

# HOW TO FIND A TAX JOB

Secrets of An International  
Tax Headhunter



By Kat Jennings

Founder and CEO, [www.TaxConnections.com](http://www.TaxConnections.com)

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**Kat Jennings**  
Founder and CEO, [www.TaxConnections.com](http://www.TaxConnections.com)



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# Dedication

This eBook is dedicated to all the extraordinarily talented tax professionals around the world! Thank you for trusting me with your professional lives and private ambitions; thank you for the many secrets you have shared about what really happens behind the scenes for tax professionals in corporations, law firms, accounting and tax services firms, government and academia. You guided me through the inner sanctum of the world of tax. The experience taught me how educated, technically gifted, creative, hardworking and passionate you are about taxes! You are the inspiration that set me on this journey to build the very first platform that makes it possible for the world to find you in one click for free!

Kat Jennings

# Foreword

This eBook was written to prepare tax professionals for job changes that will inevitably occur throughout a tax career. After navigating through five recessions, I gained a deep understanding of the impact business cycles have on a tax professional's career. Preparation in advance of these business cycles is smart career management, especially when tax professionals generally make five to seven moves during their careers. As government spending increases the burden on taxpayers to pay higher taxes, organizations turn their focus to lowering overhead and hiring costs. Knowing these business cycles are bound to occur, tax professionals must make smart career management decisions long before they find themselves in the position of searching for a tax job. The value of building a strong tax reputation online, in advance of any job change, cannot be overstated. The reward is improved access to a world of business opportunities and tax jobs that were previously unavailable to you.

Most people do not know headhunters become aware of job trends long before the media ever utters the first word. Ask any veteran headhunter what corporate hiring authorities are whispering in their ears today and you will be privy to the hiring trends of employers tomorrow. Private conversations with trusted headhunters about replacing more expensive employees with less experienced ones are happening behind the scenes again. Companies are already planning for ways to cut costs and this is how some organizations start trimming them. Downsizing an already overworked tax department while increasing staffing of part-time tax consultants is another way companies cut costs and overhead. Firms who ramped up tax staffs before a busy season can easily reduce staff and overhead after busy season has passed. I have repeatedly observed these

patterns over three decades in executive search for tax professionals and they are coming once again.

In 1980, my career in executive tax search started during the recession that began under Chairman of the Federal Reserve, Paul Volcker who raised interest rates to fight inflation following the oil and energy crisis. The early '80s are often referred to as the “Double-Dip” recession with the first January–July 1980 and another during July 1981–November 1982; that is how I started a career in executive tax search with two recessions in a row. The following recessions were 1990–1991, March 2001– November 2001, and December 2007–June 2009. Although no one can predict the future, I am expertly qualified to help tax professionals position themselves in a way that drives new business and tax opportunities to find them easily. Your future success is online!

Kathleen Jennings  
April 2014

## Find A Tax Job – A New Approach



Three decades searching for the most talented tax professionals in the world provides a valuable perspective on the subject. Fortune 500 multinationals retained me to find world class tax athletes for their tax organizations. As a highly experienced international

tax headhunter, you communicate with hundreds of thousands of tax professionals through phone conversations, speaking engagements, face-to-face meetings, and email messages. What was gained from these interactions was an understanding of the challenges tax professionals face at every step of their careers. Whether you are a new graduate seeking your first tax job, or in the middle or late stages of your tax career, I have personally consulted with thousands of tax professionals just like you!

Tax professionals who want to know the secret to getting hired should observe the characteristics of successful tax headhunters. These headhunters are personable, determined and fearless as they face constant rejection. The best ones care about finding a good fit between clients and candidates with suitably matched personalities, work styles and business cultures. On the other hand, tax professionals are focused on learning tax code, rules and regulations, and cutting-edge strategies. A tax professional's ability to understand complex tax code and explain it in a language that people can understand is why they are so valuable to the organizations who hire them. While a tax professional's strength may be deciphering the tax code; the

strength of a superb headhunter is promoting a tax professional's benefits to prospective employers.

One question tax professionals most often asked me was how to get to the top of a tax organization. My advice was, "The one characteristic repeatedly observed of successful tax professionals was their ability to sell themselves and their ideas to those around them!" Today I would answer the very same question with, "A tax professional's success will be significantly affected by how well they market and promote their tax expertise and reputation online." My prediction is that tax jobs of the future will be held by tax professionals who proactively promote their tax reputations online. Those who do not will be left in the shadows!



