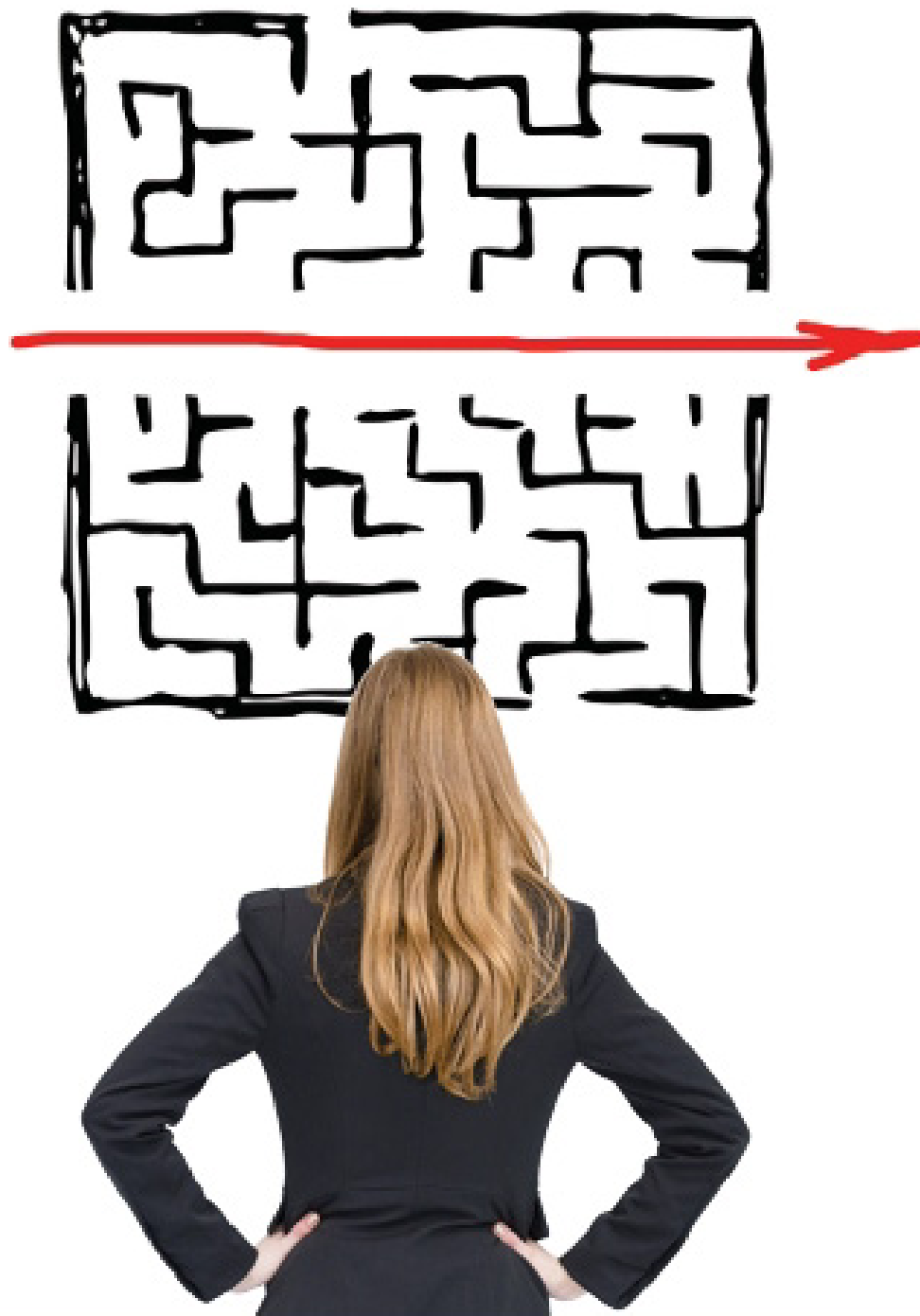


WORKBOOK

BECOMING THE TOP **MSL Candidate**

How to land the medical science liaison career
in 8 weeks or less without experience



KASEY ESTENSON, PhD

Becoming the Top MSL Candidate

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First Edition

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Introduction

Congratulations on your purchase and on your new journey to landing your dream career as an MSL. Is it possible to land your dream career as a medical science liaison within eight weeks or less? Yes, it is! You got this.

