The job hunt

Some tips from those who walked the path

Caltech Career Summit

April 23rd, 2011

Ralph's background

The job hunt journey

Life after Tech – the stack

- **Myself**: *What do I like to do?*
- **Job**: *Where can I do more of it?*
- **Pitch**: *How to stand out from the crowd*
- **Interview**: *Tips and strategies*
- **Negotiation**: *How can I optimize my career*
- **Choice**: *Is this really what I want?*

Two key assets: People & Information

Getting to know people is easy!

- Friends, Family, Professors, TAs
- Internships/Volunteering
- Conferences/professional societies
- You know me. I know people.
- You "know" alumni all over the world
- LinkedIn or other online sites
- Use informationals

Gathering information is easy!

- The power of informationals
  - What is it?
  - How do you do one?
  - People like to share their experience and appreciate initiative
- Web is your friend
- Company websites
- LinkedIn, Hoovers, Crunchbase, Startuply
- Employee and HR blogs

Myself: *What do I like to do?*

- What did I have fun doing:
  - Hobbies (things that are really fun for you).
  - Projects
- What am I good at:
  - Skills (things that you find easier and do better than most people).
  - Ask those that know you – friends, teachers, parents.

Job: *Where can I do more of that?*

- Where might this job exist
  - Search the web (blogs, interviews, news), Ask us.
  - Look at companies and competition
  - Not just companies – think tanks, universities…
  - Remember – gathering information is easy!
- Who is hiring
  - Talk to people
    - Seniors who graduated
    - Professors, Grad students
    - LinkedIn profiles
  - Specialized job sites are often the best

Pitch: *How can I stand out from the crowd*

- ## How can I get to this hiring manager
  - Your best bet is via your network or alumni
  - It is super easy to learn about people and teams online these days
  - It's hard for companies!
- ## How can I stand out from the crowd
  - You are unique and have skills that <u>very</u> few people have
  - Be creative and get noticed
  - 1 page resume rule? No rules – more like guidelines

Interview: *Tips and strategies*

- Before
  - Ask to learn who you are meeting
  - Learn about the interview style & culture
  - Alumni who work in the field are a great resource
  - Research the job and field

- During
  - Steer the conversation towards your skills
  - Ask questions – see it as a two-way interview
  - It is quite possible you are smarter than the interviewer

- Practice by doing mock interviews

Negotiation: *How can I optimize my career*

- Am I starting off on the right foot
  - Taking your time to decide is OK
  - Get help on the details of the job offer
  - Everything is on the table
- Where would I want to go next
  - What is the logical next step if you took this job? (career trajectory)
  - Talk to those who went ahead of you
  - The hiring team is a great resource too!
- Again – ask for help…talk to people ☺

Choice: *Is this really what I want?*

- Out of my options – which one is best for me
  - What is your gut feel?
  - Did you enjoy interacting with the team? the manager?
  - No single "right" answer, but position where you can learn/contribute the most often pays off
- What is my "exit strategy"
  - What can I do if I don't like this after all
  - Change is easy and common!
  - Look at those that went ahead of you

Parting thoughts

- You are different – and that's a good thing
- You are (often) smarter than you think
- Feeling nervous or uncertain ok. Hiring managers probably are too.
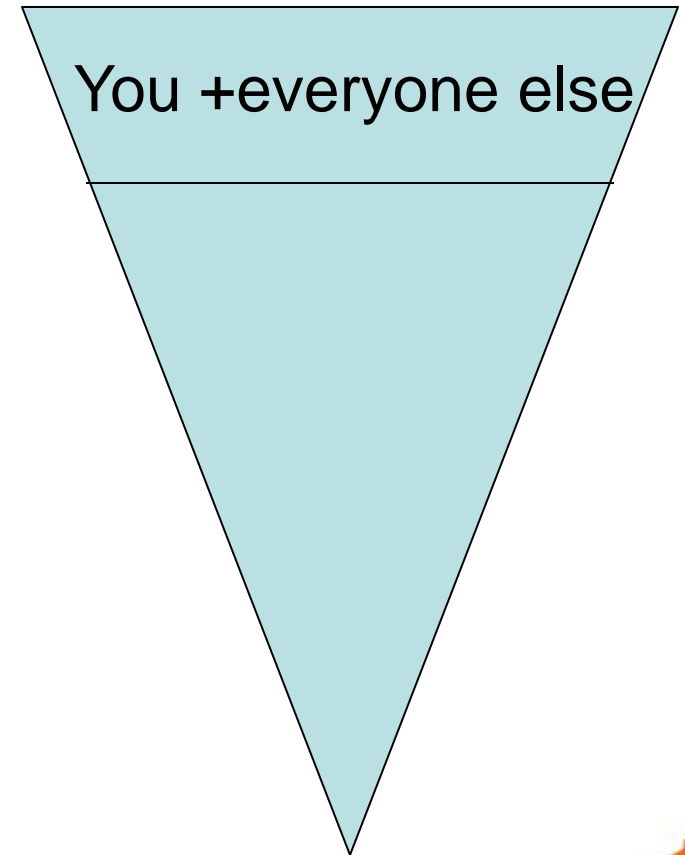- Talk to people
- Have fun!

