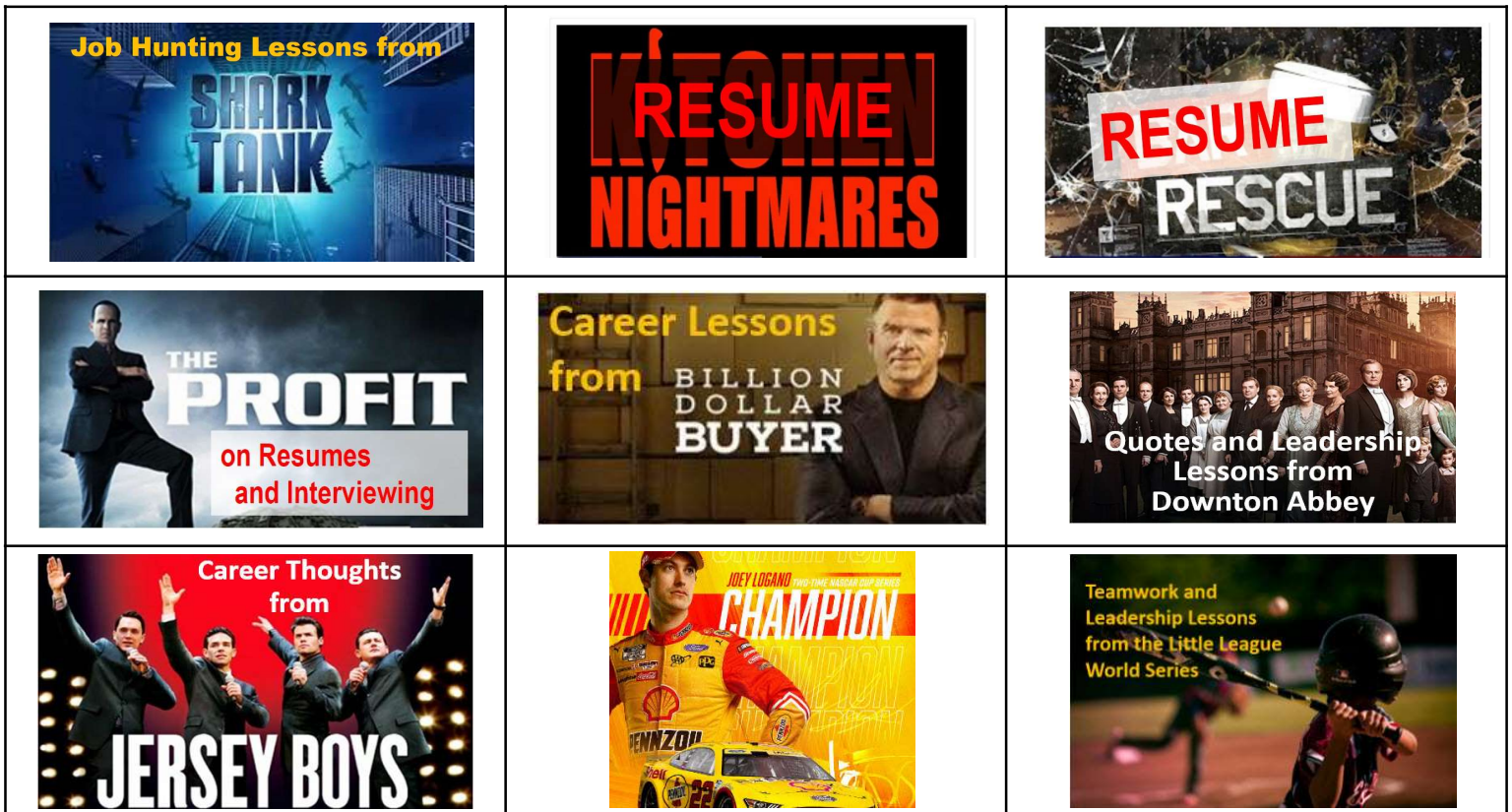


# Presents

## *2024 "Revival" New Articles Added*



**James W. Schreier, Ph.D., SPHR**

**212-Careers.com**



## Introduction

A few years ago, I contributed regular articles to the [Work It Daily](#) (Careerrealism) website. As part of the more than 60+ articles I wrote on resumes, interviewing, and other career issues, I wrote several articles connected to another project I was working on. The Performance Project was driven by lessons I regularly see from movies, concerts, and television shows. This interest is not unique to me; management/leadership gurus like “One Minute Manager” author Ken Blanchard has talked about using classic films for decades. Joseph Lalonde has a project, [Reel Leadership](#), dedicated to leadership lessons from movies, offering insights every week on new releases and classic films. *(Joseph Lalonde has gratefully allowed me to contribute several articles based on films with a [railroad theme](#), and one of the articles is included in this collection.)*

In preparing this collection, I pondered some key points. The first was related to a major part of my work, the Strategic Exploration Tools, based on the work of futurist Joel Barker (*I serve as Joel’s Director of Training*). The point I found interesting was the importance of “paradigms.” It’s what focused my interest in the Performance Project because, more and more, I started seeing lessons on leadership, management, and career issues – through my “paradigm” when I would attend a Broadway show, attend a concert, see a movie, or watch a television show. I encourage job seekers to consider that “paradigm” in similar situations. It does not distract from the entertainment. I find it enhances it!

I considered whether I should write additional articles based on other reality shows, movies, or television shows. I’ve certainly referenced scenes for additional shows in different writings and workshops. It would be possible to write an entire book on topics from “The Office” or “Office Space,” and I frequently showed a hilarious interview clip from “Monk.”



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This series was originally sparked by some of the “reality” shows, so I have pondered whether I should include shows like “Restaurant Impossible,” “24 Hours to Hell and Back,” or “Hotel Impossible” for some additional insights. The answer is twofold: first, *maybe I will*, and second, these shows offer similar messages to those I’ve cited from “Shark Tank,” “The Profit,” etc. The hosts ask tough questions; they dig deep. They don’t tolerate a lack of preparation or not knowing the numbers. These are all dominant messages you’ll find in the following articles.

There is a third point that I considered. Much of the focus on these reality shows is on small businesses getting started or struggling to survive. The messages in these articles are very appropriate for many small businesses.

I decided to include some articles that I felt were related to the broader “Performance Project. This collection includes articles on NASCAR, Little League Baseball, plus the “Reel Leadership” article on the Downton Abbey film. Predictably, you’ll find the messages are similar.

An important note is related to the significance of the “212° Careers” message. While that website is, like this collection, dedicated to job seekers, it is, by definition, intended to be a little stronger information. I offer recommendations that are a bit more honest than a lot of advice. I have always been willing to critique a resume or an answer to a possible question. I’ve researched resume content, demonstrating clearly what matters. More information on many of these topics can be found on the website.

I added a feature to many of these articles, simply designed to highlight key points and make it easier for readers to implement. The concept, “*Omne Trium Perfectum*,” all things perfect in threes, offers three key points with three words each. It fits with one of my oft-repeated messages for job seekers: “**Practice – Practice – Practice!**”

***This work is dedicated to everyone facing career challenges, looking to find their first job, a better job, a satisfying career!***



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## Resume Nightmares – Part I



### KEYS [3 X 3]

*OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM*

1. FIRST IMPRESSIONS MATTER!
2. TOO MUCH INFORMATION
3. WHAT'S YOUR SPECIAL?

For fans of reality shows like “The Profit,” “Kitchen Nightmares,” and “Bar Rescue,” there is familiarity with the strong statements from the shows’ stars:

- “I’m 100% in charge.”
- “This is the worst kitchen I’ve seen!”
- “You can’t keep doing this. You’re giving away too much food and drinks.”
- “What a disaster. This place is disgusting!”

I’ve left out the extreme language used to attack the failing businesses, restaurants, and bars aggressively. They point out every flaw in the structure, confront bad relationships – and make a passionate attempt to improve the business with expert advice. And in many cases, they confront owners who think everything is OK – and they’ve done nothing wrong, despite the failures.

I present this introduction because I’ve been voluntarily reviewing resumes for many people over the last two years, with a particular focus on veterans. Too

many of the resumes I've received have been "Resume Nightmares." I don't mean just the boring, somewhat typical "just the facts" resumes. I mean resumes having me going very "Gordon Ramsey" and wanting to be "100% in charge" of making changes.

### **The Initial Review**

On all these reality shows, they start with an overall review of the business, touring the site, sampling the food and service. It is all about measuring the first impressions. On "Kitchen Nightmares," Gordon Ramsey wants to sample the menu and meet servers before he gets in-depth information from the owners and chefs. (In his latest show, "24 Hours to Hell and Back," he goes in disguise with a few colleagues.) My response to a resume that I receive is similar. I very deliberately turn on my "first impression monitor" and imagine seeing this resume as if somebody had submitted it to me for a job. Frequently, I'll print it out for a different visual impression than I get on a monitor.

It is not uncommon for the resume to generate a strong negative reaction: poorly formatted, small font, long narrative paragraphs, longer lists of "skills." It has taken just a few seconds, but as a potential employer, it's ready for the "C-Pile," and I'm moving on.

I just received a resume to review. I was immediately distracted by the person's current job title appearing under his name at the top of the resume – a job title having very little if anything to do with the positions he told me he was interested in. Then I was drawn to long, 14-15 lines long, 9pt paragraphs on his current and previous positions. This resume also had a highlighted "Willing to relocate anywhere" line right after his contact information. Relevant, but it seemed to distract at the top of the resume. Watch just a few episodes of these reality shows, and you will often see multiple "distractions."

This resume has three strikes against it from the initial review – a high probability for that “C-Pile.”

### **The Deep Dive**

After the first impressions, each of these reality shows proceeds with a “deep dive” into the business. In some ways, each provides an interesting structure for considering a resume. “The Profit” carefully examines the business’s “people, product, and process,” while “Kitchen Nightmare” is eager to explore and sample the menu.

For a resume, it is time to read it carefully, from top to bottom, which is the way the vast majority of HR and Hiring Managers read a resume.

So, I read the candidate’s description of his or her current position, and my first reaction is: “Where’s the beef?” Gordon Ramsey is frequently frustrated by the lack of ingredients in the dishes he orders. The fish is cold or undercooked. The sauce is bland. This is my exact reaction to a resume that contains a list, or worse a 15-line paragraph, of just tasks and duties. I can see what you have done – but not what you’ve accomplished. It’s bland, and the main ingredients are under- or over-cooked.

