Are You Ready For Your Future?

Carleen MacKay's 4th book, *The 50,000 Mile Career Check-Up*, written on behalf of Career Partners International (www.cpiworld.com), includes questions about the readiness of experienced workers to continue to work well into the 21st century. Why the 50,000 mile metaphor? Well, rather than define careers in terms of chronological ages, let’s think of the questions as applicable to everyone whose career stages span 20 years or longer and whose past experience and knowledge may not support their longer lifetimes. Carleen selected a few of the questions from the book as a self-test about just how you might fare in a future that bears slim resemblance to your earlier stage career. While not all questions will apply to your situation, many, if not most, will.

1. If you were to lose (or, if you have lost) your job, do you know, beyond a reasonable doubt, that you are readily re-employable in today’s economy given your current experience, qualifications and skills? _____Yes_____No

2. If you were to lose (or, if you have lost) your job, do you have a clear understanding as to how to compete with vast numbers of similarly qualified applicants for the same, or similar, position? _____Yes_____No

3. If you are employed today but your employer is required to make some cuts in staff, is it likely, based on your knowledge of your employer’s requirements, that you would be among those selected to be retained? ____Yes_____No

4. When you think of the next stage of your career; do you know what work options are available to you, other than a job that looks very much like your current or last position? _____Yes_____No

5. Do you view your career as your business not simply as your job? _____Yes_____No

6. Along the same lines, do you currently have a written career plan? _____Yes_____No

7. Have you ever had a comprehensive career checkup? _____Yes_____No

8. Do you know which careers will offer the best opportunities for the fastest growth in the U.S. over the next 5 years? _____Yes_____No

9. Do you know for a certain fact what new skills, or additional learning, you should add to your portfolio in terms of future-proofing your career investment? _____Yes_____No

10. Similarly, have you ever conducted a formal “gap-analysis” in order to determine what you need to learn next in order to remain competitive? _____Yes_____No

11. Do you know which educational institutions offer you your best options in terms of gaining additional skills and leveraging new learning experiences? _____Yes_____No

12. Beyond developing a ubiquitous “resume” do you know how to build a robust marketing toolkit, compete with branding statements, biographies, websites, and other written/verbal communications? _____Yes_____No

13. Beyond social networking, do you understand the art and skill of ensuring that people know you, rather than relying upon you knowing them? _____Yes_____No

14. Do you know how to transfer your skills, experience and knowledge between the private and public sectors? _____Yes_____No

15. Do you know how to overcome the many myths and biases about age? _____Yes_____No

16. Do you know how to overcome objections between what you once earned and what the market will now pay? _____Yes_____No

17. If you have been with one firm for many years, do you know how to overcome biases held by today’s employers against people who linger too long with one employer? _____Yes_____No

18. Do you know how to leverage maturity’s advantages? _____Yes_____No

19. Would you consider paying for a career checkup as a “financial investment in yourself?” Think about your answer in terms of a checkup that includes a life stage review, an analysis of your career to date, a review of new options as aligned with emerging marketplace needs; a written, specific, measurable, action-oriented, realistic time-framed strategic plan as well as an array of several new marketing tools? _____Yes_____No

Source: Mature Workforce HOT TOPICS Newsletter, Vol. 5 No. 27, 1-April-2010
How to Develop Career and Life Vision
From article by Andy Chan, Asst Dean, Stanford Graduate School of Business

How to develop CLV

The CLV workshop helps students reflect on their lives, their goals and dreams, their beliefs and attitudes, and future work and life situations and environments that are meaningful to them.

One exercise is called the Obituary Exercise. In just 10 minutes, students outline what they would like their obituary to say about them at the end of their lives. Questions they consider include:

1. What were my major accomplishments (at age 20, 30, 40, 50, 60, 70)?
2. What and who was important to me?
3. Why were these issues and people so important?
4. What was I passionate about?
5. What character traits and values did I consistently demonstrate over my lifetime?

Students examine their answers, which can reveal important data toward defining their Career and Life Vision. Question one addresses "big hairy audacious goals" that require a stretch of effort and perhaps unlikely events in order to be achieved. Questions two, three, and four address interests, passions, and purpose — things that matter most when considering work and life. Question five addresses values — important beliefs that are core to who you are.

With this data, students begin to define their core ideology — who they are and their envisioned future. By more clearly defining what matters most and where they want to be, students are able to make better decisions today. Their choices are aligned with their visions and values. Their choices are strategic, with long-term perspective underlying their decision.