For years, successful organizations were built through corporate brands. No longer is it "the brand" that people hire; they want to know much more about the talent inside the building! This focus on personal tax branding will be hugely advantageous to those who are early adopters of an online marketing strategy. The organization that refuses to openly promote the tax talent inside their building fearing a competitor will recruit them will soon discover this to be their downfall. The horses are already out of the gates on numerous other social media sites!



# Resumes - You Need Two Types



One of the most important documents you will ever create is a resume as it is the first opportunity anyone has to see who you are as a professional. After reviewing hundreds of thousands of resumes, the ones that stood out clearly stated their technical

expertise and did not leave you guessing about the skills and benefits they bring to an organization. When a hiring manager is looking at resumes of prospective new employees, they are scanning for features and benefits like technical expertise, education, previous employment experience, and written communications skills. A resume that is presented professionally will attract a hiring manager's attention immediately. Most people will spend on average ten to twenty seconds on first glance of a resume. The key is to build a resume that will motivate people to look more closely at all your qualifications.

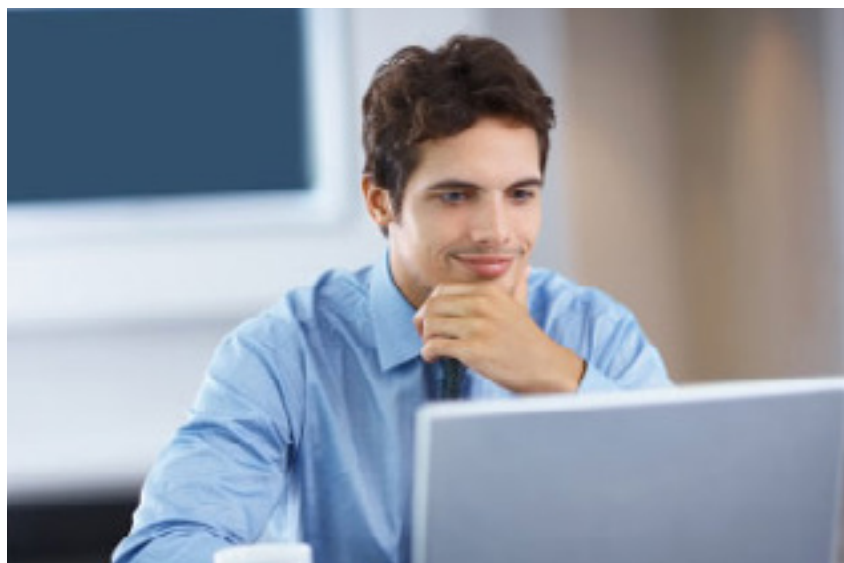
A secret strategy expert headhunters often deploy before presenting a candidate to a prospective hiring authority is tailoring the presentation of a resume to the individual tax job. They advise the candidate to modify their resume and highlight technical areas of expertise that the employer will place a high value on. The strategy is using key technical words on the resume that will catch the attention of the hiring manager. When you have a company with a specific tax job description, it is very important

to highlight the tax experience that the company requests on the job description of your resume. The company has already described in the job description the features they are searching for so it makes perfectly good sense to mention them in more detail on your resume. This will significantly improve your chances of being invited in for an interview. Your technical skills are what every hiring manager is looking for on your resume. Make certain your resume emphasizes the technical skills and experience required for the role only when you have the tax experience!

After reading dozens of books on resumes, my recommendation is “Resumes for Dummies” written by Joyce Lain Kennedy. There is a great selection of resume styles you can choose from to display and promote your tax skills and knowledge. Resumes for Dummies instructs you how to build resumes that are scannable by software known as Applicant Tracking Systems (ATS). These systems manage a company’s resumes and applications in order to match candidates with job openings. Learn how to optimize your resume’s scanning through an ATS system. Over the years, I have placed many tax professionals whose resumes were sitting in ATS systems never to be found by anyone until we brought the tax candidate to the attention of the hiring manager. The reason this happens frequently is that a resume is often in a technical language a human resources representative does not understand or the scanner simply did not recognize it as a match in the system.

# Online Resume

The smartest way to promote your tax expertise to a prospective employer or consulting client is to have an online resume that promotes your tax expertise and tax reputation. Before anyone even considers hiring you, they go to the web to research your qualifications! The secret weapon is making certain anyone can find out a lot about you *in a click or two for free*. Visibility online builds trusts with people and the amount of visibility you have



will directly affect how many doors open for you and your tax career. The more information you make available regarding your tax experience, the more likely opportunities will find you. Invest the time and effort in building

a professional profile and tax reputation online that draws people to you! Smart career management starts with making yourself available to the more than 2 billion people who now go online searching for tax expertise every year.

