

Show Me The Job!

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ABSTRACT

The movie, *Jerry Maguire*, spawned several popular quotations, including "Show Me the Money!" shouted repeatedly in a phone exchange between Rod Tidwell and Jerry Maguire (played by Tom Cruise). It took Jerry Maguire almost a year to find his client (the job seeker) the best job without compromises. Finding the best job is not a short and effortless process. The paper will speak to the challenges faced by Biometrics job seekers today, and show how landing the best job, can be far less painful, and more effective, by partnering with a technical recruiter.

The paper begins with what 'not' to fear in a technical resume. Statistical programming hiring managers in pharmaceutical organizations are looking for individuals with well-defined technical capabilities and a solid understanding of the clinical trial process. The paper will show what to consider when preparing your resume and what you can gain from a recruiter that understands your background and skills.

The paper will discuss desirable skills in today's market that hiring managers want to see and will demonstrate how a resume should be built to become more powerful and convincing with descriptive and detailed explanations. The paper will also introduce how the job seeker should prepare for a successful interview. It will share materials to review prior to a phone or onsite interview and typical questions to expect from the interviewer. Lastly, the paper will present suggestions for what to do now to leverage tools and resources available to ensure you're fully prepared when the right opportunity arises.

WHAT ARE HIRING MANAGERS LOOKING FOR?

Hiring managers are looking for individuals who can help achieve the team's objectives and accomplish the company goals. Therefore, it is key to do your homework and learn what you can about the prospective company: their successes, failures and current product pipeline. Not surprisingly, companies all face similar challenges, so your hands-on experience and the problems you solved in one company can very likely apply directly to your next company.

In addition to understanding the products and revenue channels of a prospective new company, one should pay extra attention when preparing your resume for the job. A resume should clearly communicate transferable skills from past jobs. More importantly, when emphasizing those skills always include details about how you applied them.

From our experience, the following skills and capabilities are top on a hiring managers list when choosing which candidates to screen and interview:

- Technical Capabilities (e.g., SAS®, CDISC®, RECIST) – not just the knowledge but how it was used
- Experiences – focus on how you solved the problem, improved efficiency and effectiveness
- Potential Contribution – indicate in your accomplishments how you anticipated issues and resolved them early
- Team Player – communication is key. Can you express yourself in a way that team members are inspired to be collaborative, and not just listening to your approach?

WHY RECRUITERS?

A job seeker may wonder why he or she may need a recruiter. There are key value-adds that recruiters bring to the table that often make the job seeking process shorter and more effective at no cost to you. A recruiter's fulltime job is to match the right job seeker to the right job opportunity.

A recruiter is familiar with many job opportunities, the hiring managers, and the prospective companies and is your resource to:

- Review your resume for completeness and provide valuable feedback.
- Provide connections to the right people in the company and a direct path to the hiring manager.
- Share subtle differences in what the company and hiring managers are really looking for (Is the study going to submission? Is the person needed to respond to FDA requests and product ad-hoc reports?).
- Share knowledge of job trends in the industry and your geographic area.
- Provide additional job attributes not in the job description, such as flexibility in the title, can it be higher or lower, where is the exact job location, are there work from home days, etc.
- Ability to match you to more than one opportunity, saving you time from scanning job postings or career page updates.
- Providing you with job opportunities that have not been posted; giving you an early edge over other job seekers.
- Better negotiation. A recruiter is working for the best outcome for you and the hiring manager. It might seem like a conflict of interest, but it's not. The recruiter is invested in getting the best deal for both you and the client, otherwise no one wins.

WHY ARE RESUMES IMPORTANT?

You may have heard an often-used Kevin McCarthy quote, "My belief is you have one chance to make a first impression". The first impression to a hiring manager is your resume. Your resume should effectively represent and market you in such a way, that motivates the hiring manager to move you to the next step. A good resume should showcase skills and experience relevant to the job and communicate your notable achievements and accomplishments. A well-prepared resume can show a hiring manager how you will bring value to the team and organization, even before you meet them in person.