Try this exercise and see where it leads you.
Job Search Goal Score Sheet

Record the number of points you have for each activity. Multiply the number of point by the number of times you did the activity. Goal = 30pts./wk

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Wk 1</th>
<th>Wk2</th>
<th>Wk3</th>
<th>Wk4</th>
<th>Wk5</th>
<th>Wk6</th>
<th>Wk7</th>
<th>Wk8</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Applied for job. (2 pts.)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Prepared for an interview (4 pts.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Researched a company (1 pt.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conducted an informational interview (3 pts.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attended a networking event (2 pts.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interviewed for a job (5 pts.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aligned resume for a job (3 pts.)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended a job search workshop (2 pts.)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sent job leads to others (1)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicated with a past company contact on behalf of another job seeker (2)</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Gave your business card and elevator speech to at least 10 new contacts (3)</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The Knowdell™ Motivated Skills Career Assessment is a quick and easy way to identify the motivated skills that are central to personal and career satisfaction and success.
On the following page, your skills have been organized onto a Motivated Skills Matrix™ that allows you to view your skills on two dimensions—horizontally by competency and vertically by motivation. Please note that three cells on the matrix have been highlighted.

**Motivated Skills**

*Upper Left Hand Corner*

The upper-left corner contains your “Motivated” skills—these are skills that you consistently seek to use in your life and work on a regular basis. These are skills that you are so good at, and enjoy using so much, that you would use them for free. There is a high probability that you have found one or more employers who are willing to pay you to use these skills (even though you would use them for free). These are the skills that need to appear on your resume.

If you look back at times in your life (in work, play, or volunteer settings) where you were successful and proud of the results then you were probably using your motivated skills.

**Burnout Skills**

*Lower Left Hand Corner*

The lower left hand corner contains your “Burn Out Skills.” These are skills that you are very good at, but dislike using. They may be skills that you were required to learn within your family, school, or work experience but there is a danger to using these “burnout” skills. The more that your job requires that you use these skills, the closer you will come to reigning from your job. Delegate these skills if you can. Talk with your boss about replacing assignment requiring these skills with assignment requiring your “Motivated Skills”. Get these skills off your resume.

**Opportunities for Development**

*Upper Right Hand Corner*

The upper right hand corner contains skills that you are very motivated to use, but you lack the desired skill level. They are “Developmental” skills—skills that you should seek training in so they can be developed and eventually become Motivated Skills.

We have purposely left out the skills in the lower right hand corner. These are skills that you’ve identified that you are not good at and do not like to use. No matter how much you practice these skills, they will likely never become “Motivated Skills” and may never be more than mediocre at them.
## Knowdell™ Motivated Skills Matrix™

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGHLY PROFICIENT</th>
<th>COMPETENT</th>
<th>LACK DESIRED SKILL LEVEL</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>MOTIVATED SKILLS</strong></td>
<td>Interview For Information Perceive Intuitively Improvise Act As Liaison Mentor</td>
<td>Entertain/perform Make Decisions Strategize Innovate/invent Generate Ideas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTALLY DELIGHT IN USING</strong></td>
<td>Adapt To Change Conceptualize Initiate Change Deal With Ambiguity Counsel Portray Images Team Work</td>
<td>Computer Literate Customer Service Negotiate Visualize Write Synthesize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ENJOY USING VERY MUCH</strong></td>
<td>Expedite Motivate Multi-task</td>
<td>Mediate Deal With Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>LIKE USING</strong></td>
<td>Implement</td>
<td>Observe Design</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>PREFER NOT TO USE</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BURNOUT SKILLS</strong></td>
<td>Delegate Proofread, Edit Analyze</td>
<td>Classify Make Arrangements Budget Sell Manage Time Use Mechanical Abilities Test Estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>STRONGLY DISLIKE USING</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How not to embarrass yourself doing the elevator pitch
August 16, 2010

From Marc Cenedella, Founder & CEO, TheLadders.com

It's embarrassing, isn't it?

Doing "the elevator pitch" feels so awkward, embarrassing and unnatural — like you're hawking a product on a late night infomercial. Yet it's such an important part of the job search that everybody has to have one.

You know, when I speak around the country to groups of job-seekers, it's one of the most common questions I get: "How do I do the elevator pitch without sounding goofy, or hucksterish, or like I'm babbling?"