In *Becoming the Top MSL Candidate*, and in this workbook, Kasey Estenson draws upon her own experience in landing her dream career as an MSL. After she became hyper-focused, Kasey was able to accelerate onto a fast track into medical affairs in just six weeks and is offering you a complete program to help you accomplish the same career goals for yourself.

Organized around 15 key areas, *Becoming the Top MSL Candidate* will show you how to gain the skills necessary to set yourself apart from other candidates, even without prior MSL experience. This workbook helps further breakdown key concepts from the book to help you become hyper-focused on your goals and land your dream career as quickly as possible.

The key steps we will be focusing on include: defining what an MSL is, identifying why you want to be an MSL, the pros and cons of being an MSL, determining your 'why', targeting your therapeutic areas of interest, getting organized, nailing down the date you want to start your new career, identifying key MSL buzzwords, networking, interviewing and more. These indispensable books will provide you with the foundation you need to be successful in landing your dream career as an MSL.

How to Use This Workbook

This workbook should be used in conjunction with the book you just purchased, *Becoming the Top MSL Candidate*. The best approach is to read this workbook first, so you can prepare for each activity. Next, read the book itself. You may need to do this a couple of times and refer to the book while working on your workbook. For the best chance of success, complete the workbook pages during each chapter.

Overall guidance for the workbook:

- Do each workbook section after reading the corresponding chapter.
- Do not set time limits on the sections, unless recommended, because you want to be sure you fully develop your ideas.
- Complete each workbook section before moving to the next. Each workbook section builds on the previous one, so it is not advised to skip around.
- If you need extra guidance, please go to my website, www.kaseyestenson.com, for additional videos on certain topics.
- Have fun and land your dream career as quickly as possible!

The workbook, book, and videos on my website are developed specifically to help give you real-life examples that you can apply to your own career development. All materials were designed to complement each other, to give you the best end-to-end experience. Are you ready to land your dream career as an MSL? Let's get started!

Workbook 1

What Does an MSL Do?

Jot down everything that an MSL does so you have a complete or near-complete understanding of the career. Throughout the book I will provide you with multiple examples that you can add to your list. In addition to the book, Google what an MSL does, find 10 MSL job descriptions, print them out and study them closely to learn more. After you have a full sense of what an MSL does, then research the rules and regulations an MSL must follow, such as the Sunshine Act and PhRMA Code. Keep an ongoing list of what an MSL does on hand and continue to build it as you learn more and more about the career.

Here are some examples to get you started	
Builds relationships	Meets key opinion leaders (KOLs)
Gathers insights	Becomes a disease state expert
Refers centers for clinical trials	Becomes a product knowledge expert

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Workbook 2

Why Do You Want to be an MSL?

Try to do this exercise in 30-60 minutes, uninterrupted, so you can truly get everything off your chest. If you need more time, then that is perfectly ok – spend as much time as you need to accomplish this exercise. This doesn’t have to be pretty or organized, you just need to get it all down on paper. If you need more space, print out more pages.

Set a timer and ask yourself these questions:

What exactly in the job descriptions interests you?

Is there anything in the job descriptions that doesn’t interest you?

Does this career fit your lifestyle?

Do you want to travel?

Do you like to work on your own? Can you motivate yourself to work from home?



How do you function when you're not always around people day-to-day?

Do you like constantly learning and reading to stay up-to-date on current topics?

Are you willing to move?

How long can you see yourself in this position?

Is this a long-term career?

What do you want in terms of a company's culture?

What are your three- and five-year career goals, and will this career fulfill them?



Workbook 3

Pros and Cons of Being an MSL

Fill out this pros and cons worksheet to determine all the pluses and minuses about a career as an MSL. Put everything down on paper so you can see, side-by-side, the pros and cons. Look at the job descriptions you have gathered, take all of your research into consideration, and put each job element on either the pro or con side of the worksheet. If your pros outweigh your cons substantially, then this is probably the right career for you.

	PRO	CON	

circle which side
you are on:



PRO



CON

Workbook 4

Determine Your ‘Why’

Why do you want to be an MSL? Take a deeper look and really ask yourself these questions and put your answers down on paper. What do you want in your job, in life and in your career? What is most important to you? What is going to keep you positive when you receive multiple rejections? Do you have a family member or a good friend who has suffered from this disease? Do you have this disease yourself? Do you have a passion for research? Do you want a better life for your family? Do you want to be financially free or to get out of debt? After this exercise, you should know why you want this career. You must know your ‘why’ and it must be strong. This will be your focus and help you land this career as quickly as possible.