### **Back to the Beginning**

There are many common elements in these reality shows – in addition to the strong language. One of them I’ll label as “simplification.” For restaurants and bars, even many manufacturing or retail businesses, a primary goal is not expansion; it’s reduction. Often, it’s reducing the number of items on a menu from over 150 to less than thirty. Another frequent problem is these businesses have a “save everything” mentality for useless inventory and distracting memorabilia.

And I've had both of these reactions to several resumes I've received. One of them followed the introductory contact information with a section listing more than 25 different skills. Several other resumes I've seen have listed too many jobs going back too many years, too many courses, too many awards – [TOO MUCH INFORMATION](#) – that's not relevant to a resume.

I've noticed that Gordon Ramey almost always asks, "what's the special?" or "What do you recommend?" On Bar Rescue, the "Recon Teams" ask the same questions. Even Marcus Lemonis on "The Profit" is often asking, "What business are you really in?"

When I see a resume with "too much information," either with lists of skills or duties from an endless job description, I want to ask, simply, "What's your special?"

### **It's Time for "Resume Makeover!"**

Each of these shows follows a very structured process for remaking the target business. I'm thinking that each might also provide an interesting alternative structure for developing a more effective resume. Or perhaps this might provide a different way of finding ways to improve a resume for today's highly competitive market. Let's start with Marcus Lemonis's clearly focused strategy of "People, Product, and Process."

While there remains some debate over the appropriateness of an objective statement, a professional summary, or nothing at the beginning of a resume, I believe that a well-written summary statement that emphasizes your professional strengths is an effective way to personalize the start of your resume. The summary statement should be customized to the position and company you're applying to. This is similar to understanding the cuisine of, for example, an Italian restaurant. It's understanding the mission of a manufacturing or retail business.



The most important part of your resume, the track record of your accomplishments, should clearly consider this model. For each of the positions recorded on your resume, craft a statement that clearly addresses the results achieved (**product**), how you achieved that result (**process**), and who (**people**) was involved (for team and leadership accomplishments). Describing the process is where you demonstrate your skills, not with a list of general terms.

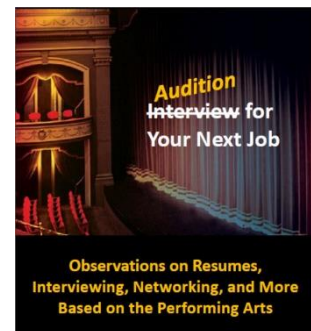
## Summary

This is one different way of looking at improving your resume. In Part II, I'll examine structuring your resume based on some of the principles from "Kitchen Nightmares" and "Bar Rescue."

## About the author

Jim Schreier is a management consultant with a focus on management, leadership, including performance-based hiring, interviewing skills, and retention strategies. He is the author of "**Interview *Audition* for Your Next Job.**"

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## Resume Nightmares – Part II



### KEYS [3 X 3]

#### *OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM*

1. CLEAN AND UNCLUTTERED
2. WILLING TO CHANGE
3. “RECON”AS COACH

In Part I of Resume Nightmares, I laid out the scenario from reality shows like “The Profit,” “Kitchen Nightmares,” and “Bar Rescue,” where strong statements from the shows’ stars harshly attack product (food and service) and owners:

- “I’m 100% in charge.”
- “This food is crap!”
- “You can’t keep doing this.”
- “You’re deluded!”

I left out the extreme language used to attack the failing businesses, restaurants, and bars aggressively. They point out every flaw in the structure, confront bad relationships – and make a passionate attempt to improve the business with expert advice. And in many cases, they confront owners who think everything is OK – and they’ve done nothing wrong, despite the failures.

I used the model from Marcus Lemonis in “The Profit” to examine the “product-process-people” aspects of constructing or improving a resume. In this part, I want to take some aspects from “Kitchen Nightmares” and “Bar Rescue” to improve resumes and LinkedIn profiles.

## The “Kitchen Nightmares” Model

In “Kitchen Nightmares,” Gordon Ramsey focuses first on the quality of the food. While he notices and is often distracted by the condition of the restaurant, he temporarily puts that aside to sample the food. Job seekers should hope that HR and hiring managers will “put aside” a poorly constructed resume, but it is unlikely. Ramsey then does a reasonably thorough sampling of the menu. He asks about “specials,” he asks: “what do you recommend?” He orders things directly relevant to the cuisine of the restaurant – just like someone reviewing a resume is looking for something directly related to the needs of the organization. Ramsey’s improvements almost always call for:

- Simplified, clearly defined food.
- Clean, uncluttered spaces.

I believe this presents a strong message for evaluating/improving your resume. The overall resume format, even for varied formats like a visual resume, should be “clean and uncluttered.” That translates to easily readable font style and size, white space, and good margins. The resume should focus on your most significant accomplishments and your strengths. Lengthy narratives of every duty from every job, long lists of skills (or awards/recognition) quickly become distracting.

In the vast majority of “Kitchen Nightmares,” Gordon Ramsey confronts owners who are burned out, in denial, stubborn, and resistant to change. The drama of these shows is frequently centered around these confrontations. Unfortunately, I have recently seen negative attitudes among job seekers – fortunately in the milder forms of e-mail and phone conversation denials. I recently received a request to review a resume – someone asking for help – just like for “Kitchen Nightmares.” And the resume was indeed a nightmare, rambling, too much information (like a menu with 150+ choices), and nothing that showed it fit the type of position the person told me he was interested in. I made a very clear offer that I was willing to help revise his resume, and I included several articles that discussed some of my major thoughts on content and design. A day or so later I got a simple response: “I showed my resume to one of my instructors, and he liked it.” End of story. If there was a “Resume Nightmare Update” site, I suspect this individual’s resume would be categorized as “still looking.”

## **The "Bar Rescue" Model**

On "Bar Rescue," Jon Taffer takes an approach at the beginning of each episode that I'd suggest to all job seekers, one that I've used when possible and would like to use even more. In addition to installing cameras throughout the bar, Jon sends in a "recon team" to evaluate the bar's décor, cleanliness, quality of food and drink, and service. After he takes over the bar for the rescue, he performs a "stress test" when he fills the bar to capacity with guests to test every aspect of the bar's operation.

Particularly for someone making a significant career change or someone who finds themselves unexpectedly looking for a new job after a long career with one company, the value of this model would be substantial. Find someone to "recon" your resume, giving it a harsh, honest assessment – not just the quick review from a friend who says, "it looks good to me." Enlist someone willing to give you an interview "stress test," asking you multiple tough questions and critiquing your responses.

Before seeing the direct connection to these reality shows, I offered a "Bar Rescue" to a veteran transitioning to the civilian workforce. His resume wasn't a "nightmare," but it needed some significant modifications. This veteran took my advice to heart and made repeated revisions to create a stronger resume. I then conducted a 30-minute phone interview with him, asking him the best and most challenging questions, and provided him feedback. When he landed a position that he targeted a few weeks later, his e-mail thank you labeled me a "true veteran's advocate."

## **Conclusion**

Some job seekers need additional motivation and guidance to prepare for the challenging aspects of their search. It can be disheartening for some. Lost in the struggle to design an effective resume, they may deny a "resume nightmare." Perhaps the formats used by some of these reality shows can prompt job seekers and career coaches to take a different view – maybe it even involves harshly criticizing a resume by labeling it a "nightmare" when that's exactly what it is.

## About the author

Jim Schreier is a management consultant with a focus on management, leadership, including performance-based hiring, interviewing skills, and retention strategies. He is the author of “**Interview *Audition* for Your Next Job.**”

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## Interview Lessons from “The Profit” and...



### KEYS [3 X 3] *OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM*

1. TELL A STORY
2. ACCEPT TOUGH FEEDBACK
3. OTHERS' OPINIONS COUNT

In a two-part series on “Resume Nightmares,” I laid out scenarios from reality shows like “The Profit,” “Kitchen Nightmares,” and “Bar Rescue,” where strong statements from the shows’ stars harshly attack product (food and service) and owners. I wrote that the processes suggested from these shows provide some interesting ways for improving resumes. In reviewing these shows, I was also struck with some key points about interviews.

Overall, there was one strong conclusion: the stars of these shows are tough, excellent interviewers. This offers the opportunity for some good interview preparation for job seekers.

### **Lesson #1 – Start with a Story**

In almost every one of these shows, the interview with the owner begins with “tell me about why you started this business” or a very close variation of this. It’s clearly better than the ubiquitous “tell me about yourself” because it provides clear guidance on what’s expected. While it may not be applicable in all interview settings, I believe that for most, it’s very good to know your story of how you decided to become a teacher, or why you joined the military, or why your first job at a fast-food restaurant sparked your interest in a customer service profession.

I've made the same argument for describing your accomplishments. Each of your significant accomplishments is a story. It's not just a boring, fact-based description of the tasks you performed. Prepare and practice telling the stories of your career. You may find them boring – because you lived them. As an interviewer, I'm fascinated by the [details of your experiences](#).

## Lesson #2 – Tough Love

For many years, I have used a technique that I recognized in these reality shows, notably “Kitchen Nightmares” and “Bar Rescue” – although I never pushed it to the shows' intensity. Maybe the intensity is justified. In many workshops, I have discussed the “tell me about yourself” opening. I have asked all the participants to be prepared to answer that question – and warned them that I would “sound the whistle” or shout “stop” if the answer was weak or irrelevant. In hundreds of examples, the overwhelming majority were stopped after the first few words, frequently with the start of life stories that started with birth.

Watching these reality shows, I've become particularly intrigued by Gordon Ramsey's “You're deluded!” In an “Interview Makeover” world, I'd like to conduct mock interviews with job seekers where weak answers were immediately confronted with:

- **“Stop!** Tell me what you accomplished – not this boring repetition of tasks!”
- **“You're deluded!** What you're telling me isn't the important part of what the result was!”
- **“Give me specifics!** Stop just telling me how great everything is (was).”