Corporate tax professionals are overlooked for new tax opportunities frequently because they often do not make the effort to actively market their tax reputations online. As a result, corporations go out to recruiters who must do all the digging and research to find them. These are the same corporate tax professionals who are forced to call recruiters when their company situation changes and they find themselves looking for a new

tax job with a little known tax reputation. What corporate tax professionals rarely understand is a headhunter really works for the company because it is the company that pays the fees that support their lives and families. When you call a headhunter and they tell you they will get back to you when they have a tax job that matches your experience, they really mean it! The real truth is if you do not fit a role with a client they are currently working for then they cannot focus on you. They will call you back if and when they have a client with a tax job that matches your technical skills and experience. Now that you know the truth, there is no need to worry. It was the result of having to turn away from helping thousands of tax professionals over the years that motivated me to find a better solution for you and we did. This eBook is about teaching you a new way to insure yourself from these situations so that more tax opportunities now find you with your online resume!

Tax professionals in public accounting are often overlooked because many of these firms simply want to keep you hidden from competitors. At the same time they are beating their folks over the head to bring in new clients and more billable hours. As stated, “the horses are already out of the gate”! Your success will be largely due to the investment you make in developing your tax reputation online. Many of the big accounting firms cannot move quickly and that will be their downfall. It is the tax professional who moves quickly to adapt to change by promoting themselves online who will take the lead. Look to your own hands and keyboards to invest in building a tax reputation online that draws a consistent flow of valuable new clients and business to you.

Tax lawyers at law firms need to be more stealth about their marketing strategy online. With millions of pages of lawyer’s results on a web search, they should no longer rely upon prospective new clients finding

them above all the other firms on the web. I can tell you for a fact that there are break out stars quietly making new fortunes through their new online marketing efforts with innovative native advertising strategies. Do not rely merely upon your firm's name to obtain clients and a new world will open up for you online. Who wants the cumbersome task of searching through

**Hale Stewart**  
Managing Tax Partner  
The Law Office of Hale Stewart  
Houston, Texas, USA  
Limited Liability Corporation (LLC)  
Cross Border Tax Planning, captive insurance, US Taxes

**Professional Summary**  
I have a masters in both domestic (US) and international taxation from the Thomas Jefferson School of Law where I graduated magna cum laude. I am currently working on my doctoral dissertation. I have also written a book titled US Captive Insurance Law, which is the leading text in this area.

**Experience**  
The Law Office of Hale Stewart  
Houston, Texas, USA Tax  
Managing Tax Partner  
Limited Liability Corporation (LLC)  
2000 - Present

**Education**  
LLM, US and International Taxation 2009  
Thomas Jefferson School of Law  
San Diego, California, United States  
Distinction Honor Roll

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all the law firms to find a tax lawyer? I can assure you none of the clients I know would be willing to do that. They want great search results, fast!

You should check your firm's "Alexa" ranking against that of a marketing platform like [www.TaxConnections.com](http://www.TaxConnections.com)

and you will discover that you are not getting the lift you really need on the search engines. Alexa provides traffic data, global rankings and other information on 30 million websites around the world and you want the lowest number possible. (Google has an Alexa ranking of #1)

Independent tax services providers competing with more than 247 million pages of tax professionals on a web search have discovered how to sail to the top of consumer's minds. Now tax professionals can compete with the huge marketing budgets of the big firms with the emergence of [www.TaxConnections.com](http://www.TaxConnections.com). Previously, independent tax services firms needed to spend thousands of dollars advertising each year. Now the cost

is reduced to pennies a day with TaxConnections Worldwide Directory of Tax Professionals. The search engines recognize this authority site with ever changing content that moves tax professionals higher in online rankings.

Tax graduates searching for their first tax job can now easily promote themselves to hiring managers around the world searching for them. What I discovered as a headhunter was the complete disconnect between new tax graduates and hiring authorities. When I learned the students were blaming the universities for lack of tax opportunities, I knew the true source of the problem was lack of connectivity between the graduates and hiring authorities. During my headhunting years, hundreds of hiring authorities asked me “How can I find tax graduates to hire for starting positions in my department?” They wanted to find tax graduates but they never had the time to appear at recruiting fairs to interview them. This is another problem I wanted to solve which is improved connectivity between tax graduates and companies searching for them and the solution is [www.TaxConnections.com](http://www.TaxConnections.com). Any student who lists their academic experiences and availability can now be easily discovered by hiring authorities around the world who need them.

Government tax professionals are often hidden from public view and that is costing them tax opportunities and valuable connections throughout their careers. The lack of communication between the public and private sectors impedes communication to this day. Get out there and promote yourself online.