Try to do this exercise in 30-60 minutes, uninterrupted, so you can find your true reasons. If you need more time, that is perfectly ok. This is your mantra and probably something you will want to keep on your wall in front of you, to motivate you when you are feeling down, or give you even more of a boost when you are excited. It is the fuel that will help you land this career.

Get focused and get ready to land your dream career. What are your reasons why you want to be an MSL?

TOP TIP

Determining your WHY will help you keep focus during this career journey because let’s face it, this will not always be easy.

Workbook 5

Identifying Your Therapeutic Areas of Interest

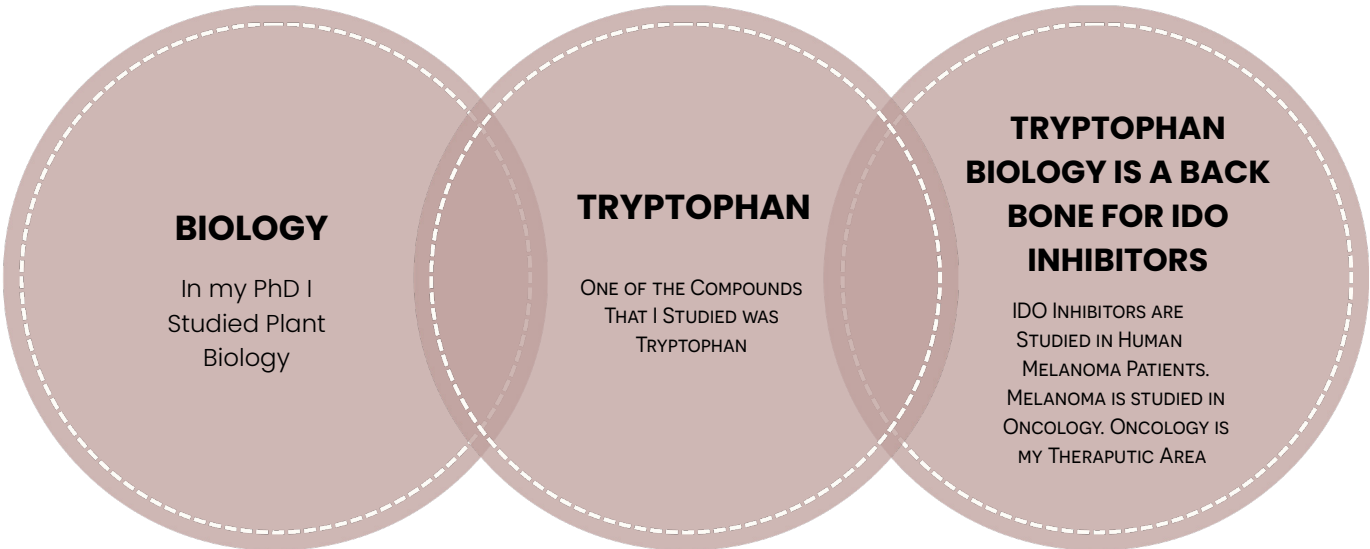
Identify one to three different therapeutic areas that interest you. You may already have areas of interest, which is great, but if you are struggling because you cannot find a connection with your past experience, search up some of the areas of MSL research, pharma companies, and diseases you're most interested in. If you're still stuck or have more than three areas, do a pros and cons list like we did above and narrow down your focus. If you have too many areas, your focus will become dispersed and you will not be able to keep track of everything – this is why I recommend a maximum of three therapeutic areas where you have either direct or relatable experience.

Here is an example of stretching your background into a therapeutic area. If you have a background in plant biology, like I did, you may be thinking that has nothing to do with oncology, so how would you translate that into a therapeutic area? Let's say you studied a specific plant pathway, the tryptophan pathway in plants. Upon doing some research you find out that humans also have the tryptophan pathway. See how I translated what I was doing to human research? I found a company that was researching tryptophan inhibitors in melanoma patients. I found a way to directly relate my experience to the company's goals and interests and boom, I had a connection that I could build from. Indoximod is a compound that utilizes the tryptophan pathway and is connected to melanoma. Melanoma is under the umbrella of oncology, so I made my focus area oncology.