## Lesson #3 – Asking Others

From an interviewer perspective, I would love to use one of the techniques used automatically in “Kitchen Nightmares.” It is also an element that I want to recommend job seekers to consider seriously. When Gordon Ramsey first visits a restaurant, he is likely to talk to staff members about the restaurant, about the food, about the owner – before he meets the owner. He'll ask:

- What's wrong with the place?
- Tell me about the food?
- What would you recommend?
- Is this fresh?

He will also sample the food and the service before interviewing the chef/owner. Jon Taffer ("Bar Rescue") does a similar "recon" before confronting the bar owners.

Think about this for a minute. Internal candidates for positions have a distinct advantage over external candidates because the HR representative or the hiring manager have a detailed awareness of the candidate's performance. They know about the person's strengths – and weaknesses. From that perspective, I want to check references before I interview a candidate, not after.

For a job seeker, follow that same path. Whenever possible, find out from colleagues, supervisors, and coaches what they see as your significant accomplishments, your strengths, and your weaknesses. Use that information to improve your resume, your LinkedIn profile, and your interview preparation.

#### **Lesson #4 – Willingness to Be Coached**

Each job seeker's career skills are different, as is his or her receptivity to coaching. Some job seekers eagerly search for coaching support and follow the advice. I have worked with individuals on resumes who relentlessly submitted revision after revision pursuing the guidelines I have suggested. On the flip side, I have seen the stubbornness of individuals who are just looking for someone to tell them everything they're doing is right.

These reality shows raise the interesting issue for individuals who can admit they need a career coach with a tough, "nightmare" style coach. This coach will deliver brutal, accurate feedback. This coach will keep you on track with deadlines and reminders for updating resumes and practicing interviews.

"Kitchen Nightmares" and "Bar Rescue" feature tough interviewers who ultimately ask one key question: "Are you willing to listen – are you willing to change?" Very appropriate for many job seekers.



## Lesson #5 – Asking Good Questions

It can also be extremely beneficial for candidates to ask good questions during an interview. If the expectations for a job are not clear, and that's often true, ask a strong question as early in an interview as possible. Ask: What are the key expectations for this position? Or: If the person hired for this position was extremely successful after the first year, what would he or she have accomplished? Notice how these questions are strong and direct, just like those from the reality shows?

Almost any episode of “The Profit” is an excellent lesson in asking penetrating questions. Marcus Lemonis is interviewing potential business partners who hope he will “make an offer.” He questions owners, employees, suppliers, and customers with great examples of questions that elicit valuable information.

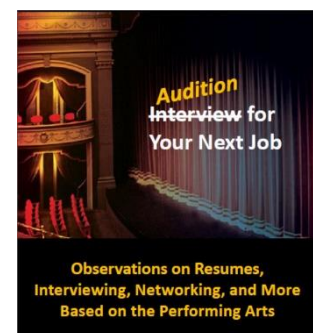
## Conclusion

The stars of these reality shows, particularly “Kitchen Nightmares,” “Bar Rescue,” and “The Profit,” feature excellent interviewers who ask penetrating questions that target the key issues. Career seekers can benefit from thinking about how their own preparation can benefit from learning – and practicing – answering and asking this type of questions.

## About the author

Jim Schreier is a management consultant with a focus on management, leadership, including performance-based hiring, interviewing skills, and retention strategies. He is the author of “**Interview Audition for Your Next Job.**”

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## Job Hunting Lessons from “Shark Tank”



### KEYS [3 X 3]

*OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM*

1. KNOW YOUR NUMBERS
2. BE PREPARED – PRACTICE
3. ARROGANCE OR SUPERMAN?

In several articles, I’ve connected job hunting issues to some reality shows, including “[The Profit](#),” “[Kitchen Nightmares](#),” and “[Bar Rescue](#).” I’ve been remiss in not examining possible lessons from “Shark Tank,” perhaps because of a larger number of episodes and the need to review several from the different perspectives of a job seeker and a recruiter. You may think that “Shark Tank” is a platform for entrepreneurs to pitch their product, to be challenged by the “Sharks,” and hopefully make a deal. But that is exactly what every job seeker is trying to do: get the interview and make the sale. There are multiple lessons to be learned from the behaviors of both the “Sharks” and a multitude of entrepreneurs who pitch products.

### Know Your Numbers

There are numerous reasons why individuals don’t get offers on “Shark Tank” – just like there are numerous reasons why individuals don’t get job offers. Many times, the “Sharks” don’t see the “marketability” of the product. Likewise, an organization frequently eliminates a candidate based on missing skills or experience.

However, one of the glaring errors that appears on “Shark Tank” is someone unfamiliar with the “numbers” of their existing or proposed business. There have

also been multiple examples of individuals “withholding” correct numbers resulting in sharp criticism and almost automatic dismissals.

For job seekers, there are a lot of emerging trends: changes in resume formats, virtual interviews, and “fast-track” hiring, to name a few. One change that has clearly emerged is the focus on “accomplishments,” not just skills and experiences. The focus on “accomplishments” means that results are **specific**, with measurable numbers – just like the ones demanded in the “Shark Tank.”

If you’re going to make a claim, on your resume or LinkedIn profile, or in an interview, you need be prepared to answer some tough questions:

- What was the result in the last month, the last six months?
- What’s the trend? Explain why it’s increasing! Or decreasing!
- Exactly what did you do to create this result?
- Who else was involved in creating that result?

I’ve been surprised by the number of examples in “Shark Tank” where that last question revealed some very important – and frequently damaging – information.

As a job seeker, you cannot “hope” that an interviewer won’t probe for the details of your accomplishments. Better yet, you should be presenting these details upfront with your [accomplishments on your resume -- and with your interview answers](#).

### **Be Prepared - Practice**

This point is obviously related, a broader perspective on the “Know Your Numbers” message. Interestingly, “Shark Tank” provides numerous examples of great examples of preparation. This is a very valuable source of information for job seekers – numerous examples of calm, serious, and detailed presentation of an idea – and numerous examples of “over-the-top,” crazy presentations. There are a lot of examples of what to do – and not to do – as part of an interview.

While there are some questions posed on “Shark Tank” for dramatic effect, or occasional comic relief, the overwhelming percentage of questions are serious, direct questions intended to provide critical information. The “Sharks” are experienced (and wealthy) entrepreneurs with extensive experience in starting, funding, and growing businesses. This translates to skilled interviewers asking direct questions – with opportunities for job seekers to observe how these

questions are answered. Some participants clearly try and avoid answering questions. It doesn't work in the "Shark Tank;" it's unlikely to work in a job interview.

One example of a successful presentation from two individuals: they recorded numerous "Shark Tank" episodes, then stopped the recording after each question, and practiced how they would answer the question. Multiple episodes, multiple times practicing with a partner! That's good practice.

Unfortunately, "Shark Tank" is also a laboratory of examples where individuals "on the carpet" just aren't prepared with responses to basic questions.

### **Arrogance or Superman?**

Two other problems appear on "Shark Tank." After receiving several resumes that contained lists of 25 or more "skills" and others that contained long lists of "awards," I addressed the possible issues in two articles, suggesting that [Superman \(or Wonder Woman\)](#) doesn't belong on your resume and cautioning that a resume with too many "awards" may come across as [arrogance](#). There was one presenter who responded to multiple challenges on his strategy with "I can do that." The "Sharks" quickly got frustrated with his "I'll do anything you suggest" approach and were quick to go "out." Similarly, presenters showing a high level of arrogance, telling the "Sharks" they're "wrong," never succeeds. The "Sharks" have all the power (and all the money), just like HR and the Hiring Manager have all the power (and all the money).

While not frequent, I've noticed several presentations where, when challenged by the "Sharks" about the potential value of their product, respond with "I've got another idea." These presenters are criticized for being "all over the place" or "lacking focus." On the other hand, successful presenters are almost always sharply focused on a single idea with the depth of a real vision for the product, or a family of products that are clearly connected to a brand.

### **Feedback**

Getting feedback is a significant problem for job seekers. Feedback on your resume or LinkedIn profile from potential employers is extremely rare, often non-existent. Feedback on an interview is often limited to hearing nothing or: "We're

going in a different direction,” “We’re not interested.” In the “Shark Tank,” feedback is frequent, direct, and often brutal. It’s frequently mixed, with positive feedback coming from some “Sharks” and negative feedback coming from others.

There are two issues here: the importance of getting feedback and the importance of responding to feedback correctly. The first of these, getting feedback, is the bigger challenge for job seekers.

You can ask recruiters, HR staff, and hiring managers for feedback on an interview – it’s almost impossible to even ask for feedback from these people on your resume or LinkedIn profile. You might hear something vague like “good job” or even “we see you as a good candidate,” but that is still not specific.

Therefore, it is important for job seekers to identify and connect with individuals who are qualified and willing to provide honest, tough feedback. It must go beyond friends’ or relatives’ “expertise” in crafting a resume or LinkedIn profile. It must go beyond “three easy tips” for your resume or interview.

Receiving feedback is equally important. Again, “Shark Tank” clearly works at preparing presenters to simply thank the “Sharks,” for both positive and negative feedback – and for being “out.” But it doesn’t always work that way as there are frequent examples of presenters arguing with “Sharks.” I’ve always been impressed by how performers so professionally respond to applause, often simply nodding, standing openly and inviting more. “Shark Tank” provides equally valuable examples of presenters leaving without realizing the value of the feedback they’ve been given, and in most of these cases, leaving without a deal. Arguing with an HR Recruiter or a Hiring Manager is likely going to result in the same thing – leaving without a job offer.

## **Networking**

The “Sharks” are ultimate masters of networking and job seekers can learn by just watching how they network with each other, sometimes combining for deals, and how each of them builds a network of products, e.g. products to be sold on television, and how they even combine entrepreneurs with other businesses they own. They seem to be constantly looking for synergies that will help businesses grow.

For job seekers, networking can be difficult and time-consuming. Yet, it is the most important part of your career search. According to Lou Adler, one of the top experts on hiring and recruiting, there are two job markets. The better jobs are in a hidden job market compared to the online market where jobs are posted. Adler recommends a “20/20/60” job search plan. He recommends spending 60% of your job hunt networking. The other 40% is split between responding to online posts and developing your resume and LinkedIn profile.

LinkedIn has become a primary networking site. It’s also the virtual networking site where individuals build connections, exchange e-mails with possible connections, access articles, and search for those 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> linked members who might be important for you to connect with directly. “Shark Tank” provides interesting insights on looking for not just networking opportunities but networking synergies based on common interests and objectives.

