress level, information you had or needed)?

---

3. What kind of people were around you? Who did you love working with?

---

4. Specifically, what type of work were you doing?

---

5. What were you contributing to the project or job that no one else on the team could contribute?

---

6. What is it about this project or job that you loved?

---

## Job/project #2

---

1. What role did you play in this job or project?

---

2. What was the environment like (workspace, stress level, information you had or needed)?

---

3. What kind of people were around you? Who did you love working with?

---

4. Specifically, what type of work were you doing?

---

5. What were you contributing to the project or job that no one else on the team could contribute?

---

6. What is it about this project or job that you loved?

---

## Job/project #3 \_\_\_\_\_

1. What role did you play in this job or project?

---

2. What was the environment like (workspace, stress level, information you had or needed)?

---

3. What kind of people were around you? Who did you love working with?

---

4. Specifically, what type of work were you doing?

---

5. What were you contributing to the project or job that no one else on the team could contribute?

---

6. What is it about this project or job that you loved?

---

Now compare and contrast the answers you wrote to identify similarities. Find the themes, the common ideas or circumstances and write them below. Each theme must be applicable to all three jobs or projects. If you end up with more than five, work to narrow them down as it's likely that some have overlapped. If you have only four, that's OK too.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

The themes you listed above, the elements that were present in each of your favorite jobs or projects, are the foundation of your Hows. They might look something like this:

1. I had a clear sense of what we needed to accomplish.
2. I got to build my own team.
3. I liked my colleagues, we shared both personal and professional information and even our lunch sometimes!
4. It was a safe environment where we could speak our minds.
5. No matter what mistakes happened, we all focused forward to get the project done.

In order for you to be able to put your Hows into action, you'll need to state them as active verbs and in order to clearly articulate them, you'll need to be able to explain what they mean. Here's how you might turn the themes above into actions:

1. Know what I want and go for it – I need to have a clear picture of what it is that I'm trying to accomplish.
2. Recruit those that can help – I can't do it alone. I must surround myself with those that share the same vision and are eager to help build it.
3. Share – I need to surround myself with people who like to teach, are eager to learn and share everything.
4. Call it like I see it – I need to be in an environment where I can be honest about what I think and how I feel.
5. Always move forward – No matter what happens, I must keep putting one foot in front of the other. I must cross the finish line.

In the space below, write your Hows, the actions or guiding principles you live by when you're at your best. Remember, they should be verbs because they are actions you take to live your Why. Write a brief explanation with each How so that you can clearly articulate what it means. Reference the examples above to make sure you're on the right track.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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4. \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Want to learn more?

If you'd like to dig a little deeper and really pinpoint and understand your Hows, check out the [Why Discovery Course](#). It's designed to help you more clearly articulate important elements of your personal Golden Circle.



## Test yourself

How do you know you got it right? Here are a few ways you can check your final product.

- Does your cover letter start with a statement about who you are and incorporate your natural strengths into what you can contribute to the position?
- Does the first paragraph give you goose bumps or some other visceral response? If you're clearly articulating your *Why*, it should.
- Is your cover letter interesting to read? Did you keep it human? Remember, a cover letter is a piece of communication to another person.
- Is your cover letter simple? Keep the facts and figures for the resume. Let who you are shine through in the cover letter.



# The elevator pitch

## How to inspire someone to ask for your resume in 30 seconds

We've all felt the pressure of the ticking clock; only a few seconds to effectively "sell" ourselves. The reason it often fails is that we try to do too much in a short time. We oversell. We try to close the deal. But remember, the goal of any elevator pitch is simply to inspire a conversation. It's not to get the job or land the deal – it's just to inspire someone to ask for more.

Talking about our skills and qualifications, the things that may make us a good potential hire are important, but we're not the only ones with those skills. We must focus on what really does set us apart; we must communicate who we are. Here are some tips to help make that happen:

### Tip #1: Tell them who you are

Instead of telling what you know and what you've done, tell them something about who you are. A great way to achieve this is to tell a quick story of your childhood or early experience.