I totally understand.

Trying to sum up your professional career in thirty seconds gives many people pause.

How do you stuff all that information into such a short time? And how do you do it effectively?

So how about this?

Let's create an elevator pitch for me, Marc Cenedella. First, I'll show you the wrong way, and then the right way, to go about it...

So, like you, I've done a lot in my career. And I'm pretty proud of a lot of my accomplishments, and I want to get across everything I've done.

I don't have a resume right now, so let's take my profile from TheLadders site and turn it into my elevator pitch.

Now in order to teach you the right way to do it, first we're going to do it the wrong way — the embarrassing, awkward, uncomfortable way.

You're not going to enjoy reading it, and I'm certainly not enjoying writing it, but in the interests of science, I need to take you through that experience of awkwardness and embarrassment in order to explain how and why to do it right.

Our first effort, which is similar to what most of us try when we make our elevator pitch, is this:

"I'm a serial entrepreneur that started a company exporting US-made pet food to Japan after college. I graduated in the top 5% of my class at Harvard Business School, and was then the lead corporate development guy on the sale of HotJobs to Yahoo in 2002 for $436 million. I founded TheLadders.com seven years ago to focus on bringing high-level talent together with $100K+ jobs, and the company has grown to be an international success with over 300 employees."

Ugh.

Frankly, you're probably wondering: "Why is he telling me this? What his purpose for bragging like that? What a creep!"

And I can tell you that, sitting here on a Saturday afternoon writing this, it makes me feel like a boasting, shilling, pompous stuffed shirt.
And I know that's how a lot of you feel about crafting your elevator pitch, too, so let's understand why this is not an effective pitch.

**It focuses on accomplishments and achievements.**

In our culture here in the US, when you say something about yourself, particularly something positive, people look askance. When somebody tells us how wonderful they are, we instinctively worry about their reasons for doing so, and question their character, truthfulness, and personality.

Sure, they might have a lot of nice accomplishments, but what if they're as much of a braggart when they actually take the job?

Ick, that's not going to be somebody fun to work with.

**And it's crafted in a "professional voice."**

This is not how people talk to each other, so of course, if I were to say this out loud to somebody, it will sound awkward.

When you speak in a professional, or announcer-like, or "official correspondence" voice, it dehumanizes you and puts a distance between you and the listener. They feel they have to put up their guard and be on the "watch out" for you because you must be trying to sell them something.

Well now, of course we want the elevator pitch to help us get a job, so why don't we take another crack at it? And this time, instead of trying to sound like a stuffed shirt, we're going to be human and real:

"My passion in life is jobs. I love everything about them. It combines the soft stuff — people's dreams and hopes and ambitions — with the hard stuff — where the jobs are in the economy, the numbers and algorithms and technology that make it possible. I've been doing this for over a decade and I find that I'm learning something new about making job hunts successful every day. Helping people through what is one of the most stressful experiences in their lives is tremendously rewarding and fulfilling, and I love doing it."

OK, which dude do you want to work with? The professional accomplishment elevator pitch or the conversational motivations pitch? Which guy would you invite to an interview?

I think you'll agree with me that the second one is far more effective. Why?

**I'm speaking about my motivations.**

As opposed to crowing about accomplishments, I'm telling you why I like doing what I'm doing.

And in our culture, we tend to trust people and believe them when they tell us what their motivations. It feels like they're being open and honest, and that they are sharing with us something about themselves. And from a tactical standpoint, it helps the recruiter, HR person, or hiring manager know a little bit more about what makes you tick, and how and why you want this particular job.

It looks to the future.

If you were hiring a Chief Job Officer, the second pitch lets you know that this is somebody who is engaged and passionate and excited about doing more job-related work in the future. The first pitch doesn't.

**It sounds like a human conversation.**

I call this "The Bud Test." If you can't say your elevator pitch to friends and acquaintances over a Bud, or
a tasty Arnold Palmer, at the backyard barbecue, it is not an effective elevator pitch.

Speaking like a regular human being makes you more approachable, believable, and likable. It feels less like a shill and more like an open-hearted conversation. And people want to help people that they believe and that they like.

So if you agree that the second elevator pitch is better, how do you craft your own?

Try this.

Answer these questions in a "real" voice. Like you're speaking to your mother, or your college buddies, or a couple of friends on the golf course. (You know, I might even recommend that you speak into a voice recorder, or just go ahead and call your own voicemail, and answer these questions out loud. That's the best way to get a conversational tone....)

