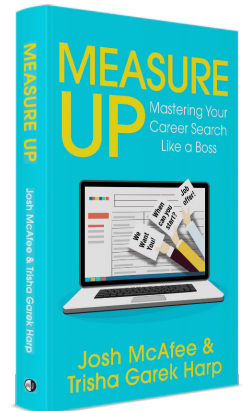


Measure Up

Mastering Your Career Search Like a Boss

by **Josh McAfee**



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THE SUMMARY IN BRIEF

Struggling to find the right job and get hired to do work about which you're truly passionate? Within *Measure Up* is a series of exceptional strategies, insider perspectives, tactics to use, and easy communication templates that are attuned to the current social and technological realities.

This summary will help teach you how to build your value story, reframe your failures and resume gaps to your advantage, and turn an interview into a valuable conversation. It will help you see yourself through a hiring manager's eyes and build rapport, making it easy for someone to hire you and embracing your emotional baggage. You'll learn to benefit from peer feedback and discover what you need to do to be seen as someone who wants to contribute. Overall, you'll discover how to connect with people who can further your career goals, help you locate open positions, build your network, and find new opportunities.

IN THIS SUMMARY, YOU WILL LEARN:

- How to be your best and most attractive self as a candidate in an interview and while networking.
- How to turn yourself into a valuable product in your industry, and how to see yourself as such.
- How to have and build on your confidence and turn it into your greatest asset.
- How to make hiring you the easiest decision a hiring manager has ever made.

Change Your Mind

How strong is the fire in your belly to change your life through a changed career? How badly do you want to reach your goals? What are you willing to do or sacrifice to achieve your dreams? What is motivating you from deep within to pursue a satisfying, new job or career? Plan a break from your job search process to take account of what's guiding you at the deepest level of your core. What is urging you from within, prodding you now to uproot your same-old-same-old and begin to construct a new personal and career identity?

Knowing this will give you focus, clarity, and power behind your action steps. It energizes your search and fuels your determination to get where you want to go. Finding the fire in your belly can be one of the most defining moments in your life and career. Frankly, those who have found it usually work harder and smarter than those who don't.

Be warned: this process takes time and can be an emotional roller coaster ride. But it will free power and awareness to stoke your mission toward your own success and happiness.

Now, ask yourself these questions, writing down the answers somewhere you'll remember.

Why do you want to change your career?

What's motivating you to succeed?

Why is it important to you now?

What's the worst thing that would happen if you didn't do this now?

Imagine yourself 20 years from now. How will you feel if you don't make the career changes you want to make and are capable of now?

Imagine yourself in your 60s. What does your life look like? Are you still working in a job you love? What do you want to feel proudest of as you look back in your career?

Failures Are Perfectly Fine

We live in a social-media-obsessed, anxiety-ridden culture, and when you go online to see other people out there achieving things, getting promotions, and having fun, you can feel like the last kid picked for the kickball team. The fallacy is that they are happy, self-assured, clear of their direction, and better than you. This is very likely not reality.

Underneath those big smiles, just about everyone has similar fears that things are going to start crumbling around them. No matter how polished someone's persona seems, no matter how strong their voice or how wide their smiles, everyone fakes it to some degree. No one is 100% confident all the time.

When we face hardships and life challenges, we sometimes succumb to the victim mentality, which will slowly drain the confidence out of anyone. But Nelson Mandela once famously said, "I never lose. Either I win or learn."

Each so-called loss or failure is actually a great learning opportunity. Interestingly, many industry leaders have said they find as much value in what people have learned from their failures as they do from their successes. When viewed through a different lens, most failures have the potential to be turned around and turned into personal successes.

Who Are You, Anyway?

What if you could put yourself on a shelf? All boxed up, just waiting to catch the eye of the next customer shopping for a new employee. Inside yourself, you have plenty of accomplishments, successes and failures that make you valuable to them. You're almost bursting at the seams with your history, skills, and desire for a more satisfying career. But your packaging...well, that might need some work. The customer notices the next box, with precise, plastic-wrapped corners and all jazzed up with colors and promises.

Viewing yourself as a 'product' might change the way you think about yourself in the work world. You are now a product in a marketplace. It's time to start viewing your job search as an exercise in marketing and 'selling' the product to the best possible customers (employers).

You can also imagine yourself as a character in a book. How would the author describe you, your strengths, weaknesses, and your skills?

Only you can get your product right for the marketplace. If that product is missing parts, prospective employers and your networks will fill in the gaps with their own ideas of who you are. They'll make assumptions when thinking about what you have to offer and whether it's valuable. If you don't define yourself, you will be dependent on assumptions and descriptions other people place on you.

Communicating More Effectively

Dale Carnegie, author of the legendary *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, said, “Why talk about what we want? That is childish. Absurd. Of course, you are interested in what you want. You are eternally interested in it. But no one else is. The rest of us are just like you: we are interested in what we want. So the only way on earth to influence other people is to talk about what they want and show them how to get it.

The fact is, everybody is wrapped up in everything going on in their own world—and these days, that’s a lot. So it takes a different kind of communication to tap into your network and break through barriers for your career.