Building an online resume and tax reputation should be every tax professional’s first priority of business!

# How To Build A Professional Summary

The first step in your online journey is preparing an engaging Professional Summary for your online resume. This is people's first glimpse of your tax knowledge and expertise. The goal of a Professional Summary is to convert viewers into taking some type of action with you! If you are searching for a new job then state so; if you are searching for consulting clients then state so; if you are looking to invite others to discuss technical topics of mutual interest then state so; if you are looking to hire someone in your tax department then state so, etc.

In Silicon Valley, entrepreneurs build an elevator pitch to promote themselves. An elevator pitch is an interesting and upbeat way to describe what you do; it is a tightly focused mini sales pitch that motivates people to take an interest and engage with you. It is called an elevator pitch because it lasts about as long as you would be in an elevator with someone. The effort you place into building your Professional Summary online can attract new opportunities and business relationships to you. A great pitch motivates prospective employers and business professionals to contact you! A great elevator pitch answers these questions:



- What is the problem your tax service/expertise solves?
- What is the premise of your business? (What is it that you do?)
- What kind of proof of success do you have?
- What is your purpose?

The message must be strong and unique enough to get people to want to reach out to you. A memorable pitch also encourages others to spread the good word about you. The primary goal is to motivate people to take action towards you. Give yourself a professional advantage and review your online resume and update it frequently to improve your online resume and Professional Summary. It takes time so expect to update it and experiment with new ways to motivate people into action with you. Making the extra effort with your Professional Summary will go a long way to improve your success online!

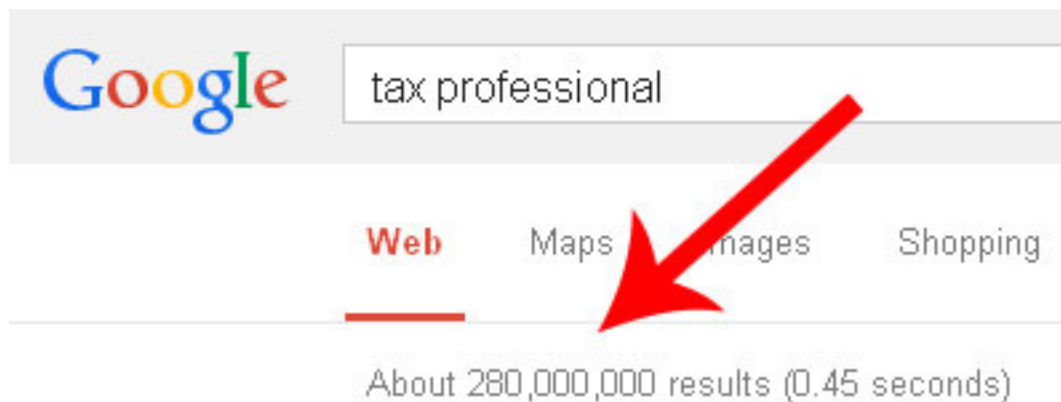


## Follow This Template To Build Your Own Professional Summary:

Hello Everyone! My name is (first name last name) and I am a (Tax Title) with (# years of experience) in (three areas of tax expertise). (Now tell them what your tax expertise will do for them, what benefits you bring to the organization). (Now provide examples of work you have done that have produced great results for a client or company). My purpose is to (save you time and money on your tax return, protect you on tax audits, represent you professionally, etc.). Send me a message and I will send you (something for free-“this is called a lead magnet”- give them a copy of a tax blog, a special tax report, a tax planner, something they will value).

## Tax Jobs – Learn Why They Never Make It To You

When you search Google for a tax professional the results appear on 280,000,000 MILLION pages. Yikes! What business savvy tax professional wants to be caught up in such an online traffic jam? How is anyone going to find a tax professional in all the clutter? If you go to Google and type in



“international tax professional” approximately 157,000,000 million pages of results will appear (today). The search engines offer vast choices but a tax professional’s success depends upon people finding their tax expertise - easily!

Tax professionals rarely consider that their LinkedIn profiles only get the attention of people in their network. They forget about all the improved access to tax jobs that would come to them if no one had to pay to connect with them outside their network. LinkedIn charges companies and recruiters upward of \$7,500 a year to access their database of candidates through their recruiting solutions. Many executive recruiters never contact you with tax jobs because they are unwilling to pay the \$7,500 annual license fee to search the LinkedIn database and this leaves many tax jobs you never hear about. No recruiter knows everybody and unless you make

yourself accessible to everyone online they will never know you either! The LinkedIn business model is supported by charging fees to access information in their database. There is a very good Forbes article written by Nancy Collamer on September 3, 2013 titled “Has LinkedIn Crossed an Ethical Line?” <http://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2013/09/03/has-linkedin-crossed-an-ethical-line/>. The author carefully discusses what is happening to job seekers through LinkedIn.