Below on the next page is an example:



Flow Example Below:



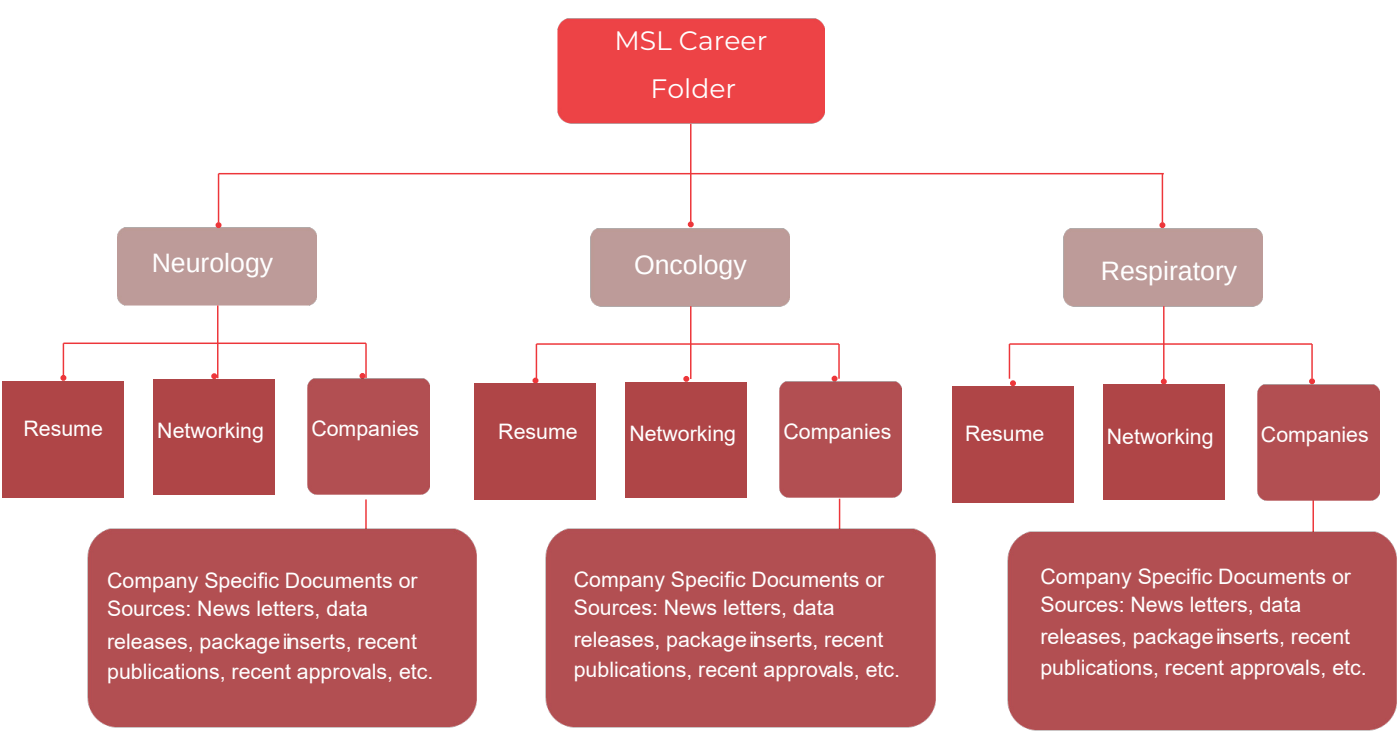
What are your top 1-3 therapeutic areas of interest?



Workbook 6

Getting Organized

Now is a great time to create an organizational method to help you stay focused and organized. You need to do whatever works for you, whether it's writing everything down, making an Excel file, having folders in Word or OneNote, making PowerPoints, posting it on the wall, using an app, keeping a journal, having a filing system, or any other nifty method that works for you. I personally like folders and Excel, but ultimately this is your own method, so spend some time and create a system that works for you. **Below is an example of what my filing system looked like on my computer:**



TOP TIP

Staying organized will help accelerate your success. If you are organized, then you can quickly reference documents and make adjustments without having to go back and dig things up over and over again.

Workbook 7

Creating a Timeline to Land Your Dream Career

Let’s create a realistic timeline for you to land your dream career. Spend some time on this and really focus on your goals. Think about how much of your time you can commit to your career search. If you have only 1-2 hours per day to work on this, the chances of you landing your dream career in six to eight weeks are probably slim.

If you can devote more time, then it will be possible to land your dream career more quickly. Once you nail down a timeline that works for you, remember to revisit your goals and adjust them to fit your time commitment. The timeline suggested below is flexible and may change depending on how your progress through the steps. Some steps may be accomplished earlier, some may take longer – you have the flexibility to adjust your progress along the way and make adjustments as needed.