Pay attention to personal details with your connections. Keep track of the details in a journal or online tool. Reference them in conversation. Become a student of what people say with their body language, facial expressions, and eye contact in reaction to what you or others are sharing. Start by noticing any subtle changes indicating shifting thoughts or feelings.

There’s a common misconception that there are simply people who naturally engage and communicate well, and those who don’t, and you’re simply doomed to be one or the other depending on your genes. People who have this fixed mindset about their communication abilities feel ‘silly’ about consciously taking steps to improve their communication skills—such as the personal notes about your connections’ interests mentioned above. But these conscious actions are the first major step towards making yourself a more natural, powerful, and engaged communicator.

Noticing how people react physically to conversations is one more step toward communicating effectively. It will also help you pay attention to your own cues. Lean in, stand up straight with shoulders back, arms at your side; and maintain eye contact with genuine interest. You’ll likely notice more engagement from those you are talking with.

Meanwhile, don’t be afraid to ‘study’ the communicators in your life. Is there someone that always seems to have the full attention of anyone in the room? Consider why and how that is, and how you can adopt some of their same traits in your day-to-day interactions in the workplace and beyond.

Expanding Your Network: Positive Influencers

Positive influencers can be a powerful tool in our lives and

careers. As you explore who they are, you also discover more about who you are. It’s another big step in job hunting and career changes to define and refine yourself.

Make a list of the people you admire and appreciate. It could be anyone from Mother Teresa to Puff Daddy or even your own mom or dad. Write down their best characteristics and traits. Then, ask yourself, “How much do I want to be a person who thinks and acts in those ways?”

Next, take action! This starts with a simple list with the very next steps to becoming more of the person you want to be. You might decide to:

- Tell others what you appreciate about them
- Set reading goals with books (like this one) that will challenge you and help you grow
- Invest in others without expectation of return
- Say thank you more often
- Expect less and give more
- Stand up for someone or something you believe in
- Listen more and talk less
- Be more proactive instead of reactive

By the time you’ve worked through this list, you’ll already be carrying yourself with a bit more self-awareness, self-confidence, and self-accountability—ideal for building relationships with admirable people. The more you interact with them, the more they’ll refer you to others looking for expertise in your wheelhouse.

Applying Yourself

You’re already miles ahead of the competition at this point. You have the ingredients you need to find that well-fitting, rewarding job where you can shine and add your unique value to a company. Now it’s time to put it all together.

Remember, your efforts in job hunting rest on the foundation of seeing yourself as a valuable product and your potential employers as a potential consumer of that product. But how do you find the right jobs and opportunities?

Data offers insights and the ability to manage and focus your efforts. A large component of the career hunting process is collecting and keeping track of valuable data about the playing field—the organizations, positions, people, influencers, hiring managers, and whoever or whatever else you deem

important, connecting you to your own personal end zone.

What are all the job titles relating to your career search?

What are the companies you've identified based on your list of positions and job titles?

Next, it's time to start reaching out in whatever form makes sense. Meeting in person is best, but if this isn't possible a video or phone call is the next best thing.

Communicating with new contacts and starting conversations can be intimidating at first, but the more you do it the more comfortable you'll become.

Inside the Interview

Finally, you've arrived at the door. Now it's time to go through the door. After all, getting the job you've been dreaming of isn't just about landing the interview—it's about the interview itself.

To get into interview mode, you're going to have to switch gears a bit. So far, your process of finding and landing a career has been mostly an isolated exercise. Now it's time to get out from behind your desk and interact with people who can hire you and make an impact on the course of your career. This means: knowing what mindset to bring with you, how you want to present yourself, how you're going to interact, and how you're going to prepare.

Your first step is to prepare, prepare, prepare and practice, practice, practice. You cannot prepare or practice too much. One might think that you can't prepare for unexpected questions or improvisation that comes during an interview, but the

fact is that the more prepared you are, the more capable you are of improvising on the fly. Just ask any jazz musician and they'll tell you that the better you know the song, the better equipped you are to improvise wildly within it.

Don't forget everything you've learned so far—listen for unspoken cues and watch for body language, and choose the right mindset for your approach to the interview. See your interviews as collaborations, not confrontations. Ask questions of your interviewers that will help you be more prepared for the position. Meanwhile, see every interview as an opportunity. Either you land the job, or you learn something from the experience. You may even dare to enjoy yourself during an interview. Don't consider it your only shot, consider it your chance to show what you're capable of and impress somebody.

While you're at it, let your excitement show. Be excited about the journey you're on and let it show in your eyes, your voice, and your smile, whether you're meeting in person or in a video interview. People are more likely to hire you if they see you're in motion, moving toward an amazing future. They'll want to be part of your adventure.

The best way for them to do that is to hire you.



In addition to being a Wall Street Journal and USA Today bestselling author of *Measure Up: Mastering Your Career Search Like a Boss*, three-time founder, entrepreneur, tech investor, board member and advisor to high growth companies, Josh McAfee has spent almost thirty years in the recruiting and coaching world consulting with and placing thousands of leaders, sales, and tech-savvy people into high-growth companies. He founded, built, and sold a national tech staffing company and has helped countless leaders of high-growth companies grow their teams with the right people to have a positive impact on their products, culture, and, ultimately, their customers.

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