## Conclusion

“Shark Tank” is a successful and enjoyable show for many reasons. Some very interesting lessons can be extracted by job seekers by watching the behaviors of both the “Sharks” and the participants, by watching the episodes through the multiple lenses of resume and interview preparation.

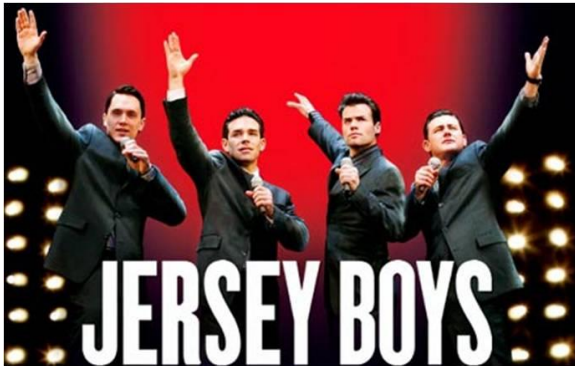
## About the author

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## Career Thoughts from “Jersey Boys”



### KEYS [3 X 3] *OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM*

1. “MY WAY OR?”
2. DEMONSTRATE YOUR PERFORMANCE
3. LISTEN TO TEAM

The story of “Jersey Boys” (Frankie Valli and the Four Seasons) is filled with examples – and lessons to be learned – about leadership and management. There are also some good illustrations of some of the key principles addressed in many of our 212-Careers articles. So here are a couple of key points connecting 212-Careers to the Performance Project.

### Recruiting – Selection

In “Jersey Boys,” during the early days of the group, recruiting and selecting members is portrayed as being handled exclusively by Tommy DeVito. “I’m looking for a fourth guy so we can get some work...this guy is great...” Tommy manages the group in a “my way or the highway” approach.

The group initially came together (with Tommy, his brother, and Nick Massi). Tommy “brought Frankie Valli into the group.” The group performed as a trio when Nick Massi, or Tommy’s brother was in “Rahway Correctional Facility.” Then, when the group started touring, Tommy always picked the fourth member. At least Tommy – or the group – let others know they were looking for a fourth. It wasn’t until Joey (Joe Pesci) pushed Bob Gaudio to Tommy – that the selection process changed – but only because Joey and Frankie pushed it. Talent Scout???

Tommy did not want to audition Bob Gaudio. He resisted – and hesitated to join in – even with Frankie, Nick, and Joey pushing it. Even after “their sound”

emerged, Tommy continued to resist, simply offering Bob Gaudio a two-week tryout. But Bob’s experience (his track record of performance) allowed him to refuse Tommy’s offer – and demand equality in the group – on his terms. Again, Tommy balked – only to be confronted with a strong stand from Frankie.

In these brief moments we can see that:

- Past performance, in the performing arts, auditions are the best predictors of performance.
- Multiple inputs, i.e., a group interview, are likely to be a better predictor of future performance than opinions of a single person.
- First impressions are powerful. Frankie and Nick did not like the selection of one new group member – perhaps just because of the way Tommy introduced him to the group – as a decision already made.
- In the performing arts, auditions are the standard for selection. Outside the performing arts, it’s becoming clear that simulations and performance-based interviewing techniques have the power to support better selection decision-making.

### About the author

Jim Schreier is a management consultant with a focus on management, leadership, including performance-based hiring, interviewing skills, and retention strategies. He is the author of “**Interview Audition for Your Next Job.**” He has extensively studied “Jersey Boys” for lessons on leadership and management. Visit his websites at [www.farcliffs.com](http://www.farcliffs.com) and [www.212-careers.com](http://www.212-careers.com).





## Teamwork Lessons from the Little League World Series



Every year, in late August, the Little League World Series presents outstanding examples of athletic competition, drama, the amazing talent of 11 and 12-year-old players from around the world, and sportsmanship at the highest level. Interestingly, behind the on-the-field performances, there are some fascinating lessons for teams and team leaders in other settings. There's even a good message for job seekers on effectively presenting their team accomplishments on their resumes, LinkedIn profiles, and during interviews.

This insightful perspective comes from a source that is a little surprising: the rules of Little League Baseball. In most organizations, the "rules" are often the constraints that irritate employees – and lead to "discipline" if they're broken. Human Resources may love rules, but they frequently don't even understand the difference between policies – which can be "broken" – and rules – which should never be broken. Is there an employee or customer anywhere that hasn't run into the dreadful "it's just policy?"

Yet, for most people there's an environment where rules are not only tolerated, they're recognized as critical to success. In the world of games, there are rules that have defined the very nature of the game and its success:

- "Go Directly to Jail – Do Not Collect \$200" in Monopoly
- Queen of Spades in "Hearts"
- "No Trump" in Bridge

In Little League Baseball, there are several rules unique to Little League. They are not part of baseball at other organized or professional levels. They include:

- Starters can re-enter.
- Multiple positions
- A player may pitch a maximum of 6 innings per week.
- Designated runner (Once per inning/Once per player)
- Everybody must play – everybody must bat.

The pitching rules are even more constraining with maximum pitch counts and prescribed days of rest based on all pitch counts.

### **Thoughts for Leaders and Managers**

I have challenged managers in predominantly customer service settings to consider the implications of their scheduling where associates are frequently working long daily hours and days without breaks. There is much written about stress in the workplace. I've known scores of employees who enjoyed their "customer contact" jobs in small doses but felt stressed when it was either constant or extended over long shifts. I revert back to thoughts about baseball where teams switch from offense to defense during every single inning. It's no wonder that "gamification" is becoming more and more popular in business applications.

Employees performing multiple "roles" is nothing new. Many jobs have multiple roles built in. They're built into the job. But it's still fairly common to keep people assigned, locked-in, to a particular job or department. In baseball, however, at all levels, the value of the "utility player" is recognized. In Bridge, the "no-trump" hand is considered the most difficult game to win – and therefore offers the most points. A classic organizational management technique is "job rotation." Today's complex organizations should prompt them to consider revitalizing this process. It would benefit both the organization and the individuals selected.

Does the "designated runner" rule key any possibilities? Why not recognize that in certain situations, you should call on a "specialist" to perform in a specific situation? It's not in any way demeaning to the person (who by the way just got a

hit) and it doesn't remove the player from the game. It's an outstanding example of teamwork.

The Little League rule of "Everyone must play – everyone must bat" has an interesting connection to hiring. The Little League teams that play in their World Series attract the best players in their region, in their countries. The coaches identify and select young talent, talent that's capable of playing multiple positions well, talent that excels in at least one, perhaps two or more positions. There are clearly star performers based on their season performance. At the same time, other players often have the opportunity to "star" in a game – and they often do. The rules of the game give everyone the opportunity to excel.

### **The Ultimate Value of Teamwork**

It's not mentioned in the "rules", but the teams in the Little League World Series display the ultimate in competitiveness **and sportsmanship**. They definitely celebrate their individual and team successes, for individual at-bats and games. But they also acknowledge the successes of their opponents. Teams from Asia bow to the opposing teams and its fans after a game; they bow to their own families and supporters. They express gratitude for their success and for the support of their fans. Unique to Asian participants, NO! This is the same gratitude expressed by the bows of Broadway casts and hundreds of performers in gratitude for attending and applauding a performance. While it's commonplace to be thanked for placing an order, e.g., in a restaurant, and it's even common to be thanked upon payment by the server, I'm always impressed by the business that also thanks me when I'm leaving the building. On the other hand, I'm unimpressed when I walk out of a theater or a store, and it feels like no one knows I was even there.

### **And for Job Seekers**

While the messages from Little League Baseball are primarily for leaders and managers, there is a message here for job seekers as well. Job seekers should be expressing gratitude to potential employers – even if they don't get the job or even the second interview. More importantly, the Little League nature of

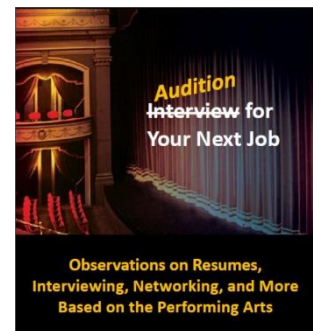
teamwork is something job seekers should consider. Emphasize the multiple roles played on a team in your resume or during an interview. Ask for opportunities to take on additional roles in your current position.

Leaders, managers, and job seekers can learn a lot about outstanding performance from the outstanding performance of these 11 and 12-year old Little Leaguers.

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*This is a 212- Careers, Performance Project article. [info@212-Careers.com](mailto:info@212-Careers.com)*

## Career Lessons from Billion Dollar Buyer



### KEYS [3 X 3]

#### *OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM*

1. NETWORK – NETWORK - NETWORK
2. PREPARE – PREPARE - PREPARE
3. IT'S ABOUT RESULTS!

Like articles I've written based on "Shark Tank," "The Profit," "Kitchen Nightmares," and "Bar Rescue," I find these business "reality" shows interesting from a variety of business perspectives. In addition, I started seeing messages for job seekers, with unique points of view based on the various themes of the different shows and the unique personalities of the shows' personalities.

"Billion Dollar Buyer" is a reality TV show starring business owner Tilman Fertitta, CEO and owner of Landry's, Inc. Each hour-long episode features Fertitta traveling the nation to sample new and innovative hospitality products.

### **Lesson #1 – Networking – Referrals**

There's a very quick message available to job seekers in the first few moments of every "Billion Dollar Buyer" episode. The companies that Tilman is going to visit are referred to him by members of his staffs – from all the different restaurants, casinos, and entertainment brands. Hiring guru Lou Adler suggests that 60% of your job search should be spent networking. It is interesting how this is emphasized by the introduction of companies in "Billion Dollar Buyer." Tilman's professionals are staying in tune with new ideas and possible companies. As a job



seeker, networking is a powerful way for companies to become aware of your interest. LinkedIn has become a major platform for networking. Your job search must contain a plan that focuses on sparking a company's interest in you.