Tax professionals are realizing that as members of LinkedIn when they type their names into the web, their name appears high on the search results associated with LinkedIn. The first time I ever discovered this, I thought it was great to be associated with the site (and it is a wonderful site) that has a high ranking on the search engines; then I realized that when I view my online profile it is not the same profile that others will see; then I realize others must pay to learn more about me and connect to me through inmail. Due to this barrier, many people exit the site when the barrier is a payment to connect with you. Take down the barriers and *many more opportunities will find you online*.

Another reason tax jobs never make it to you is that your company may block the IP addresses of the best tax recruiting firms. You most likely have not even imagined your firm would do this but they do! Emails of tax jobs from well-known headhunter’s get blocked by many company email servers ever day. I bet you did not think of that road block to your success either.

In order for the flow of new tax opportunities to turn to you, get listed on a site that never blocks connections to you. This is precisely what [www.TaxConnections.com](http://www.TaxConnections.com) does for all tax professionals listed in TaxConnections Worldwide Directory of Tax Professionals. This is why we created a site that freely drives new business and tax jobs to you.

# Tax Jobs Come To You



There are tax professionals who move from one company to another without ever searching for a new tax job. It was interesting to talk to tax folks who had made a few moves during the span of several years without ever sending a resume to anyone. I made it a point to study the phenomena in order to understand it. What I discovered were tax professionals who build their tax reputations long before they ever need a tax job. These tax professionals are writers, trainers, leaders and organizers constantly reaching out to expand their networks. They were weaving significantly more business connections into their professional lives. People reached out more to them regarding new tax jobs and business opportunities. They never mentioned to anyone they were looking for a tax job - they were simply much more accessible!!

A senior tax executive of a corporate organization asked me “Why don’t I ever hear about the senior tax jobs at my association meetings?” and I told him, “The reason is that the senior tax executives may not want the competition!” This happens quite a bit and the best solution is to make it easy for anyone to find and connect with you online. TaxConnections developed technology that utilizes a variety of features that engage you with others such as: Find A Tax Professional, Answer Tax Questions, Tax Blogs, Tax Education and training and much more. You now have at your very fingertips an opportunity to be found by people interested in your tax expertise. This technology dramatically increases the number of tax jobs and business opportunities coming to you.

# Create A Plan of Action

When it is time to get out there and find a tax job on your own, how do you create a Plan of Action? I highly recommend creating an Excel spreadsheet to organize and track your progress. It also gives you a sense of accomplishment to complete the tasks. List the following categories on your Excel Plan of Action:

- Company Name
- Address
- City
- State
- Postal Code
- Date Resume Sent
- Position Reports to Name
- Position Reports to Title
- Position Reports to Email
- Position Reports to Phone
- Human Resource Contact and Title
- Human Resource Contact Email
- Human Resource Phone
- First Date Resume Sent
- First Follow Up Made
- Second Follow Up
- Third Follow Up
- 1st Interview
- 2nd Interview
- 3rd Interview
- Comments Column With Plenty of Space to write your comments regarding the companies targeted and communications with representatives.

The research required to find a tax job is a process and it takes time and effort. After setting up your Plan of Action with Excel, go to the web and research all of the companies you have an interest in. Do not assume that because a company does not have a tax job available they will not be looking. Many companies may have placed an ad for a tax job weeks before you started searching for one. Someone in the tax department could have unexpectedly



resigned and your tax skills may be arriving at the perfect time; or the company may have a need for a tax consultant role that turns into a full-time job. The truth is you do not know what

changes will occur with companies from one day to the next and that is why you should input all the companies you want to work for! As a tax headhunter, most of the tax jobs I filled were never advertised anywhere. Once you get your Excel Plan of Action in place start sending resumes to the hiring managers and track your progress with follow up emails and/or phone calls to everyone.

# How To Approach A Company

The question is often asked, “Should you go directly to a company Hiring Manager or the Human Resources Department?” Although Human Resources departments will not appreciate this answer, my training is to send a resume to the tax hiring manager. You increase your success when it falls in front of the hiring manager because they are more likely to understand your technical qualifications, and they generally make it a priority to get the help they need sooner than anyone else. You may not hear from a Hiring Manager after a first contact it could be due to many reasons including tax deadlines, vacation or too much work. Therefore, I recommend you make contact a second time in the event you were overlooked the first time. People become distracted with new projects each day so a simple second reminder is a very good idea. It is easy to get lost in a hiring managers inbox when they may have hundreds of emails to follow up on from within their own organization. How do you approach them with an email? The following are two sample letters.