I ASK ALL PROSPECTIVE EMPLOYEES THIS QUESTION TO TEST THEIR REASONING.

YOU HAVE ONE FOX AND TWO CHICKENS THAT YOU NEED TO GET ACROSS A RIVER. YOU CAN ONLY TAKE ONE AT A TIME IN THE ROWBOAT. THE FOX WILL EAT THE CHICKENS IF LEFT ALONE.

I'D BUY LIVESTOCK INSURANCE, THEN BARBECUE THE CHICKENS AND BLAME THE FOX.

CAN YOU START TODAY?

APPENDIX

Typical job search process

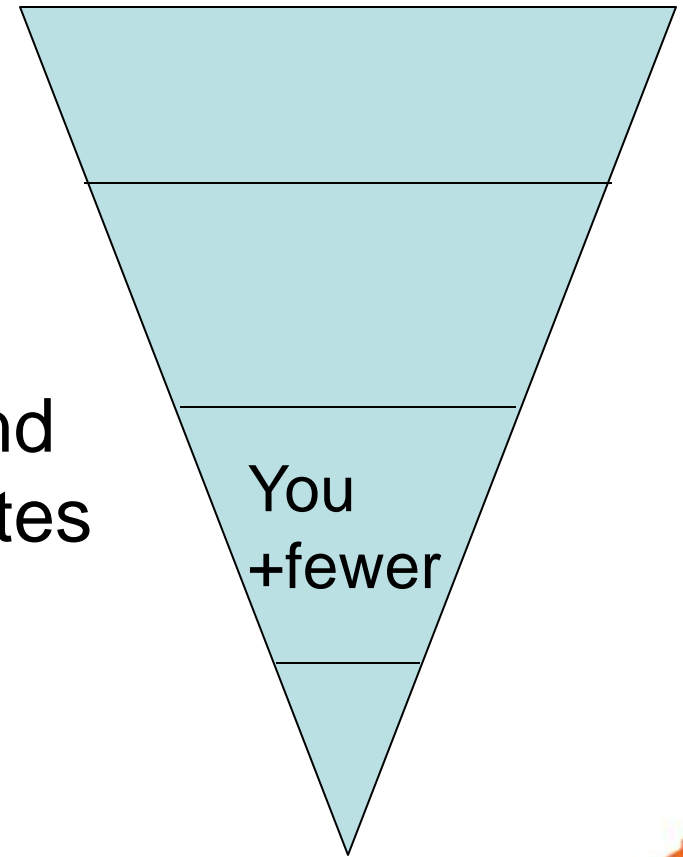- Submit cover letter and resume

You +everyone else

Typical job search process

- Submit cover letter and resume
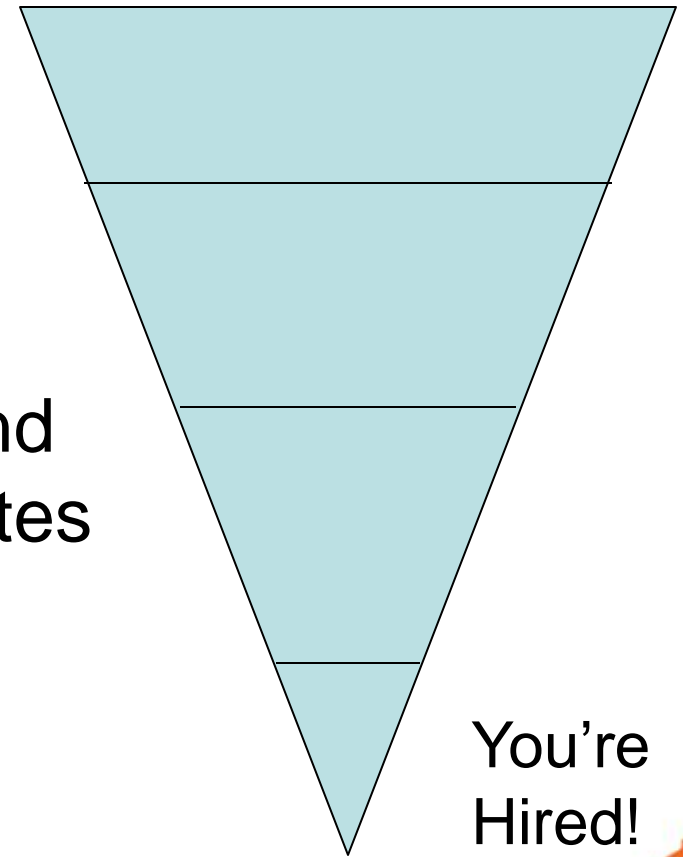- HR filters and sends to hiring manager

You +fewer

Typical job search process

- Submit cover letter and resume