## **Lesson #2 – Know the Company – Know the Candidate**

There's a two-way message here that is clearly portrayed in "Billion Dollar Buyer." When Tilman first visits a potential "partner," he's armed with obvious information provided by the referral. But more importantly, he starts with "interest-questions-experience." That's a great formula! His interest almost always starts with wanting to know who the people are who started the business and the "how & why" it got started. He asks excellent probing questions that most of the time are answered well. More on this point later. Finally, in most cases he wants to "experience" the business, making the product, trying on the clothes – whatever he can do to get a real "feel" for the business.

While I've seen most of the business owners do a good job of answering Tilman's questions about their business, there are several examples where the owners are clearly unprepared. Particularly they are examples of owners unfamiliar with their own numbers – sales, costs, etc. What's interesting among some of the possible "partners" on "Billion Dollar Buyer," the businesses helped on "The Profit," and the "pitches" from "Shark Tank," is that this is a frequent problem. I have a strong mantra for job seekers that states: "Practice – Practice – Practice." If you're fortunate enough to be interviewed by someone asking good questions, you'll likely be asked for the specific results of your work. There's a clear message here that restates that as Prepare – Prepare – Prepare!"

## **Lesson #3 – Accomplishments – The Challenge**

One of the most important elements in "Billion Dollar Buyer" is the opportunity for the potential partner to demonstrate their products in one of Tilman's businesses. Every one of these "tests" is a very real, very serious opportunity for the potential partner to prove the value of their products. For some possible partners, it might be a relatively simple test to prepare for. For example, Tilman invites a company to provide samples of their sauces, or jams, or drink mixes for a

test at one of his restaurants. In other cases, the challenges are much more complicated, involving significant preparation and cost (which Tilman apparently covers). There are episodes where Tilman commissions significant lighting fixtures for one of his restaurants or doing a complete mockup of a café for one of his casinos. Tilman Fertitta wants the small businesses he visits to succeed and frequently makes offers just to give them a chance – even if it’s something that might not lead to a major deal with his company. He also offers frequent second chances.

In whatever format Tilman offers for the challenge, this is based on accomplishments. And it’s fascinating to watch because almost every episode offers examples of potential partners who:

- *Have or haven’t done their homework* on the nature of the setting for the “test.” More than once potential partners admit the test is occurring in a restaurant they’re never visited. This shocks me – and provides the exact wrong example for job seekers. If you’re offered an opportunity to test your product at a restaurant, you should be checking out the restaurant’s website, perusing the menu, and visiting the restaurant to experience service, food, etc.
- *Listen or don’t listen to directions* from Tilman. While most potential partners react exactly as directed by Tilman, there are several examples where potential partners almost do the exact opposite of what Tilman requires. I find this fascinating from the hiring side of the job search; I see insights that would almost immediately disqualify a candidate. In several “Billion Dollar Buyer” episodes, the “failure to make a deal” is obvious based on these behaviors. In today’s world, indicating a willingness to learn, a willingness to change, is guaranteed to be a positive factor for a job search or on-going career success.
- *Offer accomplishments or excuses.* This is perhaps the most important because it’s tied to the overwhelming evidence that is focusing on accomplishments, what you’ve done, with specific, measurable results is the key to success for your resume, your LinkedIn profile, and your interview preparation. Tilman often shows frustration with potential

partners who don't focus on what they can do – but offer excuses for something that's "happened to them."

It's interesting to note that Tilman is very calm as he interacts with potential partners, calmer than the mostly calm, but sometimes irritated Marcus Lemonis from "The Profit," and completely opposite of the frequently fiery Gordon Ramsey ("Kitchen Nightmares") or Jon Taffer ("Bar Rescue"). Perhaps there's another message here for job seekers: the need to be prepared for interviewers with different personalities.

## Conclusion

In some ways, the messages from "Billion Dollar Buyer" are different from some of the other reality shows. However, the messages focusing on preparation, practice, awareness, and a focus on achievements are consistent – and important for job seekers and anyone focusing on career success.

## About the author

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## An Interviewing Lesson from Downton Abbey



In the final season's second episode of Masterpiece's award-winning Downton Abbey, under-butler Thomas Barrow, convinced he will be one of the first of the staff to be let go because of rumored staff reductions at the Abbey, goes on an interview for an assistant butler job. While viewers are not presented with the entire interview, there's enough portrayed to draw some important lessons for job seekers.

Thomas's attitude toward the interview is obvious before it begins. When a fellow member of the "downstairs staff" wishes him good luck before his interview he responds: *"If I was lucky, I wouldn't be leaving."*

While the interview segment portrayed is short, it contains some interesting dialogue. Responding to a question as to why he's leaving Downton Abbey, his response is short: *"It seems like the right time for a move."* He then asks, in a slightly condescending tone: *"Tell me Mr. Moore, what exactly is an assistant butler. I'm not familiar with the term."* When told the job combines the duties of an under-butler, a footman, and a chauffeur, Thomas is told that *"I think you need to climb off that high horse,"* and he responds with *"Goodness, this is a job for a one-man band."* His response, including the non-verbal tone, prompts Mr. Moore to respond with: *"You're a delicate lookin' fellow aren't you?"* After what today would be considered an illegal question about whether or not Thomas is married (he isn't), Mr. Moore ends the interview with: *"All right Mr. Barrow, I've got enough. We'll let you know."* Again the non-verbal tone and look tell the story that he's being dismissed.

Even in this short segment, there are four classic and powerful messages on attitude and preparation. Thomas Barrow is unhappy about his potential dismissal from the “Abbey.” He transfers that to a decision to be clearly unhappy about looking for a new job.

The first message is a positive note. Thomas, thinking he’s going to be dismissed, immediately starts looking for a new job. We see him studying the ads in a newspaper. A timeless message for sure. We know that the best time to be looking for a new job is while you still have one. At least, Thomas faces that reality.

The second point is also a reality that’s timeless. People lose jobs frequently for reasons unrelated to their performance. Today we talk about how technology is eliminating jobs, how online shopping is closing retail stores and eliminating 1000’s of jobs. So in 1925, Thomas Barrow is facing the potential loss of his job caused by changing social, cultural, and economic factors. History repeats itself.

Thomas’s first problem is one common with some job seekers today. Attitude is key, and a hiring manager will read a poor attitude within seconds, and it will influence the entire interview. This was beautifully portrayed in just a few minutes on Downton Abbey. You can see from Thomas’s non-verbals and responses that he is not looking at this interview positively.

Kelli Barrett is a Broadway actor who’s written some wonderful articles aimed at actors but perfectly on target for all job seekers. In one of the best, she argues that actors must “love the audition” even if it is the most frustrating, time-consuming process that results in an overwhelming majority of rejections. If actors need to “love the audition,” job seekers need to “love the interview.” Thomas needs to “love” that interview even as he’s upset by the possible situation he’s facing.

Thomas Barrow is easy to dislike as a character on Downton Abbey. Faced with a hiring decision – with a thorough job of interviewing him and checking his background, few would hire him. However, Thomas Barrow does have some significant accomplishments in his previous five years at the Abbey. But he’s unprepared and unwilling to present these during his interview. And that’s the second lesson from this incident. Unprepared, he fumbles with his answers and instead becomes aggressive toward his potential new boss.

With the first question, why is he leaving the Abbey, he avoids the opportunity to present an answer related to his accomplishments and provides an almost sullen “*seems like the right time*” response. Then when given a golden opportunity to present his wide-ranging talents and accomplishments, his response to the expectations of the new job is the very negative “one-man band” comment.

A final point, very important point. Thomas Barrow shows absolutely no curiosity about job other than his challenge to the title – and no genuine curiosity about the challenges being faced by his potential boss. His interviewer lays out the need for changes, providing Barrow with a great opportunity to not only show his interest in the position but his willingness to meet the new challenges.

Attitude, preparation, and accomplishments – three critical elements of anyone’s, anytime, success in a job search. Portrayed beautifully here in a segment from Downton Abbey.

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## Additional Job Search Observations from Downton Abbey



In the first parts of Downton Abbey's Thomas Barrow's job search, we saw Thomas's frustration coupled with his lack of preparation. Fortunately, in the series finale, we discover that Thomas's job search was "successful," to the extent that he found a new job, but that ultimately he was able to finally land back "home" at the Abbey in a position he will truly enjoy. The journey provides some additional messages for job seekers, extracted from Thomas's experiences in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, but relevant for all job seekers in today's environment.

The second interview we see with Thomas is very different from the first and Thomas's assertiveness is to be praised. Obviously seeing a visual difference between the condition of the estate and the advertisement for the job, Thomas assertively asks "Perhaps you could tell me more about the job?" When Sir Michael Reresby ignores the question as he tours the dilapidated Dryden Park estate with Thomas, Thomas persists, again asking for "more about the job? How many staff do you have?" It is obvious that Thomas decides to move quickly to get away from this situation, finally taking himself out of consideration with "Maybe I'm not quite up to it?"

Job seekers today, like Thomas, need to assertively inquire about the real expectations of the job. And they need to be willing to walk away from a job that does not meet their expectations – even if the need for job is great – which is exactly the situation Thomas sees.

In the same episode Mr. Barrow responds to Carson's comment on his sullen attitude: "I can't see the future, Mr. Carson. But then I suppose, none of us can."

This is an interesting comment because it is so important for job seekers to be [looking at the future](#), in determining the vision for their future and in the need to monitor the trends of the job market and job search techniques.

In the series finale, the story returns to Mr. Barrow's job search with the early scene of his announcement that he's found a new job, working at the estate of Sir Mark Styles, with Mrs. Jenkins and a maid, Elsie, as the only other staff.

Unfortunately, we are not treated to any details of how Thomas interviewed. He is offered the job via a letter. But we do learn very quickly that it's a pretty safe assumption to conclude that he took this job under the pressure he was feeling to get a job, any job. And that makes it equally easy to conclude that no matter how the interview went, Thomas endured it under that pressure.

One online review site summarized Thomas's new job perfectly. *"Barrow landed a job at another Yorkshire estate, working for a dull old couple who would have caused the statuary to keel over from boredom."* It is obvious from every scene with Barrow at his new job that he's bored and hating every minute of it. Perhaps Thomas is reflecting the frustration of the 70% of employees today who reportedly are "disengaged." When prompted by one of his former co-workers from Downton Abbey to get along with everyone, he responds "there isn't much of an everyone to get along with."

