

Ask Sabina: How to sell myself as a great leader in interviews

Dear Sabina,

I'm hoping to progress my career by moving into a new industry while also maintaining a leadership role. How should I best position myself and my skills to employers? From, Ryan

Hi Ryan,

It's encouraging to hear you've already experienced success as a leader. This will work to your advantage as you seek to move into a new industry. Many industry-related skills can be learned and acquired along the way; however effective leadership traits are often more difficult to hone.

Savvy leaders aren't necessarily the ones who hold all the industry knowledge. Think about the brightest students you knew at school or university. Just because they had the smarts to achieve top results, doesn't necessarily equate with their ability to teach or inspire others.

In her newest book, *Dare to Lead*, best-selling author Brene Brown identifies the skills required for effective leadership. These include the ability to identify problems, a comfort in taking risks, the capacity to have tough conversations and the clarity to set and evaluate clear organisational values based on measurable behaviour. In addition to this, effective leaders execute these skills while also demonstrating courage, vulnerability and empathy.

So, which of these traits do you currently possess? And where are your development areas? What real-world examples can you draw on to illustrate your existing leadership credentials to a potential employer? It would also be useful to identify what leadership

growth in the future looks like, and where you have already achieved growth to date.

When you have the confidence that your leadership skills are well-developed, it's time to explore what's required to move into a new industry. What is about your existing industry that has resulted in your yearning to leave? Is it people related, lack of growth opportunities, or even boredom? In contrast, ask yourself what appeals about the new industry? And what compromises and losses are you willing to tolerate to make the move, including perhaps a reduced salary or managing a smaller team?

Next, it's necessary to assess what steps you have taken to help bridge the gap between old and new industries. That could be through professional development, talking to recruiters or meeting with people currently working in that industry. Of course, you will increase your chances of making the leap if you plan to move into a growth industry, where niche skills may not necessarily be required.

Finally, many newly appointed leaders fall into the trap of seeking to make their mark swiftly by creating big changes after only a short time in the chair. Be mindful that any new leader needs to listen more than they talk. It takes time to build trust; and empathy and respect are non-negotiable ingredients in strong leadership regardless of tenure or industry.

Together, your experience in leadership, combined with an awareness of the strengths and gaps that you bring to a new sector should help place you in good stead as you approach a move. When future employers can clearly see your stellar track record, as well as your potential and commitment to growth, learning, and development; you'll be well placed to flourish as a leader in the opportunities that lie ahead.

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