(Continued on next 2 pages)



## First Contact To A Hiring Manager - Template

Dear Jack,

It has come to my attention that you are searching for a Tax Director at (XYZ Company). I am interested in learning more about this opportunity to determine if my qualifications are a fit for the (title of tax job) role. My current technical skills include substantial experience that is in line with the requirements mentioned in the job description. My current responsibilities include: (list technical skills you have that match the role's job description; if you do not have a job description simply highlight your tax expertise).

A copy of my resume is attached for your review. You can also view my professional profile online at [www.taxconnections.com](http://www.taxconnections.com). (Remember everyone can fully view your qualifications and online resume at TaxConnections). If you would like a sample of my written communication skills, you can also refer to my tax blog posts, tax questions answered, and a video presentation available on my TaxConnections Professional Profile.

All the best,

Luken Forajob

City, State

Email

Phone Number

This message will lead the hiring managers to your TaxConnections Profile Page which encourages the hiring manager to "Send A Message". If you do not hear anything for two weeks you can follow up a second time with another email.



## Second Email To A Hiring Manager - Template

Dear Jack,

About two weeks ago, I sent a message regarding my interest in the (tax job title) role at (XYZ Company). I want to provide you with additional information that may be helpful in evaluating my qualifications for this role. My interest in this opportunity is due to (state a good reason).

You are understandably very busy and that is why I wanted to follow up with you once again with my resume attached for your review. If you have any questions regarding my qualifications for this role, I would be happy to answer any questions for you. The kindness of a reply regarding my qualifications would be most appreciated.

All the best,  
Luken Forajob  
City, State  
Email Phone  
Number

**Special Note:** If you do not hear from the Hiring Manager then you can start all over again with the Human Resources department. If you do not hear back from anyone after three emails, you can assume... not interested at this time. What often happens is that the first wave of applicants come through from an ad and are often overlooked and forgotten. You want to come in with the first and second waves with a fresh new approach. A very busy executive will appreciate your second follow up and it gives them an example of good follow through on your part.

## What To Wear To An Interview

What to wear to an interview is a frequently asked question. My recommendation is wear a suit or your best dress attire to the first interview. Go all out to create a strong first impression as it is much better to present yourself overdressed than to be understated during your first encounter. Your interviewers will appreciate the extra effort you put forth to dress your best for the first meeting. Women should never wear low cut tops or short skirts; men should be in a suit and tie. It is that simple!



# Types of Interviews



## Phone Interview

A phone interview is generally focused on evaluating your verbal communication skills, technical skills, compensation, and if relocation is required. Phone interviews are a very cost effective way to screen candidates for roles. A phone interview enables hiring managers to make more informed decisions whether to move a candidate forward in the interview process. The goal of every phone interview is to be invited in for a face- to-face interview.

During a phone interview always have your resume in front of you, the job description, and a list of questions you will ask them. Prepare your questions in advance and always have them in front of you during the phone interview. Ask more questions and you appear more interested and prepared; you also keep the interviewer talking and you are much more informed. Always take notes during any phone interview as the information will be advantageous when you have follow up interviews. As the phone interview ends, be certain to thank the interviewer for their time and consideration and ask what the next step is. The interviewer will either tell you that they want to bring you in for a face-to-face meeting, or

they may tell you they will get back to you. If they are truly interested they will invite you in at the end of the phone interview.



### **Face-to-Face Interview**

The goal of any interview is to build rapport with the people interviewing you. A great way to start your interview is look around to see if you can identify any mutual interests. For example, you may see displays of family photos, sports memorabilia, or travels that can start a conversation regarding mutual interests. Spend a few minutes establishing common ground prior to moving into the requirements of the role. Then ask questions about the responsibilities and what technical skills they would expect the person to have for this role. Discuss the technical skills you bring and the immediate contributions you will make if hired for this role. Ask the hiring manager this question, “If I stepped into this role today, what are three primary projects you would like to have me do for you?” This opens the conversation to discuss similar tax projects you have been responsible for and how they could benefit from your skills. You must prove to the hiring manager that you can do this job by presenting real examples of work you have completed in the areas of technical expertise they need. This technique is very powerful because it demonstrates your technical skills during the interview.

As a company introduces you to other people in their organization, I recommend you ask different people during the interview process a couple of the same questions. The reason is that it helps identify if everyone has a consistent view or very different view of the particular role and your responsibilities in the tax department.