But the final scenes of Downton Abbey bring Thomas Barrow back to Downton Abbey in the esteemed position of Butler, replacing the seemingly irreplaceable but ill Mr. Carson. And in this final moment, there are two outstanding messages for job seekers. Barrow's job searches and short experience with his new job with the Styles have demonstrated to him how good his job at Downton was. A colleague e-mailed me with a perfect description: Barrow now has an "attitude of gratitude" that shifted his whole being making him a much more "likeable" character. When he is at the wedding and volunteers to serve champagne during the crisis, he did it out of true commitment and concern which is not the Mr. Barrow we had come to know and love (conniving and manipulating). The truth is HE CHANGED, which changed his whole perspective and hireability AND made him the right candidate for the Downton job, which he would have never had been considered for previously.



In today's competitive world, several top companies have realized the value of recruiting from former employees. I'm familiar with a top U.S. company which actively recruits from "alumna" and has found that when these former employees return, they have noticeably stronger attitudes, higher retention, and lower absenteeism than employees who've never left. I had a student several years ago who actively contacted employees who left on a regular basis, offering strong incentives to return, with excellent results.

The final point from Downton Abbey is a solid point for all job seekers. Barrow has clearly earned this job based on his job performance – his selection for the position is easy. Even though he's left – for a very short time – it's really an internal promotion. His performance, over ten plus years of service, is known. His flaws are known, his growth as a person is known. Plus, when Mr. Carson is asked if this is OK with him, his response is clear: "Of course, sir, I trained him." It is the challenge for every job seeker today to make their performance known, in the interview, on the resume, and on the LinkedIn profile. It's performance, clear accomplishments that distinguish top performers, not skills and experiences.

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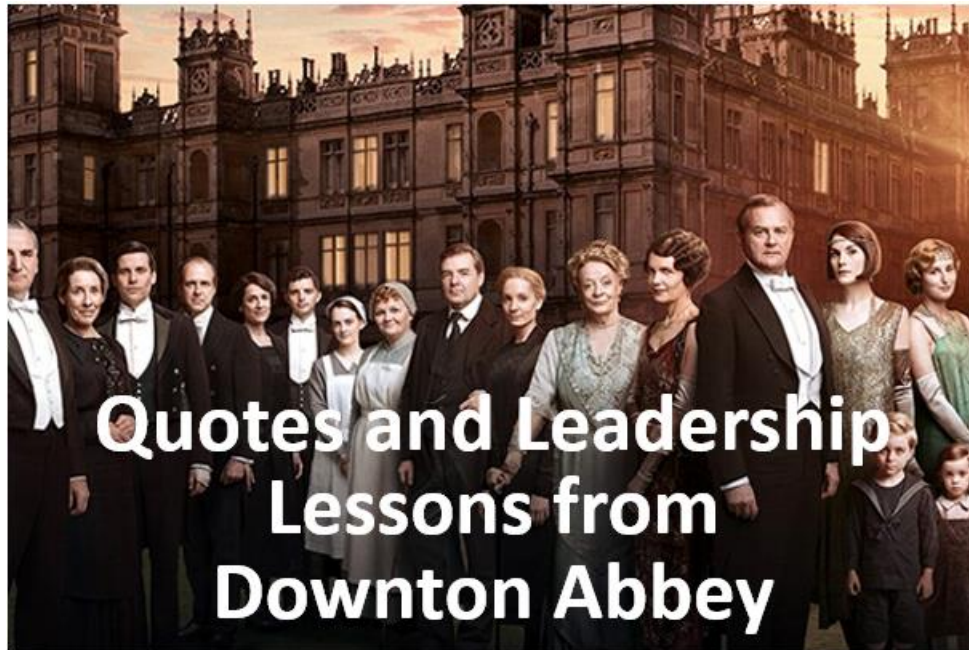
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# Quotes and Leadership Lessons from Downton Abbey

A Reel Leadership Article



*This article was written for, and originally appeared in, Joseph Lalonde's [Reel Leadership Blog](#), an outstanding source of regular articles on leadership from films. He has gratefully allowed me to contribute several articles based on films with a [railroad theme](#).*

Several episodes of the classic Downton Abbey television series provided fascinating examples of leadership and a variety of other management issues. Now Downton Abbey, the movie, brings a story on an even grander scale – and with some outstanding lessons for today's world.

Downton Abbey opens with a picturesque scene, a historical reality that offers a thoughtful observation on today's "tech-driven" world. Downton Abbey is going to be the site of a royal visit from King George V and Queen Mary. The notice, originating as a hand-written note, travels by mail train, by a mail truck, by a messenger on a bike, and then is hand-delivered to Lord Grantham. It's an interesting scene to observe, how a message travels – clearly the opposite of instant communications today driven by just the press of a few keystrokes.

## #1 – Think about Communicating

In an almost “Back to the Future” moment, I’ve begun communicating with several coaching clients by **mailing** printed copies of articles to them. The first client I started doing this with “loves it.” He reported very quickly that he’s able to focus more on the key points in the articles, keep track of the articles because they’re not lost in the overload of emails and downloaded files and that they initially grab his attention when they arrive.

## #2 – Communicate Directly with Persistence

No one communicates more directly in the Downton Abbey world than the Dowager Countess Violet Crawley, perhaps the most loved character brilliantly portrayed by Maggie Smith.

*Machiavelli is frequently underrated. He had many qualities.*

*I am an expert in every matter.*

*I never argue; I explain.*

While Violet’s sometimes caustic wit may not be appropriate in many organizations today, the honesty contained in many of her messages is worth noting and often acknowledged by her family members. Her knowledge of family history is obvious as well as her knowledge of the “culture” of living in a world of powerful families, royalty, and the formal structure of the “upstairs-downstairs” working environment.

With some hesitancy, Violet eventually addresses a major family crisis involving the Lady Maud, who is Robert's first cousin once removed and he is her closest relative. The two families have fallen out over who should inherit Lady Maud's estate. This must be noted because Imelda Staunton, who plays Lady Maud, is likely recognized by many as the much-hated “Dolores Umbridge” from the Harry Potter movies. She’s definitely a different character here although there are a couple of lines and a couple of facial expressions that made her instantly recognizable.

Lady Maud: *How clever of you to find me.*

Violet: *Well, not really.*

Lady Maud: (Planning a seemingly clandestine meeting) *We'll have it out once and for all, but now I must go to Her Majesty.*

It's Violet and Isobel (Lady Merton) who eventually, and directly, confront the issue with Lady Maud. The confrontation doesn't start or end well, with Violet stating in her typical style: *"You should be in an asylum."* Isabel (Lady Merton's) interjects: *"There is no need to argue and argue. I expect you to face it, Violet."*

Isobel: *You are amazing, Violet. You haven't won.*

Violet: *You know I didn't believe in defeat.*

Violet clearly doesn't give up, thinking about how staying connected can help the situation, then seeing how Tom Branson's blooming relationship with Lady Merton's daughter (Mary and Tom *"have agreed to correspond"*) could solve the inheritance issue:

*I won't dislike it. I'll lick the stamps!"*

This connects back to the communication message earlier. It's another reminder to think about how we communicate today versus how communication flowed in the late 1920s. And to be continually reminded of the classic communication message on *"the media is the message"* (Marshall McLuhan)

### **#3 – Loyalty to the Organization (Family)**

Tom Branson (Allen Leech) is a displaced Irishman who comes to Downton Abbey as a chauffeur in the television years before marrying into and becoming a valued member of the family. His political views, including his "opposition" to the monarchy, are well known to the family and to fans of the television series -- and clearly introduced in the movie. He is, early in the film, recruited by an Irish radical who intends to assassinate the King, assuming that Tom is an ally. Fortunately for the King, Tom quickly becomes suspicious of this man interested in the King's "security" and foils the attempt. Tom's loyalty to the family at Downton Abbey is stronger than his personal opinions.

Lady Mary spots Tom coming out of a pub with the intended assassin. She engages her sister Edith in a conversation:

Edith: *Do you think Tom would ever try to make trouble?*

Mary: *Why do you say that?*

Edith: *He says there's some army type who has him under surveillance.*

Mary: *Tom likes to shock. That's all. He'd never be disloyal to his family. Never.*

Tom's position is clear, recognized even by Princess Mary:

*Something Mr. Branson said about deciding what matters: "to me, the crown matters more than any of us."*

It continues with another interaction with Tom Branson and Lucy, whom he doesn't know at the time, is the heir to the family's fortune.

Tom: *You could love people you disagree with.*

Lucy: *And you love them?*

Tom: *They're decent.*

Enough said, definitely seeing how Tom is integrated into the family and contributes to its success.

Political differences are nothing new, in the Downton Abbey era, in today's world, and in today's organizations. There's a constant undertow of tension among families, within families, and within the broader world of early 20<sup>th</sup> century Europe. Within the Downton Abbey family and relatives extending beyond the estate, there is, for the most part, a unity driven by family. As organizations today, not just in the United States, struggle with a variety of challenges, how does the leadership of an organization maintain a clear focus?

#### **#4 – Leadership Style**

There are a lot of different leaders portrayed in Downton Abbey: a King and Queen, multiple leaders within the Crawley family: Robert (Lord Grantham), Lady Mary, the Dowager Countess, multiple staff leaders: current and retired butlers Barrow and Carson, kitchen head Mrs. Hughes, head cook Mrs. Patmore. A common element observing these leadership styles is the dominance, defined by

the culture of the era, of carefully defined roles and an authoritarian style. Yet there are noticeable differences.

It would be easy to refer back to examples of Lord Grantham and his wife, Cora, Countess of Grantham and their leadership struggles and successes during the television series. Here both their involvement is limited, more observing and commenting. Lord Grantham shows an appropriate fatherly head of the house leadership style, with a friendly sense of control, a quiet in-charge personality that's matured over the years as he's grown in understand his spouse, his daughters, his sons-in-law, and his grandchildren. He often expresses his view's in a calm, hopeful manner:

Robert: *Tom, you're keeping your enthusiasm under control. Is this the Irish patriot making a reappearance?*

Tom: *I know you find my opinions highly entertaining.*

There's a much stronger sense of "role clarity," particularly among the "downstairs" staff: butlers, footmen, kitchen staff, ladies' maids. They're a team – and it shows – but each member of the team has a tightly defined job to perform. And the leaders, typically, express their leadership clearly. Current butler, Barrow, who's replaced for the King and Queen's visit by retired butler Carson are both no-nonsense leaders who are quick to point out that they're in charge:

Carson: *I will play no part in this. Suppose his majesty finds out and is displeased?*

I chose that example because it's an interesting prelude to Carson's role in one of the most important plotlines of the story – one which shows Carson's leadership style in a different light from what most viewers would be familiar with. He becomes an active participant in what I'll call the "engagement plot."