TOP TIP

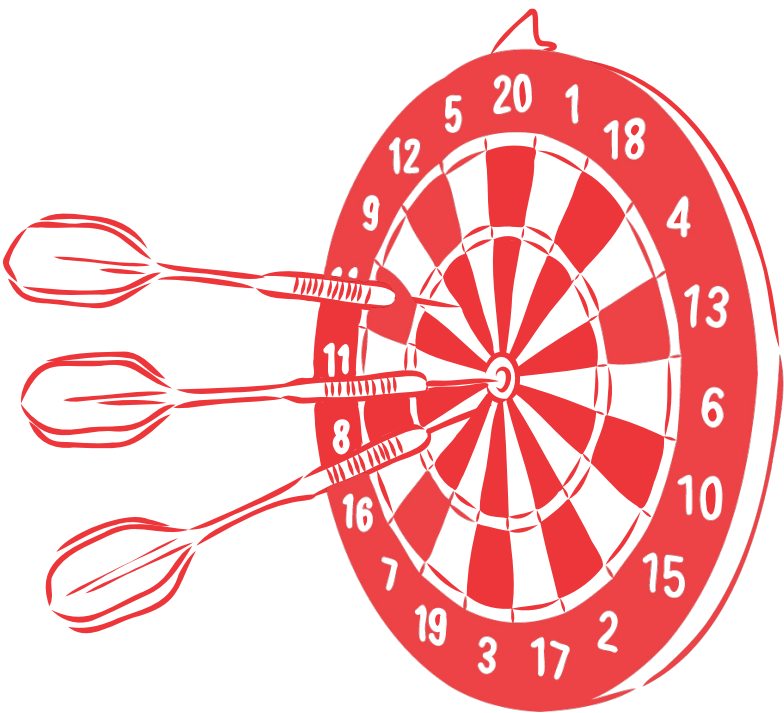
Set your DATE to land your dream career. Stick it to your wall, bathroom mirror, in your car or anywhere you can see it EVERY DAY.

Below is an example of what an eight-week calendar could look like:

- Step 1: Find your ‘why’, narrow down your focus and create your own organizational method 1-2 days
- Step 2: Therapeutic areas and company research 1-5 days
- Step 3: Branding yourself and pre-prep 1-2 weeks
- Step 4: Pre-Interview prep 1-2 weeks
- Step 5: Networking 1-6 weeks
- Step 6: Interview prep 1-2 weeks

Now it’s time to draft your timeline, take as much time as you need to realistically set your goal.

Whats on your mind:



TOP TIP

Make your goal your north star and your number one goal until you land your dream career, revisit your goals daily or weekly to ensure you are on track and achieving your dreams.

Workbook 8

Mapping Out the Key MSL Buzzwords

The best way to identify key buzzwords is to start with 10-15 MSL job descriptions – you can find these by looking at Indeed, pharma websites, and LinkedIn, just to name a few. Make sure the job descriptions are in your therapeutic area of interest. Copy and paste the details into a Word document. Be sure to only include the job description/summary, skills and abilities – do not include the company details or anything about the company’s culture.

After developing your word document, copy and paste each of the descriptions into your document, and don’t worry about formatting or neatness – you just need raw words, and they can even be presented as bullet points. Once you have all of the important words from all of the job descriptions in a single document, copy them all and put them into a free word-cluster program such as TagCrowd.com or FreeWordCloudGenerator.com. These generators will spit out the most common words in all those job descriptions and the top 25-50 words are your key buzzwords. You absolutely need to have them in all the documents that we generate. Now its your turn to list out all the buzzwords.

Both of the sites I mentioned offer some quick tools to help you get started. Both sites will only generate single words, so after you have your core list, do a check through all the job descriptions (I usually print them out so I can look at them side by side). Look for double-word themes (such as ‘team player’ or ‘building relationships’) and be sure to add those to your list of 25-50 words. These are your key buzzwords for your career journey.

List out all the KEY buzzwords you find below



TOP TIP

Keep these KEY buzz words, they will be the foundation for the rest of the work you do to land your dream career.



Workbook 9

Matching the Key MSL Buzzwords to Your Own Experience

Now it’s time to make all the magic happen by taking your experience and matching it up to your KEY buzzwords. The easiest way to do this is by taking an item from the job description and matching your experience to it. Do this for every job description and match all your experiences from each job you have had in the past.