HOW TO BUILD THE PERFECT RESUME

So, what is the perfect resume? The perfect resume is the one that represents you in the best way possible and shows how you are a good fit. Its goal is very simple: A piece of communication designed and prepared to impress the hiring manager and advance you in the process.

DESIRABLE SKILLS

From our experience, certain skills are very desirable in the current market. Being mindful of how you can build upon key skills such as; hands on CDISC implementations, advanced SAS® knowledge, proficiency in tables, listings and figures, or a better understanding of regulatory requirements and experiences and producing submission documents, all will help you stay competitive and market yourself more effectively.

HOW TO GO FROM GOOD TO GREAT

So, how can you turn a good resume into a great resume? The resume needs to show what you have done and what you know.

A good resume will include important key skills needed in the pharmaceutical environment, such as CDISC experience, ISS/ISE submission work, preparation of electronic submissions, etc. But, a great resume provides details and more importantly is convincing about what you know. When writing about your CDISC experience, include your specific hands on experience such as SDTM and ADaM and which versions you have implemented, name the outputs you generated. If you have oncology experiences, the type of tumor is more informative, include Oncology SDTM domains, and datasets specific to oncology studies.

FREQUENTLY MISSING FROM A RESUME

Many resumes are often missing vital information. It's usually not intentional but resume writing is not the highest on most people's priority list and they wait until one is needed to write or update it. We recommend keeping track of skills gained and career accomplishments on a regular basis before the memory starts to fade.

The following additional information can distinguish one job seeker from another:

- Industry involvement such as CDISC ADaM team member, PharmaSUG section chair and PhUSE working group member.
- Papers and Presentations
- Qualification Summary – Many hiring managers or HR personal will skim read resumes. If one of your important work achievements is buried in a prior job it may not get noticed. Start with a Qualification Summary at the very top of your resume and include 10-15 key and most impressive skills that you have. A qualification summary should include your technical capabilities, management or supervisory experience and your communication and collaboration skills.

HOW TO ACE THE INTERVIEW

The interview is your first chance to impress the hiring manager verbally through a phone screen or onsite interview. At the interview, the hiring manager will decide whether to advance the candidate or not. Sometimes it's one person that is the gate keeper to the next steps. Job seekers should prepare diligently for the interview.

The following is a list of what to do to prepare:

- Learn about the company
- Practice a technical interview. What would you ask yourself to be challenged?
- Get to know the interviewers, especially the hiring manager. Look up their LinkedIn profile and search for industry papers or presentations from that author.
- Be prepared with good questions.
- Prepare answers for possible questions (e.g., Why are you looking? Why should we hire you? What was the most complex problem that you solved?)
- Relax and enjoy the process. Whether you get the job or not, you are networking with peers and managers in your field and a good impression is never lost.

From our experience as recruiters, the interview is always two-way. The hiring manager will decide to make the offer, but the job seeker will be the one to accept. You should ask good questions to understand the company culture, hiring manager and potential new colleagues.

MAKE YOURSELF VISIBLE

It is important that you are always active and visible in the industry. Hiring managers want to hire people who are invested in their own personal career growth by staying active, engaged and current with industry trends.

Programmers can do the following to be active and visible in the industry:

- Offer to give presentations at major conferences.
- Network – Attend user meetings and interest groups.
- Volunteer in the industry, such as CDISC groups, join a conference committee (PharmaSUG, SAS @ Global, PhUSE and local SAS @ users group) or PhUSE working group.
- Social media – Keep your LinkedIn profile current. Connect with current and past colleagues and follow thought leaders that are influencers to you.
- Be open to new job opportunities – You may not be actively looking to change jobs, but don't pass up any opportunity to learn about a new opening when it comes your way. Throw your hat in the ring and say yes to the interview. Screenings and interviews may take time, but taking a chance at new opportunities means you'll be testing out your resume and developing better interviewing skills.

CONCLUSION

The hiring process can be long and exhaustive. Sometimes, programmers may wonder where to start looking or how to start looking. Knowing what hiring managers are looking for, connecting with a good recruiter, putting effort into your resume and preparing for the interview are key ingredients to finding the next best opportunity for you.

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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your comments and questions are valued and encouraged. We are happy to connect you to your next career move. Contact the authors at:

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