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# Employee Transition Guide

**December 2025**

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# Human Resource Contacts

## HUMAN RESOURCE BUSINESS PARTNERSHIPS

Human Resource Business Partnerships offers consultation for placement options and job search assistance including:

- Orientation of application process and online job search.
- Available job search tools and resources.
- The Special Consideration Program, if participation has been elected.
- The UTemp Temporary Employment Program.

Human Resources Business Partnerships email: [hrrs-hrpb@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hrrs-hrpb@austin.utexas.edu)

## BENEFITS

Human Resource Benefits offers consultation for insurance and retirement. Leave Management offers consultation for time off and leave.

Insurance and Retirement email: [hrrsc@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hrrsc@austin.utexas.edu)

Leave Management email: [HRS-LM@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:HRS-LM@austin.utexas.edu)

## EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provides confidential support for benefits-eligible faculty, staff, retirees, and their household members during times of change. Our licensed counselors can help you:

- Navigate the complex emotions that can accompany a job transition.
- Clarify your options and weigh decisions.
- Prepare for difficult conversations.
- Identify next steps and strategies for coping.
- Connect with campus and community resources.

EAP services are available to you through the end of the month in which you remain benefits eligible with the university. If your separation occurs close to the end of a month, we will work with you to ensure you have the mental health support you need during the transition.

EAP offers free and confidential counseling by phone, video, and in person. To schedule an appointment, contact us at **512-471-3366** or [eap@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:eap@austin.utexas.edu). Please note that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed over email due to the nature of electronic communication.

If you need to speak with a counselor urgently when the EAP office is closed, call **512-471-3399** to reach a licensed crisis counselor available 24/7.

For more information about our services and resources, visit [eap.utexas.edu](http://eap.utexas.edu).

# Insurance

Your current insurance will end on the last day of the month in which you leave your employment.

## COBRA INSURANCE CONTINUATION

COBRA (Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act) is a federal law under which employees and their covered dependents have the opportunity for a temporary extension of medical, dental and/or vision coverage at group rates in instances where coverage under the plan would otherwise end. In certain cases, it may also be possible to continue HCRA (Health Care Reimbursement Account) coverage. The employee or dependent is responsible for the entire premium for COBRA coverage plus a two percent administrative fee.

Employees have a right to choose COBRA benefits when coverage is lost due to:

- a reduction in work hours, or
- termination of employment (other than for gross misconduct).

Coverage is extended only to those individuals covered at the time of termination and may only continue the level of coverage that was in effect on the day of termination, or a lower level of coverage.

Covered dependents also have a right, independent of the employee's right, to COBRA coverage. The covered dependent may elect COBRA even if the employee does not. A spouse or dependent child covered under an employee's medical plan has the right to elect COBRA continuation coverage if they lose coverage due to:

- the employee's death, the employee's termination (other than for gross misconduct), or reduction in work hours, divorce, the employee's entitlement to Medicare; or
- no longer meeting the definition of a dependent.

## COBRA ENROLLMENT

When you or your dependent lose eligibility for coverage under the employee insurance plan, UT Benefits Billing will send you a COBRA Election Notice and application after your insurance has been terminated. To ensure that you receive this notice, please be sure that your email and mailing address are up to date **in Workday**.

**If you elect COBRA coverage, you must send the application and payment directly to the COBRA Plan Administrator, [UT Benefits Billing](#), within 60 days from the date your employee insurance ends.**

## PORTABILITY AND CONVERSION OF LIFE INSURANCE

### Portability

When coverage ends due to termination of employment, Portability allows active employees and their dependents to continue their Voluntary Term Life coverage by remitting their premium directly to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. Portability is not available to insureds who elect to convert coverage or whose coverage is terminated due to retirement.

- You must request Portability within 31 days from the date that your employee insurance ends.
- The Request for Portability form is available at [bcbstx.com/ancillary-ut/pdf/anc-life-port-app-tx-ut.pdf](https://bcbstx.com/ancillary-ut/pdf/anc-life-port-app-tx-ut.pdf)
- The maximum age for coverage in force by Portability is age 65.
- Provided premiums are paid when due, coverage terminates the earlier of age 65 or the date the insured no longer pays the required premiums.