Example: When I was a kid, I wanted to be an astronaut. I love the idea of exploring the unknown and doing things most people never get to do. I'd dream about going to space and telling everyone what it was like. Although I didn't end up being an astronaut, that passion for the unknown has stayed with me. I love being the guinea pig, trying things first, and sharing my perspective with others.

Immediately those who are like you will be inspired by your story. They will find you interesting enough to want to learn more about you. Once you've built a good Why-based connection, the traditional stuff like job experience or skills becomes a piece of a bigger conversation.

Guess what?

It's called an elevator pitch because it's meant to be delivered in the span of time of an elevator ride.

Simon says 

"People don't buy what you do, they buy why you do it."

It's true, some may be turned off by your story, but if your story is a good reflection of who you are – if you love your story – then you wouldn't want to work for them anyway. Working for someone who thinks the stories you love are wonderful is a good start to finding a job you love.

## Tip #2: Keep it simple

Avoid flowery language or big words. The more clearly you can communicate your Why, the more easily you will be understood.

Example: When I was a teenager, I served in my community as a Big Brother to a 5th grader who lived alone with his mom. Over the couple of years that I spent with him, I realized what an amazing kid he was and that he was able to do so much better in school and at home when he had someone he could talk to and trust. I think all of us are a little like that 5th grade kid. We do better when we have people around us who care about us and who build us up. I'm at my best when I can be that person for those around me.

## Tip #3: Think of the problem you help to identify and solve

Think of a problem you're good at solving. Your value to an organization comes from your ability to work to your strengths. What are you supremely good at? What comes naturally to you that has made a tangible difference in your work experience? Tell them that and make sure they know you love doing that. If you do, your passion will shine through.

Example: One of my strengths is helping teams work more efficiently. One of the ways I do that is to capture and organize seemingly intangible knowledge that's stored only in people's heads. I've worked with a lot of teams and have noticed the precious time and resources spent on relearning information after a colleague has left the company, which inevitably slows progress. By capturing and making that valuable knowledge available to others, organizations can focus their time moving forward, rather than trying to play catch up.

Simon says 

"If you talk like a scientist, only scientists will understand you. If you talk like a trucker, everyone will understand you."

## Tip #4: Slow is better

Sometimes it can be a little nerve wracking to express everything we want to say in such a short period of time. Choose your words carefully so that you can give your elevator pitch without rushing through it. As great as it may be, if people can't keep up with what you're saying, you'll miss opportunities for the important conversations that lead to being able to hand out your resume.

try this! ↘

1. After each sentence, pause. Think about what you just said. Is all the information **really** necessary at this point?
2. Slow down to the point that it feels a little uncomfortable. It may sound too slow while you're speaking, but if you record yourself you'll be amazed at how much clearer and more confident you come across when you speak slowly.
3. Be conscious of your tone of voice. Relax. You're communicating with another human being who has feelings and emotions and who has the capacity to be inspired.

## Tip #5: Make eye contact

Whether you're speaking to one person or a room full of people, eye contact helps you connect with others. If you're giving an elevator pitch in front of a group, make eye contact with different people in the room throughout your pitch. Try to give a complete sentence or whole thought to one person. Then, focus on another individual for your next phrase or thought. Focusing your attention on people rather than on the wall at the back of the room or your notes will help you connect on a more personal level.

## Tip #6: Tell people what you're looking for

If you don't tell people what you're looking for they won't know what you're looking for or how they can help you. If they can't help you, maybe they know someone else who can.



[Check out Why University ▶](#)

## Tip #7: Record yourself

If you're worried about how you come across, try recording yourself. It's important to hear what others will hear. As you listen to the recording, ask yourself:

- Do I sound confident?
- Do I give enough/too much content for the amount of time I have to fill?
- Do I communicate a little about who I am before I launch into what I can do?
- Do I repeat any concepts or ideas that don't need to be said more than once? (If you can take out repetitive information, it allows you to include something else of importance.)
- Do I identify a problem I see and how I contribute to solving that problem?