## **#5 – Engaged Employees Take Risks**

When the King and Queen's staff take over all the roles of the downstairs staff, Mr. and Mrs. Bates (John and Anna) encourage the staff to take back the house to save their pride. It starts with a simple challenge that energizes the staff – and

shows how much the different members of the “downstairs” staff come together. While it’s a somewhat unbelievable plot, it’s an entertaining look at an engaged workforce.

*Anna: Mr. Bates and I want to defend Downton’s honor. We would like your opinions on how you were treated at luncheon.*

Over Carson’s temporary objectives, they concoct an elaborate plot to eliminate the King and Queen’s staff (sleeping pills for the cook, locking the butler in the deserted sleeping wing of the house, getting the footmen sent off-site). It works, and there are several minutes of great teamwork. The King and Queen are delighted when they find out that the Downton Abbey staff prepared and served their meal.

## **#6 – Awareness Is a Critical Skill**

I have always believed that awareness, of surroundings, and what’s going on in situations, is a valuable skill for leaders. In Downton Abbey, there’s an interesting plotline that develops, involving two key characters, Lady Mary and her maid Anna. First, there is Lady Mary’s awareness of what’s going on with Tom Branson, to the extent that she ends up being part of Tom’s final actions to stop the assassination attempt. Then there is the start of a different plotline involving Lady Mary asking Anna:

*Have you seen the silver box from the table by the fire in the drawing-room? My grandmother used to keep playing cards in it.*

As a number of items begin to disappear, it is obvious that Anna goes on the alert, retaining, and connecting information from different places/sources. Items are missing from upstairs and downstairs. When she spots one of the Queen’s staff members in a room where she doesn’t belong, her suspicions eventually bring her to the clear conclusion and action where she confronts the thief. It provides an additional lesson where Anna clearly states her principles to a person who believes it’s “OK” to steal from the wealthy family. And a reality lesson, some people’s attitudes, and behaviors don’t change even when confronted by a principled challenge.

Anna: *Why did you do it, Miss Lawton?*

Miss Lawton: *Doesn't it ever worry you that on each table in this house there's an ornament that you couldn't buy with a year's wages.?*

Anna: *And what's your answer? Because everyone can't have them, no one should have them.*

Miss Lawton: *No. My answer is why can't I have it? Don't worry on the one I take, there's not more than one in a hundred who would notice they're gone.*

Anna: *But they're not yours Miss Lawton, and they never will be.*

Miss Lawton is unmoved by Anna's challenge, even when she asks: "What would her Majesty think?" Lawton's response: "Keep your advice for someone who's interested, Mrs. Bates."

Both Lady Mary and Anna demonstrate the key elements of situational awareness, the perception of things in their environment, the comprehension of the significance, and the projection identifying the actions they each take.

## **#7 -- Honor the Past – Hope for the Future**

The very appropriate, final lesson from Downton Abbey, is perfect for today's organizations. In 1927 (as seen in both the movie and the television series set 5+ years earlier), the world is changing fast. The organizational style of their world is changing, the roles of staff are changing (shrinking), their businesses are changing, and technology is rapidly evolving. Sounds like today!

While Mary ruminates over the changing times, the thought of leaving Downton Abbey, her thoughts about leaving are discouraged while her role in leading the future are encouraged by the Dowager Countess (Violet).

Mary: *I have such doubts, Granny. I'll be right to keep it all going but the world it was built for is fading with every day that passes. Will George and Caroline still be living that life?*

Violet: *They're living it now. Our ancestors lived different lives from us, our descendants will have different lives, but Downton will be part of it. **You are the future of Downton.***



Leadership today can successfully build on its history, the stories of its origins, and must create specific inspiring visions of the future.

## Conclusion

With a story that follows six television seasons, 52 episodes, and a time span of 12+ years, there are many, many stories of leadership, teamwork, conflict, and communication that connected with references in the film. There's the dynamic of four different generations at Downton Abbey, how everyone from Granny to the little children adjust. It's momentary but certainly sparks thoughts for the multi-generational challenges of today. There's a direct address of Barrow's sexuality – raised in the television series but explored here for both the negative and then the positive of his accepting the understanding of a gay relationship. For those looking for observations on a variety of issues in today's world, there are plenty of opportunities to nod or to contemplate the observations from the film.

Beyond the glamour, the costumes (and the constant need to change clothes), the scenery, the music and pageantry of the parade and closing ball, and the food, there are a lot of interesting observations to be taken from Downton Abbey, the movie.

*This was a guest article from James W. Schreier, Ph.D., SPHR. Jim is a management consultant with interests in leadership, management, hiring, retention, and organizational culture. He also works extensively with strategic exploration and career issues. He can be found at <http://www.farcliffs.com>*

*His articles on hiring lessons from the Downton Abbey television series can be found at <http://www.212-careers.com>*

## Translating Skills for a Career Transition



### KEYS [3 X 3]

*OMNE TRIUM PERFECTUM*

1. TELL A STORY
2. ACCEPT TOUGH FEEDBACK
3. OTHERS' OPINIONS COUNT

An article on a national news site described the transition made by a former NFL player to becoming a “gas man” for a NASCAR Cup Series pit crew. The story struck me as interesting from a personal perspective but as I reflected on the article, I saw a powerful message for individuals looking to make a significant career change.

Many “career changers” struggle with the question of how to translate their experience from a different job or industry. Common questions are:

- “What jobs am I qualified for?”
- “How do I describe my “experiences” on my resume? In an interview?”
- “How do my “skills” translate to a new field?”

This story about a NASCAR pit crew member may give “career changers” some insight into how to translate the skills from their experience into powerful information for a resume and interviews. However, it is not one simple step. It is not just identifying skills. The “skills” need to be presented in the context of specific accomplishments. Let’s look first at the skills identified by the NASCAR pit crew member:

- “Over-the-wall crews with bigger, faster, stronger and more agile personnel”
- “It's a whirlwind, with several tasks being performed in a tight space with traffic and tension all around.”
- "It's a high-pressure situation, and you have to be able to think in the moment"
- "Things can go wrong. You have to be prepared for those to happen...being safe.”

There are some skills and traits here that can be easily identified: faster, agile, several tasks being performed, tension all around, high pressure, think in the moment, things go wrong, prepared, and safe. I can easily identify several positions from entry level in multiple service industries to higher level supervisory, management, and professional positions where those traits and skills would be valued.

Next, let’s look at what a “career changer” needs to do: identify the skills and traits they learned and developed in their experience. This can be a relatively easy step but it also leads to one of the biggest mistakes made by many job seekers. Too often, a resume contains laundry lists of skills. In today’s fast-changing, highly demanding world of technology-driven jobs, organizations are not interested in the skills that you have – they want to know what you’ve done with those skills and what you can do with those skills for them.

So the critical action is to describe their significant accomplishments and include in those accomplishments the skills and traits demonstrated!

Here’s one “skill” listed on an actual resume, in this case, a veteran wanting to make the major career change from the military to the civilian workforce:

***Ability to make rational decisions under extreme duress/stressful situations.***

Here’s one of the “Experiences” from the same resume:

***Responded to emergency calls for support and mitigated crisis situations through pro-active response to anticipated issues.***

The “experience” is OK as a typically listed job duty – but it is not a strong accomplishment because it does not indicate the result of the “responses to emergency calls.” Let’s put the pieces together. A strong accomplishment identifies the Challenge, the Action (Skills/Traits), and the Result.

***Provided 360 degree coverage for base personnel and assets in the event of a ballistic threat/insurgent attack. Ensured one-hundred percent operability of assigned systems and responded quickly in extremely stressful situations to maintenance issues to ensure continued operability.***

As a hiring manager, not only do I see the Challenge, the Action, and the Result of this accomplishment, I am encouraged to know more about it. I am interested in interviewing this candidate to learn more about his or her story.

There’s another piece to this puzzle. The critical pieces here, identifying the transferable skills and connecting them directly to accomplishments will fall short if a “career changer” is not applying for jobs where those skills are needed. Unfortunately, job ads or posts are too often just as weak as candidates’ resumes, listing little more than basic duties. Fortunately, many organizations are starting to create ads and job posts that more realistically portray the challenges of the position – highlighting the work that top performers do. This will provide better information for searching to match accomplishments with possibilities. I’ll use a basic retail sales position here – something everyone can identify:

Traditional Job Ad/Post: ***“Help Wanted. Retail Sales Position. The retail organization is seeking highly motivated sales staff for a large electronic retailer. Stores open 7 Days a week – Base compensation plus commission.”***

OK, that proves I can write a really bad ad. However, it is still fairly typical. Here’s an ad/post that’s better for the organization – and enables a job seeker to get a more accurate picture of a job that might meet their skills and desire.

“Performance-Based” Ad/Post: ***“Every day is “Black Friday” at our Electronics Super Store. There are mobs of people lined up every day to take advantage of our daily deals. Our sales consultants thrive in this chaotic, highly charged environment. They react quickly to ever-changing demands from customers and our***

***inventory staff to manage ‘just arrived’ merchandise. Our top sales consultants thrive in a competitive environment and earn top commissions.”***

This is simply an example of how a job seeker can examine an ad or job posting to see if it offers the opportunity to use the skills you’ve identified from your experience. You can explore an organization’s web site for possible connections. You can ask questions about the challenges of the job during an interview. Moreover, you can match the skills you’ve developed in your experience to the demands of many jobs in today’s work environment.

## **Conclusion**

Creating a resume seems natural to many job seekers because all one needs to do is to list skills and job duties. However, that is not going to create a resume or profile that portrays what you do best and how that fits the needs of an organization. Translating those skills and experiences into substantial accomplishments is what leads to more effective interviews and a satisfying career opportunity.

