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LEAP Before you Look!  
by Andrew Silberman

Yes, you read that right-this month I'm recommending you throw Conventional wisdom off the cart, put your cart before the horse, and LEAP before you look into anything as important as your next job.

The LEAP I'm going to introduce is a tool we've created at AMT Group. It helps aspiring leaders improve themselves on the job, and you can Easily adapt it in order to increase your chances of success on your job hunt. In this article you'll learn what the tool is, how it works, and how you can personalize it.

What is LEAP?

LEAP stands for "Leadership Effectiveness Attribute Profile(r)." Dr. James Loehr, the sports psychologist who wrote a series of books on "mental toughness," inspired us to adapt and apply his Competitive Adjective Profile (CAP) that he developed for the United States Tennis Association. Both of the tools are based on similar assumptions, among them: there are certain traits, or attributes that will help you succeed professionally, you can see where your strengths and weaknesses lie in terms of these attributes, and you, as the Director of Your Life, will know how best to sharpen your strengths and improve your weaknesses At AMT Group, we've invested hundreds of hours researching and Discussing attributes that best reflect an "AMT Group Leader." Among the 21 we've identified are our five core "action values": Listening, Creativity, Empowering, Encouraging, and Balance. The other 16 LEAP attributes have evolved along with our company.

LEAP Ahead in Your Job Search

Before I get into how you actually use the tool, let's discuss the Skills and especially the attributes you think your next job will require, and even for the search itself. I bet you'll agree with most of the following: flexibility, stamina, communication skills, creativity. That's a good start. Once you've identified 10 or so, you're ready to LEAP!

A 4-step LEAP

After you've compiled your list, you're ready for step one: ranking. Rank your attributes from strongest to weakest by rating yourself on each of the attributes. For example, let's say you have the 5 attributes from AMT Group's Action Values. You would first ask yourself, "Am I more creative, or more balanced?" Whichever the winner is, you compare with the next attribute on your list, until you'll eventually have an overall "strongest" attribute. Continue your comparisons until you have a clear ranking from 1 to 10 (or however many attributes you've decided on).

Step two, note your lowest 3 attributes. These will be your priorities For the next 21 days.

Step three, the longest step. Write three essays on your three lowest attributes. You'll write for 20 to 30 minutes, and title each essay "My plan to improve (attribute)." Start with a positive statement - an "affirmation"- in the present tense. For example, "I am creative." (Even though you scored the lowest on a given attribute, you still do possess some of it, right?) Then continue with "My plan to improve my creativity over the next 21 days is to?..." In your essay, explore ways to improve whatever three attributes you've decided to work on. As Henriette Anne Klauser proscribes in her book by the same title, "Write it Down, Make it Happen."

Step 4. Now you're ready to "leap." You will "LEAP out of bed" and "LEAP before you sleep." Spend one minute (no more is needed) in the morning, just upon waking, to visualize yourself with those winning attributes. It's that easy and that quick. And at the end of the day, keep a tally of your progress. Score yourself a "+" if you've stuck to your plan all the way, a "0" if you did nothing special towards improvement, and a "-" if you feel you backtracked. Keep your scores on a "LEAP" card that you create, or, if you'd like a pre-made one from a spreadsheet, let us know and we'll send you one by e-mail.

"It Sounds Good, But Does It Work?"

You be the judge. Try it and let me know. Employees at major Corporations are using LEAP to achieve better results at work. Top athletes are using a similar tool to win more games, matches and championships. Certainly, something that's effective for them should work for you.

One of the best ways you can stand out from the competition in any job interview, for example, is by knowing yourself better than other job seekers. And if nothing else, the LEAP exercise will provide you with valuable self-knowledge. The Leadership Effectiveness Attribute Profile(r) may prove to be the one extra nudge you need to "leap" into that next great job. So this month, forget the old saying, and do the opposite: LEAP before you look.

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