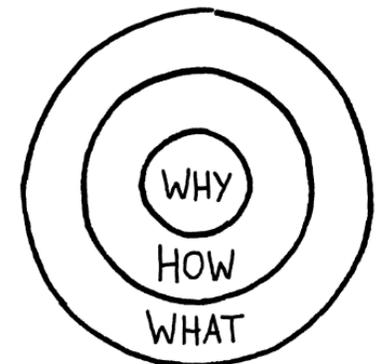
## Tip #8: Be patient

The Golden Circle illustrates the three components that lead to lasting and fulfilling success:

- Clarity of Why
- Discipline of How
- Consistency of What

The problem is, we've spent most of our lives thinking, acting and communicating from the outside-in. It takes practice to do it in reverse. It's like riding a bicycle: at first we are unsure and unsteady. We are thinking about what we need to do, really concentrating. Sometimes we may even fall over and scrape our knees, but that doesn't mean we can't do it. All it means is that we need to keep practicing.

Starting with Why is no different. At first it will feel awkward. It may not even work. But with practice, the ability to think, act and communicate from the inside-out of The Golden Circle, to start with Why, will become so natural that you can't even imagine a time when you couldn't do it ... just like riding a bicycle.



The Golden Circle

## Learn how to go from What to Why

Following are two versions of an elevator pitch – a traditional one and a Why-driven one.

### Traditional elevator pitch

My name is Allison Carver and I specialize in Project Management. I've helped companies of all sizes deliver on their strategic plans for over 15 years.

My attention to detail and aptitude for structure and planning has allowed me to consistently complete projects on time and on budget. I help companies have a better understanding of their short and long-term goals and how they can reach those more efficiently.

The greatest asset I provide is improved predictability for project budgets and completion. No one likes to spend excessive money or time to reach their strategic goals and I help ensure that they don't have to.

### 1 Why-driven elevator pitch

1 I believe that every one of us has an amazing capacity to achieve something great. If only we had someone by our side, watching our backs and helping us get the things we want to get done, actually done. My name is Allison Carver and I'm the Lieutenant every General wishes they had.

2 For over 15 years my ability to build structure, provide support and to advocate for others has become better and better and better. A huge key to my success in supporting others is my organizational skills. Because I'm highly organized, I can manage projects with lots of moving parts quite easily, which reduces the stress of my colleagues and allows them to do what they're really good at.

3 If we're not moving forward, we're moving backwards. I'm up for a challenge. I'm looking for a team that will push me to get even better. All that I have learned, all that I can contribute and all that I will continue to learn goes to the person or company whose vision inspires me.

## Consider this

It takes practice to reverse our thinking. But with practice, thinking, acting and communicating from the inside-out of The Golden Circle becomes second nature.

1. Allison confidently states her Why.
2. She identifies a problem she's able to solve and how that solution benefits others.
3. She tells them what she's looking for in a company.

This exercise will help you put some structure around your elevator pitch based on a few of the ideas we've brought up. For each section of the elevator pitch, write a couple of sentences you could use. When you're done, go back over them and choose the one that feels best. Put them all together and see how it sounds.

try this!  
←

You'll probably tweak and change a few things, but that's OK. It will evolve with time. Once you get the words and flow that feel right, you may even want to print it out and carry it with you in case you need to pull it out and refresh your memory until you have it down.

**1. Start with Why – A story or a statement that communicates what I believe/who I am, and what I am working toward:**

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**2. A problem, situation or issue I'm really good at making better:**

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Check out Why University ▶

### 3. The kind of opportunity I'm looking for:

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Remember, now that you have the structure of your elevator pitch in place, practice, practice, practice. It's just like riding a bike. The more you say it, the easier it becomes, until it's second nature. Your elevator pitch doesn't only have to be for potential employers. Tell your family and friends too! Once they have a sense of who you are and what type of job would bring you fulfillment, they can be sources of possible opportunities as well.