## **About the author**

Jim Schreier is a management consultant with a focus on management, leadership, including performance-based hiring, interviewing skills, and retention strategies. He is the author of “**Interview Audition for Your Next Job.**”

Visit his websites at [www.farcliffs.com](http://www.farcliffs.com) and [www.212-careers.com](http://www.212-careers.com).

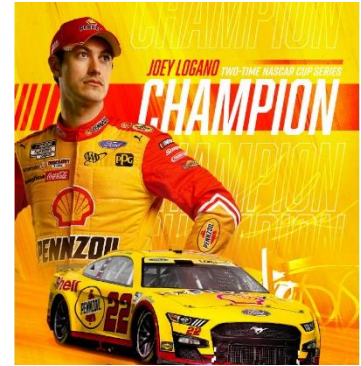
This article is based on a [USA Today story](#):

**“Ex-NFL player Boone Stutz prefers pit road over gridiron”**



## Leadership Lessons from the 2022 NASCAR Champion

On Sunday, November 6<sup>th</sup>, NASCAR driver Joey Logano earned his second championship with a dominating performance in the final race of the season. In his post-race press conference, he provided several clear messages for leaders in any setting.



### The Performance Project

Several years ago, I created “The Performance Project” to identify leadership and management lessons from the performing arts. I deliberately minimized, but did not ignore, references to the sports for one simple reason. I’ve seen – and actually have colleagues – who published on leadership with a sports focus. I repeat that I do not ignore this topic. I’ve posted links to several sports-related stories and authored two articles on lessons from the Little League World Series and one on how an NFL player translated his skills into a NASCAR pit crew career.

### Stepping into a Leadership Role

In 2022, NASCAR driver Joey Logano, already a champion from 2018, and driving for the powerhouse Ford team owned by legendary Roger Penske, found himself moving into the “lead driver” role on the three-driver team when his mentor (and the person who recruited him to the team), also a champion Brad Keselowski, left the team to become a team owner. Logano would now be the “senior” driver at 32 years old with teammates: a 28-year-old, 7-year “veteran” and a first-year “rookie” in NASCAR’s top series. It’s worth noting that both of his teammates come from families with notable histories and connections in the racing world.

### Strong Leaders Beget Strong Leaders

I’ve learned from a career in the coaching/career counseling world that family lineage and connections are often a powerful influence, mostly positive but sometimes negative. Entrepreneurs beget entrepreneurs; doctors beget doctors, etc. The overwhelming message of “It’s the Manager” extends to leadership and has been proven in several settings. I’ve formally studied leadership and management for decades but equally influential have been my good fortune in working for some excellent leaders and managers.

So, the fact that Joey Logano has emerged not only as a champion on the track, but as a leader is not surprising. Perhaps there’s a bit of a surprise in how clearly he stated his leadership philosophy after 300+ miles of intense competition and an hour-plus of post-race celebration. The question: **“Roger (Penske) was in here, he said that when Brad (Keselowski) was leaving,**

**he told you that you're now the veteran, you're in charge, you've got to step up. What did you do to meet that request of his?"**

Here are Logano's exact words from his post-race press conference.

### **A Leader Is...**

*I'm not the type of leader that wants to be on a pedestal above everybody and say, hey, I've been here the longest, listen to me.*

*It's not how I do it, it's not how Paul (Wolfe) does it, it's not what I think is best.*

### **Leadership Is Shared**

*I wouldn't say it's just me stepping up. I feel like (Ryan) Blaney stepped up a lot, and Austin (Cindric) is a good leader right off the bat, too, with this Next-Gen car.*

*Yes, my experience is valuable because I've been here a long time and I know how things work and I know how the sport works and all those type of things. That's all well and good. But I had to unlearn a lot of things when it came to the race car itself.*

### **A Leader Listens**

*I feel like the best way a lot of times is to really get everyone's opinion and gather it and form your own opinion; and if it's something you feel truly strong about, you fight for it.*

*And then as a team, that's what I want: I want my teammates as drivers to voice their opinions and put something together. When we feel like something is right, we form one voice together.*

*Same thing all the way through it, from TC all the way down. That's what we want as a race team.*

### **A Leader Is Willing to Have Tough Conversations**

*That means there's hard conversations that just have to happen. That's good to have. As a leader, together, that's okay with me. I'm fine with the tough conversations. I love tough conversations. They're better, if you ask me. That's what you need. That's where growth comes from. It doesn't come from shoving things underneath the rug.*

*This is great, and that's what — this is where the hard conversations happen, when they come to championships at the end of the day. And when you think of what Penske was able to do this year as a team, winning an INDYCAR championship and a Cup championship in the same year, never been done before, that's a really special thing.*

## Roger Penske's Influence

It's valuable to note, with a clear connection to the points above, that Roger Penske's leadership influence – and modeling – is evident. Penske's leadership style (described on multiple sources), directly for his race teams, is summarized in his own words:

*"I think that's what we're doing in racing. Racing is a great platform for innovation and expertise and also effort. ... I can tell you teams that are winning are not just lucky, they're putting in the effort to make the success they have around themselves."*

## Conclusion

The world of sports often provides clear examples of superior performance and teamwork, valuable lessons for leaders and managers. The excellent point here is the **clearly articulate principles on leadership** from Joey Logano. Another reason to congratulate this champion.

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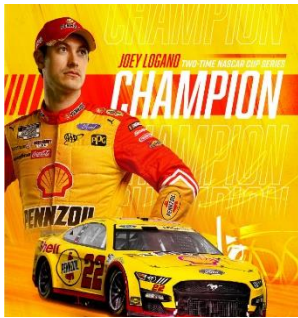
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## A New Season: Additional Leadership Lessons from a NASCAR Champion



In November of 2022, I wrote and posted an article on “[Leadership Lessons from the 2022 NASCAR Champion](#).” Expressing a little surprise at a message delivered just after a grueling final race and a championship celebration, the clear powerful message from Joey Logano is a good one for leaders in a variety of settings. Fast forward to February 2023 and a new NASCAR season is about to begin. Again, I’m surprised – perhaps not as much as November – by another strong message for Joey Logano as he looks forward to the new season.

### Just Because You’ve Won Once (or Twice)

In this pre-season interview, Joey got to an important point quickly:

*“It’s nice to run out the season as a reigning champion or a previous champion, whatever it is, but it’s over in my mind. We had our moment to enjoy it, to celebrate. Now it’s back to work. We’ve got to do it again. The goal is the same again this year. We can’t do the same things – we’ve got to find more and adjust again. Nothing changes.”*

Sports and the performing arts seem to do a good job in driving this point. I’ve heard from multiple performers that I’ve interview for The Performance Project that “you’re only as good as your last role (performance).” Sometimes, for individuals or organizations, there are the constraints created by a “remember when” paradigm.

### Never Enough

*“Our team motto this year is ‘never enough,’ and it’s for those reasons. You can always do better. You can always do more. You can’t be content and be OK that you won two championships.”*



### Cultures Comes from the Top

Legendary car owner Roger Penske’s impact on his organization, Penske Racing, and Joey Logano was noted in the “Champion” article. And the powerful influence of an organization’s culture is evident again here.

*“You’re a product of your environment. You are who you hang out with, and I’ve been there for a while now — the majority of my career. I’ve seen it, I live it, and he doesn’t tell me this. Roger doesn’t tell me anything. You just know. ...I will say being around him sure isn’t a bad thing to have that mindset as well.”*

Among Penske's clear messages establishing the clear culture he wants are his 1) recognizing accomplishment in the moment, then immediately moving on to what's next, and 2) what's reported as a Penske classic, "not tripping on your headlines."

For the major teams in NASCAR, there's a direct connection between teams and the auto manufacturer, in Logano's case, Ford Motor Company. A meeting with CEO Jim Farley resulted in no congratulations but a message Logano ultimately took as a challenge.

*'Well, it's good you guys won. You're probably not going to win next year. You'll probably be a little more comfortable because you guys already did it.'*

Logano's response:

*And I was like, what? I was instantly pissed off. Instantly. What did this guy just say to me? After letting it set in for a month, I realized what he was doing. He's really smart. Now I have a chip on my shoulder because now it's to prove a point.*

### **It's a Team with Multiple Leaders**

There are many parallels that can be drawn with a NASCAR team and the teams in many organizations. There are multiple leaders. In NASCAR, they can include the manufacturer, the owner, the crew chief, the driver, and more. Owners, department heads, managers, supervisors – in many organizations.

For many NASCAR teams, like many teams in other organizations, the "frontline" performers, the customer service workers, the sales teams, the teachers, the artists, the drivers are the individuals who "perform." For the top NASCAR teams, a driver or drivers act more – and are seen more – as leaders. Prior to the 2022 season, Joey Logano "shared" team leadership with Brad Keselowski (who left for a bigger leadership challenge of team ownership). Acknowledging his role as the team leader, however, he sees it more as a mentor.

*"I don't think there should be any A, B, or C driver. We need to try to do it together as a group. "Now, granted, I may have the most experience, but Blaney's got enough experience to help along now, too. Together, we can lead two other rookies with us."*

### **The Future – A New Season**



How the 2023 NASCAR season for reigning champion Joey Logano is unknown. It started with a win in his Daytona 500 Qualifying Duel. And in a wild overtime finish to the Daytona 500, Joey finished second, a car length behind after 500 grueling miles.

Joey Logano is portrayed as an enigma by some, fiercely competitive on the track, jovial family man outside the car. Perhaps it's that combination that makes him interesting to follow from a leadership perspective. But there is definitely something in the attitude he expresses that deserves notice.

*"I got a cool little badge and a great parking spot for Daytona.  
That's it. It's over, and we've got to do it again."*

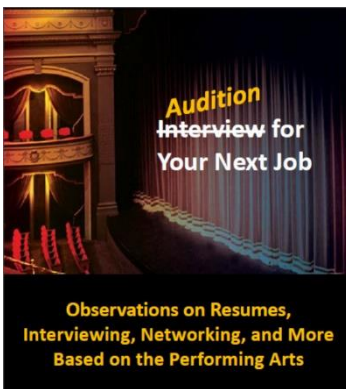
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*The Performance Project focuses, primarily on lessons from the performing arts. However, there are occasional articles from sports. This is the third NASCAR related article and I've written an article on [Leadership Lessons from the Little League World Series](#).*