Remember to ask technical questions about the role so that the hiring manager understands the range of tax knowledge and expertise you will bring to the organization. If the interviewer starts talking code sections and regulations, and you are uncertain about the code sections they are referring to, simply ask them to remind you of the code section title because you cannot recall the code section at that moment. You can also tell them jokingly, “I am certain it will come back to my memory in my dreams tonight!” :)



### **Group Interview**

The group interview has several people in attendance at the same time with all eyes on a candidate in the room. Group interview techniques can run the gambit of the casual group interview to the other end of the spectrum which some have described as wolf packs. Although I will not mention the names of the companies who used wolf pack tactics, the purpose of the wolf pack interview is to determine how candidates handle stress.

Fortunately for the tax professionals who consulted with me, I was able to prepare them for these commando type, stress interview tactics. Although these types of group interviews can be intimidating for some, you can sail through these interviews by being aware that you may encounter one. When you find yourself in a group interview situation approach them calmly with solid eye contact, direct responses and a smile.

Make certain ask each interviewer for their name if you were introduced to several people at the same time and cannot remember all names during the group introduction. I would ask each person for a business card to gather their name and title at the beginning of the interview; then organize their business cards in front of you in the order they are sitting around the room! Gathering business cards in the beginning also enables you to easily follow up with a thank you message after the interview. If they do not have a business card, write their name and title down in your notebook. Always bring a notebook to take notes during any interview.

### **Behavior Interview**

The behavioral interview is typically used by experienced human resources professionals. During these types of interviews you may be asked about hypothetical situations to discuss how you would handle them. Example questions are: How would you handle a difficult project with no support from colleagues? How would you manage a person who was not doing their job? How would you handle an error made by your boss? These questions provide the interviewer with a perspective on your personality and how you may handle situations.

## Top Ten Interview Mistakes

1. You have typos on your resume that you notice during the interview.
2. You do not research the company and the people who are interviewing you.
3. You do not ask enough questions about the responsibilities of the position.
4. You left a previous employer out of your resume because you were there a short time.
5. You swear or use inappropriate language during interviews.
6. You tell the hiring manager you are unwilling to work overtime or weekends.
7. You arrive late for the interview and did not call to say you are running late.
8. You make disparaging remarks about a previous employer or colleague.
9. You ask about vacation time during an interview; ask about vacation only during offer negotiations.
10. You should never drink during an evening dinner interview, no exceptions!

## What To Do After An Interview

Follow up every interview with a thank you note to each individual. If you asked for the business card of each person you met during your interviews, it is much easier to follow up with a thank you message. One day a Tax Director candidate contacted me and asked, “Do I send a hand written thank you note or do I send an email?” That was the same week two separate employers contacted me and they both gave me their views on hand written versus email thank you messages they received. One stated they preferred hand written and the other stated they preferred email. What you see most these days is the email thank you message as it is faster!

A great strategy for staying in contact with the hiring managers after the interview is to offer to send a writing sample or technical memo to them. Make certain you white out/delete any reference to identifiable company information. Sending a writing sample to the hiring manager is a great technique and reason to follow up with them after the interview! If you would like an example of an interview follow-up message, I have provided one on the next page.



## Interview Thank You Letter - Template

Mr. John Smith  
Tax Director  
APEX Company  
One Great Way  
Grapevine, CA 12345

Dear John,

Thank you for your time in discussing the Tax Manager role with APEX Company. The opportunity to learn more about APEX and the technical and managerial responsibilities of this role was valuable. The possibility of joining your company is exciting because my technical and managerial skills would make an immediate contribution to the company.

We discussed your needs for an individual with strong (tax technical skills) and I have successfully handled these responsibilities with my current employer. In addition to my strong (tax technical skills), my ten years of managerial experience will add value to the efficiency of a global tax organization. People who have known and worked closely with me will tell you that I am one of the most hardworking Tax Managers they have ever met. You can count on me to get the job done even under the toughest deadlines.

Thank you for considering my qualifications for the (title of tax role) position. As you have requested, I am sending you (writing sample, references). Please contact me at any time if you have any questions regarding my qualifications for this role. I am very interested in working for (name of the company).

Kind regards,  
John Smith  
Attachment: References

## How To Handle References

Everyone should prepare a list of references with the names, titles, phone numbers and email addresses of each reference to send to a prospective employer after an interview. Ask each reference for permission to have a potential new employer contact them as a reference prior to giving their name to a prospective employer. You should call in advance to let them know who may be calling and thank the reference for speaking to this employer.

If you are able to motivate a client or previous employer to write a recommendation on your TaxConnections Professional Profile page consider this a treasure and career currency. It is important to ask them to place the recommendation on your TaxConnections profile because you will gain credibility and people can see it for free.