Simon says 

“The visionaries aren't always the ones who have the ideas, they are the ones who can clearly communicate them to others.”

## Test yourself

After you give your elevator pitch, ask yourself the following questions to help ensure that it's inspiring:

- Did I communicate who I am in a way that is simple to understand? If I used a story, was I concise and to the point?
- Was I inspired by the first two or three sentences of my pitch? (Did I get goose bumps, chills or another visceral response?)
- Did I feel rushed or anxious? (It's difficult to hide these feelings. If you're feeling it, chances are the person you are speaking with is too.)
- Was it short enough for an elevator ride?



# Tips on interviewing

## What to say after your resume gets you in the door

After our resume has inspired someone to invite us in for an interview, we need to prepare. We sometimes think we are at the mercy of the interviewer but often, a good resume can help dictate the direction of the interview. If our resume offers interesting experiences worth talking about, the odds are good that an interviewer will ask us about them.

An interview is like a date. Don't you want to know a little about who you're sitting across the table from? Before the interview, take some time to research the company and, if possible, the person who will be interviewing you. Look for things you have in common. You may find it helpful to take a few minutes before the interview to refresh yourself on that information so you can speak about it.

### Tip #1: Start with Why

Interviewers often jump straight into what you have done. They ask questions about your experience, past employment, goals, etc. Do what you can to answer those questions in a way that communicates more about who you are.

Below are a couple of common questions interviewers ask that focus on what you do. Take a look at the type of responses we suggest and use them as a guide for other similar questions you may get:

#### Sample question 1: Tell me something about yourself.

Instead of talking about where you're from or where you took your last vacation, use the opportunity to tell your interviewer a story that provides some flavor of who you really are. Tell a story from your childhood or something you do outside of work, especially if it embodies something you love to do.

Simon says 

“You are authentic when everything you say and everything you do you ACTUALLY believe.”

Example: I feel like we're all rushing around and often aren't as thoughtful as we could be. Most people would never guess this, but I love to sew. I love having a plan and seeing that plan to come life, but it's more than completing a project. I do each project with a specific person in mind. I make thoughtful things for people I love. My favorite part is seeing their face when they open a present that I've hand made just for them and they say, "I can't believe you spent so much time making this for me!" This is just one of the many things I do to spend time and energy letting people I love know that they matter to me.

Simon says 

"Before we can build the world we want to live in, we have to imagine it. Greatness starts with a clear vision of the future."

### **Sample question 2: Why are you interested in working here?**

This is a trick question. It's not really a question about them, it's a question about you. What they really want to know is, what is it about them or the work they do that inspires you? Though you are talking about them, you're telling them about yourself.

Example: I wake up every day to revel in who I am and to support and encourage others to do the same. When I was looking at your website, it said your vision is to inspire people to do the things that inspire them and I got goose bumps when I thought about the possibility of helping you do that. By myself I'm certain I can make a positive difference in the lives of those around me, but if I were to join your team, I can't even imagine what I could do. I know that I've only got a limited number of days to make a positive impact and I can see that you are operating at a level of scale that I could never achieve alone. I want to see thousands if not millions of people reveling; doing the things that inspire them. I believe what you believe and I want to stand shoulder to shoulder with you to help build the world you imagine.

### **Sample question 3: Where do you see yourself in five years?**

We tend to jump right to future positions, raises and tangible goals when asked this question. Before answering this question we must first ask ourselves what we truly want. Is moving into management, buying a bigger house or more vacation time really the full answer to the question?

What if the question were asked differently? What if we were asked “how do you want to feel in five years”? The answer likely wouldn’t be different than how we’d like to feel today. Happy, fulfilled by the work we do. We’d like to know that the work we’ve done has made a difference in the lives of others. Explore this question from a feeling perspective and see what you come up with.

Example: Happy. In a place where I can do what I love personally and professionally; working with people I care about and who care about me. Isn’t that what we all want?