For questions and additional information about Portability, please contact Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas at 1-866-628-2606.

### Conversion

Conversion allows employees and their covered dependents to convert some of their Basic Life and/or Voluntary Life insurance to an individual whole life policy if any portion of their Life insurance terminates. This can be done by remitting the premium directly to Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas. Insureds who elect Portability are not eligible to convert.

- You must request Conversion within 31 days from the date that your employee insurance ends.
- The application to Convert Group Life Insurance is available at [bcbstx.com/ancillary-ut/pdf/anc-convert-grp-life-app-tx-ut.pdf](https://bcbstx.com/ancillary-ut/pdf/anc-convert-grp-life-app-tx-ut.pdf).
- Provided premiums are paid when due, coverage will continue until the insured requests termination of coverage.

For questions and additional information about Conversion, please contact Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas at 1-866-628-2606.

## LONG TERM DISABILITY CONVERSION

If you are enrolled in Long Term Disability (LTD) insurance and lose eligibility for the coverage for a reason other than retirement, you may be eligible to purchase the insurance under the group conversion policy. For questions and additional information about LTD Conversion, please contact Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Texas at 1-866-628-2606.

# Retirement

You should contact your retirement provider as soon as possible to discuss the disposition of your retirement account and the options available to you.

If you are enrolled in TRS, please contact TRS directly at 800-223-8778. For all other retirement plans, please contact your retirement plan provider or financial advisor. A list complete list of provider contacts is available at [utsystem.edu/offices/employee-benefits/ut-retirement-program/approved-providers](https://utsystem.edu/offices/employee-benefits/ut-retirement-program/approved-providers). **Please review our Pre-Retirement Checklist, <https://hr.utexas.edu/retiree/retirement-checklist>. This is a great resource for employees planning to retire.**

# Paid Time Off

You may choose to defer any portion of your unused annual leave payment into a UTSaver 457(b) Deferred Compensation Plan and/or UTSaver 403(b) Tax Sheltered Annuity Program retirement account at any time prior to your last day of employment. To do so, complete the deferral authorization form located at

<https://www.docusign.net/Member/PowerFormSigning.aspx?PowerFormId=2789e024-b08a-4b0a-9a03-719be812b94d&env=na1&acct=d40a37d5-d708-44dd-9ea7-aab378b81326&v=2>.

Unused sick time off is not paid out upon your separation, but you are welcome to donate it to the [Family Leave Pool](#) or [Sick Leave Pool](#) by submitting the requisite donation form prior to your last day of employment. **If you choose to donate, please keep in mind that the Family Leave Pool is new, has a very low balance of hours, and is in greater need of donations.** For more information, please visit <https://hr.utexas.edu/current/leave>.

# UT Placement Options

## SPECIAL CONSIDERATION PROGRAM

The Special Consideration Program is established under HOP Section 9.48, "Dismissal Procedures in Cases of Reorganization, Reduction in Staff, or Funding Sources Not Realized." Employees who are laid-off are provided first right of refusal for re-employment if the same position which was eliminated is reinstated within 12 months of their separation date. Employees may join the Special Consideration Program for 12 months. The Special Consideration program provides the hiring department the option to hire with diminished administrative procedures and provides preference in hiring if the employee is deemed to be as equally qualified as a nonparticipant.

### **Special Consideration Program Services**

The following services will be provided to employees under the Special Consideration Program:

- Transition consultation.
- Letters of introduction.
- HR on-site resources.
- UTemp employment pool.

### **Advantages to the Hiring Department**

- Special Consideration candidates can be considered and hired prior to posting a position.
- When a Special Consideration candidate is hired, the administration of the recruitment process and completion is greatly simplified.

### **Employee Participation**

- All employees impacted by a reorganization or layoff are eligible to participate and will automatically be enrolled in the Special Consideration program. Requests to opt-out of the Special Consideration program should be directed to HR Business Partnerships ([hrbp@austin.utexas.edu](mailto:hrbp@austin.utexas.edu)).

Eligible employees may participate in the Special Consideration Program for 12 months from their date of separation from the university due to layoff, or until the employee finds another benefits eligible UT position, whichever occurs first.