Example Below:

MSL Job Requirements Examples	Kasey Job Qualifications
Minimum of 1 year liaison related experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 7+ years' experience as a medical and clinical researcher in areas of Neurology and Psychiatry• Participated in clinical studies• Certified Nursing Assistant, worked in a hospital with key opinion leaders (KOLs)• Liaised for a medical device company
Excellent communication and presentation skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Presented over 70 presentations during medical conferences, journal clubs, colloquiums, poster competitions, and scientific meetings• Wrote two peer-reviewed manuscripts Proficient in Word and PowerPoint
Relevant therapeutic and clinical experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pharmacodynamics expert for preclinical drugs• Developed clinical trial protocols• Scientific expert in Neurology and Oncology
Manage and generate product/disease state education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worked on multiple cross-functional teams to develop class II medical devices and drug delivery platforms• Developed and managed multiple projects by meeting deadlines in a timely manner• Led scientific discussions during meetings• Educated colleagues during lectures to ensure current knowledge on disease state education

Workbook 10

Interview Preparation

Interview preparation is the key to your success. Go through chapter 8 of the book and make a list of the general interview questions I have given you. I like generating about 50 questions and answers, but you can create more – you can decide how much time you want to spend on this, but make sure you craft your answers wisely. A few things to remember: do NOT put personal things in your answers; tailor your answers to a career as an MSL only; be sure to sprinkle in your key buzzwords... and practice, practice, practice your answers so you can confidently deliver them without stumbling during your interview.

Develop your version of the 50 questions and answers, and remember – practice is the key to your success!

TOP TIP

While doing informational interviews remember to make this all about the person you are talking with and do not ask them for a job or reference.

Workbook 11

Preparing Your Own Questions for Interviewers

Build draft questions for each of the following people you could be interviewing with (the goal is to have at least 10 questions per person): recruiters, hiring managers (HM, typically a field director), human resources (HR), medical information manager/specialist, MSL, vice president (VP), medical director and so on. Also prepare questions for other potential people from other departments, such as clinical, marketing/commercial, or research and development (R&D).

Make tailored questions for each person you could potentially interview with below:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal red ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

Workbook 12)

Networking Tracker

Develop a networking tracking system that works for you to keep on top of your networking. Things you should follow in your tracking system include when and how often you reach out (i.e. date, day, and time of outreach), how many times you have reached out, what company they are from, what responses you have had so far, if they have mentioned a follow-up time-frame or any other important information. You can also keep track of interesting personal facts so you can build rapport the next time you talk with a person and keep track of anything else you can think of.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal red ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

TOPTIP

While doing informational interviews remember to make this all about the person you are talking with and do not ask them for a job or reference.

Targeted Networking Questions:

Sample questions for a recruiter may include:

- 1) When do you anticipate filling this position and when is the start date?
- 2) Is this a newly created position or was there previously another MSL in this position? If so, why did they leave?
- 3) What are the next steps in the interview process?
- 4) Do you have any information on the hiring manager or any of the other colleagues I will be interviewing with, so I can be prepared for the upcoming interviews?
- 5) Do you have any additional questions about my candidacy that I can address?

Develop the rest of your questions for each person in the targeted networking section of the book.

TOP TIP

Developing targeted networking questions shows the interviewer that you are prepared and that you are eager about the role. Having the questions already drafted will ease your interview-prep process and help you feel confident during the interview.



Workbook 14)

Build out Your Plan of Action Prior to Your Interview

The previous 13 workbook sections have all been preparation for the big interview you have coming up. To successfully prepare for your interview, you will need to develop a daily plan so you can prepare, to the best of your ability, prior to the interview. Doing the prep work will ease your nerves and allow you to feel more confident during the interview process. To ensure you are adequately prepared for the interview, I suggest you develop a schedule.

Use the templates within the book to develop your own timeline below.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal red ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

Workbook 15)

Build out your 90-day Plan Once you Land the Career

Congratulations! You have landed your dream career! Now you want to set yourself up for success and hit the ground running. Map out your 90-day plan once you start your career. This plan will vary depending on your training and onboarding schedule.

Develop your 90-day plan below:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal red ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

[illegible]

TOP TIP

Developing 90-day plans will set you up for success throughout your entire career. Once you get through your first 90-days, set another 90-day plan and discuss your career goals with your manager.

You've got this and I know you will have a successful career!