## Tip #2: Be honest

Sometimes we feel we need to cover our insecurities by exaggerating our achievements and accomplishments. Ironically, truly honest answers are much more powerful. Be honest about your work history and your past salary. This doesn’t mean you should restrict your salary goals. When the topic of what salary you’re looking for comes up, even if it’s much more than you used to make, simply add “I’m asking for more because I know that what I have learned and what I want to contribute is worth more than I used to get paid.”

### Share what you’ve learned

Many of us have a blemish or two on our resumes. We’ve been fired, quit a job after only three months or started a business that failed. Failure is an important part of success. Often it’s where we learn our most valuable lessons. That said, on a resume, it’s difficult to give context to those awkward transitions in our lives.

The good news is, these questions generally come up in an interview. Our instinct is to list the reasons we failed in an effort to show that it wasn’t entirely our fault. In doing so, we miss the opportunity to share what we’ve learned.

When asked about one of these not so attractive parts of your work history, give context to the reason it was such a great part of your success.

Simon says 

“It’s better to endure the discomfort of the truth now than suffer the discomfort of the lie later.”

Example: I got the entrepreneur bug after a couple of years in a corporate job. An opportunity presented itself and I jumped at it, without fully understanding the risks and potential pitfalls involved. Ultimately, it failed from a business perspective, but I learned more during that time than I did from an entire business degree. Now, when I consider a new project or opportunity, I draw on that experience and what I learned the hard way. I'm smarter about how to assess and manage risk and I can spot red flags that may lead to poor decisions and failure.

Simon says 

“If you're different at home than you are at work, in one of those two places, you're lying.”

## Be yourself

Being yourself requires honesty. The more willing you are to be yourself, the more likely you are to find a job that's a great fit. Be comfortable in your own skin; in the way you dress, talk and act. That doesn't mean you should wear jeans to an interview if that's inappropriate. It simply means that if you feel out of place in a tie or a dressy blouse, wear something else that's appropriate and be confident in how you present yourself.

The goal is to be the same person at work as you are at home. When you are clear on your Why and your Hows, they help you articulate who you are as a person. What you do (your job, your friends, your hobbies, etc.) are just opportunities for you to be in alignment with your Why and your Hows.

## Tip #3: How to answer the question, “What are your weaknesses?”

One of the questions interviewers love to ask is “what are some of your weaknesses?”. This is another trick question. The interviewer wants to know if you're self aware, how well you know yourself. They actually want to know that you can work around and/or overcome things you're not great at.

There's a great tactic for navigating this section of the interview. When you're asked this question, the key is to focus on your strengths and the situations or circumstances in which those strengths may become weaknesses. Companies don't hire based on weakness. They hire based on strength. So rather than saying what you're not good at, talk about your positions of strength.

That doesn't mean that you have nothing but strengths. Some things you may really not be good at. In that case, frame your weaknesses in the context of other people's strengths. Below are a few examples of focusing on your own strengths or the strengths of others to give some context to your weaknesses:

- I find that I do much better when I work with someone who's great with details. I tend to be up at 30,000 feet most of the time and I need someone who can work with me on the details because that's not my strength.
- I've learned that I need to work in teams. When I have others to brainstorm with and be accountable to, I'm at my best. I find that I struggle when I work alone.
- I really am an idealist and I have a huge desire to rush forth and do good in the world. If I work with people who are very money-driven I can get frustrated with that.
- I'm the kind of person that thrives on knowing the reason behind the work I'm doing. If I know how my piece of the puzzle fits into the big picture, I can do my best work. When I'm not given a clear sense of purpose or destination, I struggle.

### Tip #4: Interview them

Perhaps the most important paradigm shift in preparing for interviews is to realize that we are interviewing the company as much (if not more) as they are interviewing us. While it's important to get across an essence of who we are, it's as important to learn who they are. Not every company will be the right fit.