## **UTEMPS TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM**

UTemps is the temporary employment program for The University of Texas at Austin. Employees in the Special Consideration Program may enter the UTemp pool once they have received the layoff letter and completed their final day of employment. UTemp employment does not affect eligibility for Special Consideration Services. Participation in UTemp will be discussed in the transition meeting.

Those seeking additional information regarding the UTemp Program may go to [hr.utexas.edu/prospective/utemps](http://hr.utexas.edu/prospective/utemps).

Interested employees may contact the [UTemps coordinator](#) to discuss temporary employment opportunities.

# NextJob

The University offers assistance to employees impacted by a layoff. Human Resources contracts with a vendor, NextJob, to provide job search coaching and resume writing support. The following section includes content provided by NextJob that outlines their services.

## **ONE-ON-ONE ON DEMAND JOB COACHING**

A job coach is like a personal trainer for your career. Coaches help job seekers:

- Craft and fine tune a resume, 30 second commercial, social media profile, etc.
- Choose a career direction to best tap their talents and background.
- Stay focused, accomplish goals and interview with confidence.

## **ONLINE PROVEN JOB SEARCH TRAINING SYSTEM**

Things change. Job boards, social media sites, resumes. NextJob provides:

- Tools and exercises to help be prepared, including a resume builder.
- Today's networking strategies to tap the 50% of jobs that are "hidden."
- Guidance to the top job boards and how to use them.

## **WEEKLY JOB CLUB WEBINAR**

Each week JobTalk webinars dive into a key topic so job seekers can:

- Hear experts discuss best practices and leading trends you need to know.
- Participate in group learning, share and hear from others.
- Download recordings to listen to on demand.

## **8 STEPS TO YOUR NEXT JOB**

- Resume: You only have a few seconds to get a hiring manager's attention. Write a resume that makes them want to read on instead of move on.
- Career direction: People tend to be happier and better paid in jobs that fit – set a direction that matches your talents and how you're built.
- Visible jobs: Don't be late for jobs that are easy to find. Master the best strategies with job boards, staffing companies, online job agents and more.
- Hidden jobs: Are you missing the 50% of all job openings that are "hidden?" Learn to network and use social media effectively to find hidden jobs and get your foot in the door.
- Contacting employers: Avoid common mistakes in how you contact employers. Learn what employers expect as well as the unspoken rules.
- Cover letter: Get to the bottom line with words that count. Write a cover letter to go with your resume that will get it—and you—noticed.



- Long resume: Be ready for your next interview armed with handy details and a document that shows you are willing to go the extra mile.
- Interviewing: Avoid nervous interviews by learning 1) the top interview questions, 2) the three key questions to ask, 3) the 10 common mistakes to avoid, and 4) the right way to ask for the job.

## COVER LETTERS

The cover letter is typically a one-page customized document that officially states your interest in a job. It serves as an introduction of your work history, professional skills and qualifications as it relates to the job. As an applicant, you can use the cover letter to convince potential employers to invite you for an interview with the goal of being offered a job.

Check out LinkedIn Learning videos [Writing a Cover Letter](#) and [Cover Letter Tips](#).

The cover letter is equally as important as a resume. For a customized cover letter, indicate the desired position, the organization that you are targeting and how you heard about it. The cover letter is intended to demonstrate that you have researched the organization and have a clear career objective in mind. It is important that you make the connection between your skills, abilities and experience, and the job qualifications.

Most cover letters consist of:

- Header: Include your contact information, employer name and location, job title and position identification. The font type and format should match that of your resume
- Paragraph 1: Tell your reader why you are interested in the position, what makes you qualified and what value you bring to the organization.
- Paragraph 2-3: Use bulleted points or paragraphs describing how your qualifications match the job requirements.
- Paragraph 4 (closing): Reiterate interest in and qualifications for the position and request an invitation for a job interview.