* Say, why do you like your work?
* Why have you been doing this for 10, 15, 20 years?
* What is it that you find interesting about it?
* No, seriously, don't talk to me like I'm your boss, what do you really find interesting about it?
* Why do you want to stay in this field?
* What do you like about this industry?
* When you're in the shower in the morning, what types of challenges at work make you excited to get the heck to the office as soon as possible?
* When are you having the most fun?

And then take those bits and make a conversational elevator pitch that focuses on your motivations, not your accomplishments.

So instead of rehashing your resume and job titles and greatest hits, your elevator pitch will sound real, and human, and be deadly effective.

So please forgive the embarrassing first elevator pitch, Readers. I feel awfully goofy and awkward and uncomfortable sending that obnoxiousness out to all 4 million of you on Monday, but I do hope you'll find the advice based on the comparison between the two helpful in your job hunt.
Sample Motivated Skills

INTERESTS
What do you like, what are you interested in?

VALUES
Success, friendships, status (job), status (social), entrepreneurship, self-confidence, peace of mind, health, philanthropy/volunteering, security, autonomy, creativity, adventure, family, etc.

SKILLS

• Technical
Software, hardware, systems design, networking, IT, etc.

• Non-Technical
Project management, writing, presenting, organizing, leading, etc

• Generic
Speaking, producing events, conceptualizing, problem solving, writing, advocating, organizing, designing, explaining, working outdoors, building, analyzing, training, promoting, selling, computing, delegating, creating
1. Scan the items you listed in the **Highly Proficient** column of your Matrix Sheet. Sort the skills into subgroups of related skills. What broad areas of functional strength emerge?

2. Scan the items you listed in the **Competent** column of your Matrix Sheet. What skills would it be useful to improve to become more eligible for attractive career opportunities?

3. Scan the items you listed in the **Little or No Skill** column of your Matrix Sheet. What skills would it be useful to develop or improve to become more eligible for attractive career opportunities?

4. Do you see any relationships between the skills in which you are highly proficient and the skills you most enjoy using?

5. Has your work to date accommodated the use of the skills you perform best and most enjoy using?

6. How important is it to you to use your motivated skills in a job?

7. Of skills you feel are important to your career progress, which would you like to emphasize using in future work assignments?

8. Of skills you feel are important to your career progress, which would you like to minimize using in future work assignments?

9. Sketch a scenario of personal career satisfaction. Define a job title, and describe tasks relevant to your motivated skills and the setting in which you would do this work. Trust your instincts and interests in answering.

10. Is there anything that might prevent you from making this scenario come true?

11. Complete the following sentence stems:

   I learned that I …

   As a result of my learnings on the Motivated Skills Card Sort, I plan to …
1. Scan the items you listed in the *Highly Proficient* column of your Matrix Sheet. Sort the skills into subgroups of related skills. What broad areas of functional strength emerge?

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    I learned that I …

As a result of my learnings on the Motivated Skills Card Sort, I plan to …
## Skills Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Knowledge/skills /talents</th>
<th>Tactical</th>
<th>Like doing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managed successful project</td>
<td>Planning, directing, leading, etc</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gave customer demos</td>
<td>Speaking, selling</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The four types of networks

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Professional Network</th>
<th>Work Network</th>
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<tbody>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Life Network</th>
<th>Company/Organization Network</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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</table>

Source: Lynne Waymon, co-author of “FireProof Your Career” and co-founder of career-and networking-coaching consultancy Contacts Count
Networking Scavenger Hunt

Instructions: Read the items listed below; then find someone in the group who fits the bill for each item. Ask him/her to sign the blank next to the item which applies. (Any one individual may sign for only one item on your list.) Your goal is to find a match for each item. Good luck!

1. _______ Shares your first initial
2. _______ Serves as an volunteer in a non-IEEE association
3. _______ Played a musical instrument in a band
4. _______ Worked outside the US
5. _______ Has worked for a company while it went public
6. _______ Has more than two graduate degrees
7. _______ Has been to Washington, DC on business
8. _______ Has published a book
9. _______ Has gotten a job using Internet
10. _______ Has traveled to more than three continents
11. _______ Has worked for one company more than 15 years
12. _______ Speaks a foreign language fluently
13. _______ Has worked on a political campaign
14. _______ Has more than 4 children