Landing a job we love is more than just landing a job. It's important for us to identify the type of environments that allow us to be at our best. This is where our Hows come in. Hows are the actions we take, the strengths we have and the guiding principles we live by that allow us to be at our best. When we aren't in an environment that amplifies our strengths, when we don't feel like we belong, when we don't trust and care about the people we're working with, the salary and benefits may quickly lose their appeal.

Reference the results of the exercise you completed on page 29 to review your own Hows.

Simon says 

"Fulfillment is our right. We need to demand that our companies tell us Why they exist. What cause are we working to help them achieve?"

To help you learn how to determine if a company's a good fit for you during an interview, we asked David, another member of the Why community, to provide his Hows along with some interview questions he prepared based on them. Each question is followed by what he is looking for in an answer that will indicate alignment with his Hows. Here's what he had to say:



[Check out Why University](#) ▶

#### My Hows:

- Understand the big picture – I need to know why I'm doing what I'm doing. I have a hard time finding the motivation to do things when I don't know the purpose behind my effort.
- Take responsibility – When I see a problem, I'm the kind of person who wants to jump in and fix it. Environments where people sit around and just complain about problems without doing anything about them really frustrate me.
- Be the example – The best way for me to influence someone else is by practicing what I preach. If I'm not willing to do it, I don't expect anyone else to. If I have a manager that doesn't walk the talk, I find it really hard to work with them.
- Tie a bow on it – I like things to be as close to perfect as possible before I put my name on them. I have a hard time working with people who don't give it their all.
- Learn from every experience – I approach my day with the attitude that I can learn something from every situation and every person I come in contact with. I'm an optimist. I don't do well around negative people.

#### **Question: How are employees evaluated?**

What I'm looking for in the answer: I know that the big picture is what I'm working toward and I do my best work when I'm working toward a long-term goal. If employees are evaluated on monthly or quarterly performance goals without consideration for progress toward the long-term goal, I'll likely experience stress and frustration.

#### **Question: Describe the attributes of an employee that's considered successful here.**

What I'm looking for in the answer: I feel most successful when I can step up and take responsibility. If employees are rewarded for stepping out of their assigned roles filling in the holes and helping each other out, I'm going to do great. If the answer only reflects that success is defined by doing my job and churning out my projects on time, chances are I won't feel successful.

### Question: What's the culture here like?

What I'm looking for in the answer: I need a culture that embodies quality over quantity. If I can be trusted with a little extra time, I'll produce better stuff. If I'm kept to hard deadlines with very little flexibility, my work won't be as good and I won't feel good about it.

### Question: How does the company handle mistakes?

What I'm looking for in the answer: I learn best from my own experience. I need a company that understands the importance of constant learning. If mistakes are seen as a negative thing, dealt with behind closed doors and then ignored, I won't learn what I need to learn to improve.

try this!  
↓

In the space below, write some interview questions you may ask based on your own Hows. Don't be afraid to probe a little bit with your questions to make sure the environment will be a good fit for you. You may find that your interviewer isn't very forthcoming with potentially negative information about the company's culture or management. If it feels right, try to find out a little more. The fact that they don't want to say much may also be a very good indicator of what the culture of the company may be like:

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Simon says 

"Listening is not simply hearing the words that are spoken. Listening is understanding why the words were spoken."

### Consider this

If you have to take a job you normally wouldn't take because you have to pay the bills, pick a company where you will get along with the people you work with.

It may not be your dream job, but you can find a lot of fulfillment in a job where you trust and care for the people around you.

## Tip #5: Listen for clues

What the interviewer says, and more importantly, what the interviewer doesn't say can be helpful clues when determining if the company will be a place where you'll feel like you belong. For example, fear of admitting unfavorable elements about the company may be an indicator that the culture discourages employees to talk about the things that bother them, rather than providing an open forum for feedback and positive change. You can get a sense of the culture and the people you'll be working with by noticing the way your interviewer interacts with you and others you may be introduced to.