A good cover letter has these traits:

- Salutation – avoid writing “To whom it may concern” or “Dear Hiring Manager”. Be specific if possible.
- Has a strong opening statement that grabs the reader’s attention and reflects your value proposition, a clearly stated objective.
- Addresses the first 3-4 requirements stated in the job description, as they are usually a priority.
- Uses strong action verbs and keywords reflected in job description.
- Expands on key work experiences to paint a clearer picture of your skillset and achievements; don’t just repeat points on your resume.
- Avoid clichéd words, like “synergy,” “dynamic,” “fast learner,” and “self-motivated.”
- Contain quantifiable accomplishments relevant to the job for which you are applying.
- Connect the requirements of the job to the applicant’s value proposition
- Expresses interest in working for the specified company or organization.
- Is concise
- Has been carefully proofread more than once.

## JOB SEARCH

Searching for a job can be a full-time job. How aggressive your job search is will likely depend on your needs. If you need a stopgap, consider industries that are still hiring for contract or part-time work as well as remote work opportunities in the meantime. A critical aspect of job searching is relationship building and networking to find out about opportunities that may not be shared on job boards or company websites. The results from your job search will help inform the organization of your resume.

LinkedIn Learning video: [Job Search Strategies](#)

- Network online.
- Diversify your job search avenues.
- Don't rely fully on job boards; networking yields better results.
- Create or update your LinkedIn profile. LinkedIn is a powerful job search and career resource. » [How to Create a LinkedIn Profile](#) (video)
- Tips for marketing your skills on LinkedIn:
  - » Include keywords throughout your profile that prospective employer would utilize to search for top talent.
  - » Request good recommendations from current and former colleagues and customers.
  - » Join relevant industry groups and actively engage and participate in online discussions.

### Top job search websites:

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Indeed](#)
- [Glassdoor](#)
- [CareerBuilder](#)
- [SimplyHired](#)

### Job search advice:

- [The Muse](#)
- [Job-Hunt.org](#)
- [Work It Daily](#)

### Specialty job boards:

- [Dice](#) – technical jobs
- [Build In Austin](#) – startups & tech
- [HigherEd Jobs](#) – colleges and universities
- [Idealist](#) – nonprofit, volunteer and internships
- [Mission Capital](#) – nonprofit

### Remote work/freelancing/gigs:

- [FlexJobs.com](https://www.flexjobs.com)
- [Remote.co](https://remote.co)
- [UpWork.com](https://www.upwork.com)
- [We Work Remotely.com](https://www.weworkremotely.com)

LinkedIn Learning Video: [Working as a Contract or Temporary Employee](#)

## NETWORKING SKILLS

One of the most effective ways to find a job is through networking. It is the process of interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional relationships for a desired outcome. Your network can include current and former co-workers, members of professional associations, former professors and classmates, and friends and family. Some key benefits of networking include getting access to job leads, career advice and support, gaining different perspectives and building your confidence.

### Building a Network

- 1. Join an organization.** No matter what the occupation, most likely there is an affiliated professional organization. National and professional associations often have local chapters where you can meet other professionals in the same field. Most associations hold conferences and events designed specifically for networking. Many organizations have an online interactive presence like Facebook and LinkedIn groups. Professional organizations can also help keep you up to date on the latest developments in a field. They provide members with the latest industry news, trends, and research, as well as training and education. This information can even be useful during the interview. Joining an alumni association is another option. Most colleges have alumni organizations made up of former graduates. These organizations usually contain people in every occupation and industry. The key in joining organizations is active involvement online and face-to-face.
- 2. Continuous learning.** Look for online courses that are relevant to your chosen career to learn new skills to boost your resume and make you more attractive to employers.
- 3. Community involvement.** Volunteer work can expand network outreach. If you cannot find a company or cause related to your profession, offer to help a favorite charity by doing something that is job related. By volunteering, you get a chance to use skills, expand your network and make a needed contribution.
- 4. Friends and family.** Soliciting opinions from friends and family members as to what career they think should be pursued is another option. They probably know you well enough to know your strengths, weaknesses, likes and dislikes. Asking direct questions is best, such as "What do you think my strengths are?" and "Have you imagined me in another career?" Family and friends may dream bigger than you would.

## INTERVIEWING

### Preparation for the interview

Besides determining that the basic job qualifications have been met, preparation is the key to success in the interview. Before interviewing for a job, prepare thoroughly. This preparation consists of gathering information about the prospective employer and evaluating your own knowledge, skills and abilities.

