Chemistry: A Solid Foundation for Alternative Careers

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What makes us seek career alternatives?

- Job stagnation or boredom – need change
- Hate the boss – want good people to work with
- Company unstable – may be laid off soon
- Already laid off
- Seeking advancement or new directions
- Better financial remuneration or benefits
- Relocation

... whatever our reasons, we pause to take inventory of what we have to offer before deciding where to go next.
Personal / Leadership Inventory

- Core competencies
- Tendencies
- Learned behaviors & attitudes
- External projection
- Participation & involvement
Core Competencies

As chemists, we generally share a rich array of core competencies...

- Fast learners / intelligent
- Strong powers of observation
- Analytical
- Conceptual
- Structured
- Define and quantify problems
- Problem solvers
- Good with numbers

- Curious and inquisitive
- Writers and presenters
- Comfortable with technology tools
- Detail oriented / careful
- Process / procedure oriented
- Judicious – decisions are based on facts and data
- Persevering / patient
As individuals, we have our own inborn tendencies – let’s get to know ourselves

- Gregarious or quiet?
- Emotional or factual?
- Organized or free-form?
- Open-ended or decisive?
- Optimistic or pessimistic?
- Gut reactive or cerebral?
- Visual or auditory or kinesthetic?

- Easy going or regimented?
- Approximate or precise?
- Abstract or concrete?
- Celebratory or stoic?

... Our tendencies influence how we communicate, how we receive and process information, and how we react to people
Learned Behavior & Attitudes

As educated chemists, we have no excuses and we own our choices!

- Discipline
- Organization
- Time management
- Confidence
- Focus / concentration
- Can-do attitude
- Assuming positive intent
- Impulsiveness
- Honesty and ethics
- Flexibility / response to change
- Tolerance
- Humor
External Projection

As chemists, we have a strong sense of professionalism – so just live it

- Smile or frown
- Greeting and acknowledging staff
- Notice everyone
- Social graces
- Political savvy
- Social choices
- Dress for success
- Expressing praise
- Modesty

- Office / work area appearance
- Lead organized meetings
- Show up prepared
- Punctual
- Attentive
- Avoid being judgmental
- Avoid martyrdom
Participation & Involvement

As chemists, we have a solid sense of community

- Volunteerism
- Accepting speaking engagements
- Coaching
- Mentoring
- Willingness to help others at work
- Taking initiative
- Referring and connecting people

- Seeking out interactions with peers - networking
- Going the extra mile
- Listening and encouraging
- When opportunity knocks… open the door
Inventory Results

- Core competencies and professional participation will come through on your resume
- Mastery of tendencies will arm you with the ability to have rapport during interviews
- Attitude and professional behavior will be evident the minute you start interacting
- External projections will feed those all important first impressions
- Participation and involvement may have already connected you with the current opportunity - networking
Find the Possible Transition Points

- Look for cross-over in specialty knowledge
- Look for common market knowledge
- Look for skill and task match-ups
- Look for discipline overlap
- Look for parallel experiences
- Look at companies/organizations who serve your current employer
- Look at companies/organizations your employer serves
- Look at companies/organizations who are like your current employer
Examples

Lab work, research & graduate teaching

To

Chemical society staff position developing continuing education via computers

- Discipline: chemistry
- Experiences: teaching vs. continuing education
- Degrees: sufficient credentials
- Skills: technical writing skills
- Community: professional society chapter leader
Examples

Chemical society staff position developing continuing education via computers

To

Managing peer review for chemical journals and deploying computer-assisted tracking system

- Discipline: chemistry
- Same organization: different division
  - Core competencies demonstrated
  - Attitude and behavior -- management material
  - External projection – also management possibilities
Examples

Managing peer review for chemical journals
To
Directing publications for a physics society

- Like organizations
- Experiences
  - Scientific society governance & society publishing
- Skills/Edu: management & some business courses
- Community: engaged in publishing societies
  - Reputation wrt core competencies, external projection, attitude and behaviors, professional participation
Examples

Directing publications for a physics society

To

Product mgt/marketing in a research journal production company

- Company serving my current employer
- Market knowledge: scholarly publishing (customer base)
- Experiences: journal production management
- Skills: business and marketing functions
- Community
  - Deeply engaged in related professional societies
  - Volunteer at White House Office of Science & Technol. Policy
Examples

Product mgt/marketing in a research journal production company

To

Leading web application development & deployment

- Market: knowledge of scholarly publishing
- Experiences: journal production technology
- Same company: different division
  - Core competencies demonstrated – managing projects
  - External projection, attitudes/behaviors, and awareness of tendencies – leadership material
  - Community – continued involvement
Chemistry: A Great Start

- Solid foundation
- Build your awareness of self and others
- Control your attitude and behavior
- Manage your projected image
- Be involved, help others & take risks
- Look for career connectors

Thank you!