# Compensation Discussions

There is a time and place to discuss compensation so let's start with how you should handle these discussions from the beginning. Whenever you interview and a prospective employer asks about compensation be very careful not to say anything that will knock you out early in the interview process. When an interviewer asks you what salary you are looking for there are two things that will invariably happen. The interviewee could state a salary that is so high they are disqualified early in the process, or the interviewee states a salary so low the perception could be that they are underqualified and this could also disqualify them early in the interview process. Therefore, I recommend candidates state the following during an interview:

“ \_\_\_\_\_, I am here to evaluate the tax opportunity and responsibilities in this role. The tax opportunity is the focus of my interest. As we move through the interview process and determine this is a good fit, I am confident you will make me a fair offer based upon my qualifications for the role.”

It is important to move all salary negotiations to the end of the interview process. Think about it this way, once you understand the value of something, you are willing to pay more for it only if it offers great value. Bottom line, if company management likes you and wants to hire you, they will pay more once they understand the benefits you bring to the organization.

Prior to negotiating your compensation package, I would recommend the following:

1. Write down every detail of your current compensation package (Base, Bonus Target, Stock, Vesting Periods, Medical, etc.).
2. Write down the date of your next review, expected salary increase along with any other benefits.
3. Prepare a written analysis to give to a potential employer if there are a lot of details to your compensation package or verbally communicate your expectations based upon your current salary.
4. Negotiate vacation time before you start so everyone is on the same page regarding preplanned trips.

Always keep an open mind when negotiating salary. There are often benefits like start up opportunities, stock options, signing bonuses or relocation allowances that have more value than a base salary in an offer.

# Conclusion

Now that you are more conscious of what goes on behind the scenes that affects your success, it is time to do something about it. Social and professional media sites like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and numerous others are wonderful sites. However, you need to be hanging out where people are searching for your tax expertise every day. If you are hanging out in communities talking to other tax folks that is a great way to learn but it is not going to bring you a lot of new clients or tax jobs. As a young budding recruiter in the early 1980s I will never forget what my manager Billy G told me. He said, “See all those guys hanging out at the water cooler. They will never sell services to anyone because they spend so much time talking to each other.” I never forgot that valuable lesson as I learned to venture out and do things differently. The purpose of my venturing out of executive search for tax professionals and into an internet entrepreneur for tax professionals is to teach people how to do things differently. There is an old saying that “if you do the same thing over and over again, you get the same results.” The thrill for me is watching the tax professionals who are adopting new strategies to be more successful and they are doing this through [www.TaxConnections.com](http://www.TaxConnections.com). We really thought through how to drive more business to tax professionals and now it is here for you!

**[Please join us for a 45 Day Trial Membership in TaxConnections interactive Worldwide Directory of Tax Professionals. Click Here](#)**

# About Kat Jennings

For more than thirty years, Kat Jennings was retained by Fortune 500 multinationals, international public accounting firms, and law firms to find tax professionals for organizations worldwide. As an internationally recognized expert in tax search, Kat was hired by Apple Computer, AC Nielsen, Accenture, Agilent Technologies, Allergan, Alza, American Express, American Media, Arena Pharmaceuticals, Aon, Baker & McKenzie, Barclays, Bechtel, Cargill, Carl Zeiss Vision, Century Aluminum, Chevron, Clorox, Citigroup, Commercial Metals, Constellation Energy, Deloitte, DLA Piper, E. & J. Gallo Winery, Electronic Arts, Ernst & Young, Fox Entertainment, Fremont Group, GE, Hewlett Packard, Hyatt, Intel, Jones Lang LaSalle, Kimco Realty, KLA-Tencor, Koch Industries, KPMG, Levi Strauss, Logitech, Lucasfilm, Maersk, McKesson, Newell Rubbermaid, Nissan, Oracle, Pacific Gas and Electric, PricewaterhouseCoopers, SAIC, SanDisk, Sony, Sempra Energy, Synopsys, Toyota, Univar, Walmart, Wells Fargo, Vertex Pharmaceuticals, Yahoo, and Xilinx during her career.

Prior to founding TaxConnections in 2010, Kat was the preeminent international tax headhunters in the world. The experience motivated her to build the very first site to connect tax professionals worldwide to the more than 2 Billion people who go online for tax expertise each year. The improved connectivity drives more business opportunities and generates increased revenue for tax professionals around the world.



How To Find A Tax Job - Secrets of an International Tax Headhunter

By Kat Jennings, Founder and CEO, [www.TaxConnections.com](http://www.TaxConnections.com)

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