In addition, a thorough analysis of strengths and weaknesses and the ability to communicate these in a positive, candid manner are important steps in the preparation process. Equally important is an evaluation of problem areas in your background and well thought out responses that make a strong case for why these weaknesses will not be a hindrance.

Have clearly defined career goals and plans. Employers look for people who have done their career planning, who know what they want and where they are going. Employers also look for applicants that have thoroughly researched the position and organization. Based upon this research, you should then be able to articulate how or why your goals match to the organization.

Prepare answers to possible questions from the interviewer and prepare a list of well-researched questions for the interviewer. Sample questions are included in the next section of this guide. Practice answering interview questions with a friend or career counselor.

Know the name, title and level of responsibility of each individual who will be present in the interview. This information can be obtained when the interview is scheduled. Know exactly how to get to the organization and be prepared to arrive early and stay as late as necessary. Dress to project an image of confidence and success. Wear clothing that is professional and appropriate to the job and organization.

Bring at least two copies of your resume and your separate list of references. Give copies of the list of references to the interviewer if requested.

### Helpful Reminders

You should generally avoid:

- Negative comments about previous or current employers.
- Treating the interview casually.
- Chewing gum.
- Allowing a personal cell phone to ring during the interview.

### Interview Format

Because each interviewer is different, there are many types of interviews. Interviews can range from open-ended, in which the interviewer asks specific questions and lets the applicant do most of the talking, to a highly structured interview following an outline format. Be prepared for any style of interview.

**Introductory stage:** The interviewer will establish rapport and create a comfortable atmosphere. This is where the interviewer gets the important first impression of the applicant. A number of interviewers begin the interview chatting about general topics. This small talk provides a first impression and is an important phase of the interview. Even though the small talk seems informal, it has a definite purpose. It allows the interviewer to judge your communication skills.

**Review of background and interests:** This is usually where applicants are asked the "what", "why", "where" and "when" types of questions. The focus is on what has been

accomplished, background, as well as future goals and objectives. The objective will be for the interviewer to see if your qualifications match their work interest.

**Conclusion:** The interviewer will explain the hiring process. You should ask any questions you might have at this time.

### **Sample Interview Questions**

Questions that you ask during the interview can provide the interviewer with additional insight. In fact, these questions can lead to judgments regarding how you would perform if hired. This is why it is important that questions are well thought out and reflect the time and effort put into researching the position and organization. Here is a list of possible questions:

- Can you explain your organizational structure?
- What is the department's plan for the next five years and how does this position contribute?
- What do you consider to be the major problems facing your industry today?
- What are the day-to-day responsibilities of this position?
- What are the most important duties of this position?
- How much travel, if any, does this job require?
- What characteristics would the ideal applicant for this job have?
- What are some of the skills necessary for someone to succeed in this position?
- Do you offer a formal training program?
- Who will review my performance? How often?
- What are the opportunities for advancement?
- What would be the typical career path for an employee entering your organization (department) in this position?
- Can I tell you anything else about my qualifications?
- When can I expect to hear from you?

### **Sample questions to consider answers to before the interview**

There are different types of interviewing styles and methods, and the approach an interviewer takes may be based upon their own preference, the type of position, the department, or the organization. This guide offers a series of common questions regarding these varying approaches.

#### *Personal Traits:*

- Tell me about yourself.
- Why do you want to work here?
- What are your strengths, weaknesses and interests?
- What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort and to be successful?
- In what ways do you think you can contribute to our department?
- How do you work under pressure?
- In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- What is important to you in your job?

*Selection:*

- Why should I hire you?
- Given the investment we will make in hiring and training you, can you give us a reason to hire you?

*Accomplishments/Goals:*

- How do you plan to achieve your career goals?
- What accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction in your career?
- Are you a goal-oriented person? Tell me about some of your recent goals and what you did to achieve them.
- What are your short-term goals? What are your long-term goals?
- What do you see yourself doing in five years?

*Teamwork:*

- How would you describe yourself in terms of your ability to work as a member of a team?
- Describe some ideas (not necessarily your own) that were implemented because of your efforts.
- Give an example of when you had to work with a difficult team member. How did you handle the situation?