## Tip #6: Say thank you

This important step is often overlooked or forgotten in the interview process. It's a simple concept. Be grateful for the opportunity. Depending on the company and the dynamic of the culture, the method you choose to send a thank you note may vary. For some of us, a handwritten note sent in the mail may be the way to go. For others, an email may feel better. The format is not as important as the action itself.

Use the thank you card not only to express your gratitude, but to remind them of who you are and how you can make a positive contribution to their company. Incorporate the following ideas into your thank you note:

- A sincere expression of gratitude for the interview
- A brief recap of your understanding of the company's needs and/or challenges (showing that you listened) followed by an how you can fill those needs
- End with *Why*: one or two strong sentences to explain who you are what you can contribute

Simon says 

"If you're nice to people, people are nice back. It's not a complicated formula."

Simon says 

"Instead of expending energy to fit into the group, it's better to expend energy to find the group in which we fit."

## Tip #7: Ask for feedback

Most of us have had job interviews that didn't end up in a job offer. If you're the type of person who believes that every experience is an opportunity to learn and grow, there may be an excellent opportunity to do just that. When you get a call back about a position for which you were not selected, it may be appropriate to ask your interviewer for feedback. You may not be able to do this with every interview. But if you feel like you had good rapport with your interviewer and your gut tells you it's appropriate, there may be some valuable lessons you can learn.

You may be given a generic reason why you were not offered the job (someone else had better qualifications etc.) but you never know unless you ask. Many interviewers will have a genuine interest in you and will be happy to provide helpful feedback that may help you improve.

Simon says 

"We don't learn much when everything goes right. We learn the most when things go wrong."

## Test yourself

On the ride home after your interview, your mind may replay how it went, so give it some direction! Ask yourself these questions.



- Did I give some sense of who I am?
- Did my passion for who they are come through?
- Did they see how I can contribute to what they do?
- Does this job feel like a good fit?
- Can I imagine working there and being happy?
- Did I say things that were consistent with what I wrote in my resume and cover letter?
- Did I provide good examples that demonstrate who I am and what I'm capable of?
- What do I want to do differently next time?
- Did I like the individuals that I met? Were there any red flags?
- Did I feel the interviewer was open and honest? Did I feel that they "got me"; that they saw the value of what I have to offer?
- Will I take this job if they offer it to me?
- Do I have any follow-up questions I'd like to ask if they should call me back and offer me the job?
- Can I imagine working there for a long time?

## A final thought

By completing this guide, you are well on your way to mastering communication from the inside-out of The Golden Circle (Why, How, What). Though it's a simple concept to understand, it's not always easy to implement. Each time you successfully start with Why, the purpose, cause or belief that drives you, you're one step closer to landing the job you love.

People who land a job they love find their work more meaningful. They feel like they're making a difference and they are happy at work. People who are happy at work, go home happy and those happy people make happier husbands, wives, moms, dads, neighbors and friends. A Why-driven resume, cover letter, elevator pitch and interview experience can make the difference between finding a job you can tolerate five days a week, and a job you absolutely love; a job that will be a reflection of who you really are.

When you're on the job hunt, it's easy to focus on salary, benefits and perks as the compensation package. Remember, those perks are important, but aren't the only things that matter. They don't bring lasting happiness. Lasting happiness, fulfillment, comes from making a contribution to something bigger than ourselves.

Simon says 

"The standard for your job should be 'I love what I do' for the same reason that it is better to fall in love than to fall in like."

**Imagine a world in which the vast majority of people wake up everyday inspired to go to work in the morning and return home fulfilled by the work they do.**

**This is the world we are working to build, and by finding a job you love you are helping to build it. Thank you for being a part of this movement.**

When you land a job you love, would you please let us know so we can celebrate with you?

Drop us a line at [inspireme@startwithwhy.com](mailto:inspireme@startwithwhy.com).

We are always striving toward continuous improvement. Based on feedback and success stories, this guide will change. As updates and additions are made, we'll forward them on to you for free.