- HR filters and sends to hiring manager

- Hiring manager filters and invites selected candidates for interview
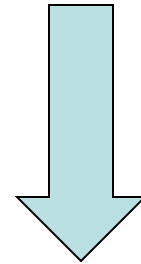
You +fewer
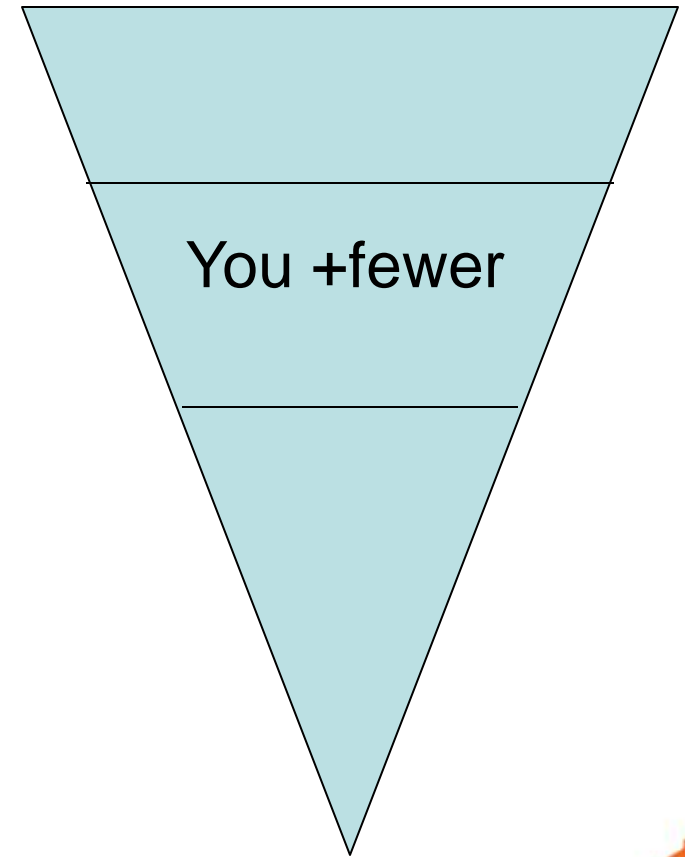
Typical job search process

- Submit cover letter and resume

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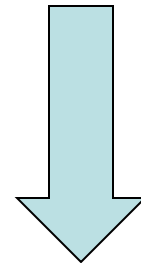
- Interview, ranking

- Offer

You're Hired!

Ideal job search process

- Meet people (pre-interview)
- HR filters and sends to hiring manager
- Hiring manager filters and invites selected candidates for interview
- Submit cover letter and resume
- Interview, offer

You

↓

Interview

↓

Offer