*Decision Making:*

- What steps do you take before reaching a decision?
- Describe a situation in which you were able to successfully turn a decision around.
- Give me an example in which you used good judgment and logic in solving a problem.
- Give me an example of a time in which you had to make a decision relatively quickly.

*Time Management/Priorities:*

- How do you determine priorities in scheduling your time?
- Tell me about a time you had multiple responsibilities with deadlines. How did you organize the work you needed to do?
- Describe the system you use for keeping track of multiple projects. How do you track your progress so that you can meet your deadlines? How do you stay focused?

*Communication Skills:*

- Describe a time in which you had to use good communication skills to get the message across.
- Describe the most creative and effective presentation you had to deliver.
- Describe a situation where you had to arrive at a compromise and guide others to that decision.

### *Customer Service Skills:*

- Tell me the most difficult customer service experience that you had to handle. Be specific, and what was the outcome?
- Tell me about a difficult situation when it was necessary for you to keep a positive attitude. What did you do?

### **Online Interviewing**

Many companies are conducting online interviews using Zoom, Skype, Facetime and Google Hangout, just to name a few. A video interview is equally as important as an interview conducted in-person. It is critical that you research the company and be familiar with the job description so that you are able to connect your qualifications to the job description requirements. Here are two videos to help you prepare for online interviewing:

- [Video Interview Tips.](#)
- [How To Prepare for Video Interviews.](#)

For successful video job interviews:

- Test your equipment days prior to your interview – computer, camera, microphone and headset.
- Arrange your webcam so that your screen displays your head, shoulders and upper chest.
- Have a clutter free background with appropriate lighting.
- Eliminate any noise distractions.
- When speaking, look into the camera.
- Wear appropriate interview attire from head to toe.

### **Salary Discussions and Negotiations**

During the interview process, salary discussions and negotiation can be challenging. There are several important points to remember about salary discussion during the interview. Generally, it is best to avoid the issue of salary during the interview. This issue is always present for both parties, even if unspoken and it is never forgotten or ignored. When a candidate is seriously being considered for a position, salary will be addressed.

If the interviewer brings it up, you have several options:

- Ask the interviewer what range they are offering.
- Defer the discussion until the adequate information about the position has been collected.
- Suggest the maximum for the package held at your most recent job, e.g., \$38,000 + incentive pay + other fringe benefits. Add all of this together. This will provide the top end of the range.
- If the interviewer wants to know what salary is expected, suggest a range, without giving an absolute figure. Try to learn if there is a range established by the company for the position. If so, use this range to gauge your interest. If it is not apparent, or it has not been established, then base the range on salaries for similar positions, qualifications and level of experience.

## Post Interview

A successful interview is not the final step of the job search process. Before leaving the interview, clarify the hiring process. It is appropriate for applicants to know when and from whom they should expect to hear next. Also, verify what action, if any, is expected. Then, after departing the interview, make notes right away so critical details are not forgotten. The final post interview step is to send a thank you note or card

# Assessing an Offer

If an offer is made, the first step is to evaluate the job against your goals and objectives. Does this job fit into those plans? Evaluate the environment, people, duties and functions of the position, as well as opportunities for growth. Look carefully at the conditions or requirements of the job that are different from established expectations. The second step in assessing the offer is to review the conditions of both the salary and benefits package. Moreover, salary is not the only consideration.

Gross salary is not the only consideration in negotiating compensation. Some individuals believe that receiving the maximum amount of pay is very important, regardless of the work hours or conditions. Others find that having better work hours and the overall job conditions are more important than receiving the highest pay. Consider these other variables when negotiating:

**Work- Life Issues.** Is working a flexible schedule important? Is it important that the employer have childcare facilities? Does the employer have a work-life program?

**Benefits.** Understand the benefit package for insurance, retirement, tuition reimbursement, vacation leave, sick leave, etc. What amount will the employer pay towards insurance premiums? If an employer offers a high gross salary, yet employees have to contribute a significant amount to insurance premiums, then is that the ideal package?

Finally, in negotiating, it is important to recognize that both the employer and job seeker have concerns, priorities, and interests. Look for ways to identify options for mutual gains instead of being locked into one position or perspective. Focus instead on the requirements of the job and the match that has been made between the skills and expertise brought to the table.