

QUALIFIED

i **ISN'T**
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ENOUGH

**Develop Your Story.
Land the Interview.
Win the Job.**

**Gina
Riley**

PRAISE FOR *QUALIFIED ISN'T ENOUGH* AND GINA RILEY

Empathetic, motivational, and packed with practical strategies, Gina Riley's *Qualified Isn't Enough* inspires confidence and action. The focus on storytelling, real-world examples, and clear exercises empowers leaders to take control of their career path with clarity.

—**James Cape**

President, Intel Alumni Network

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When the stakes are so high, tips aren't enough. Gina Riley provides step-by-step instructions executives can follow to maximize their returns from their career transition efforts.

—**Steve Dalton**

Bestselling Author, The 2-Hour Job Search and The Closer

Gina Riley and her Career Velocity™ framework are the real deal. This book will tell you the truth about what's holding you back in your career or job search. Use it as a road map to tell your unique story with brevity and influence. Armed with these insights, your best leadership role is ahead!

—**Jennifer Davis**

President, Central States Building Works

The job market has changed, and you need to be prepared. In an age where a stellar résumé is no longer enough to get you in the door, much less land the job, *Qualified Isn't Enough* is a masterclass on standing out and effectively communicating your story. Through Gina Riley's Career Velocity™ framework, you'll learn how to identify your unique value proposition while enhancing your personal brand and developing effective networking skills. Whether you think you already have the perfect job or you're just starting to think about future opportunities, this book arms you with the knowledge you need to take your career to the next level. A must read for all leaders!

—**Jeff Deitrick**

Vice President, CPG Company

Gina Riley has built a masterclass in career differentiation. *Qualified Isn't Enough* is a surgical strike on generic résumés and uninspired interviews. Gina's Career Velocity™ method arms you with the tools to craft a standout narrative, articulate your leadership, and dominate the hidden job market. If you're playing chess while others play checkers, Gina's the strategist you want at the board.

—**Brian Fink**

Talent Acquisition Partner, McAfee

As the owner of an executive résumé writing firm, I have referred numerous senior leaders to Gina for her expertise in career clarity and job search strategy. Her proven methods consistently deliver results. This book encapsulates her white-

glove coaching approach in an accessible and practical guide. It's one of the most actionable and effective career resources I've encountered. Whether you're aiming for your next C-suite role or building sustained career momentum, *Qualified Isn't Enough* delivers.

—**Sarah Johnston**

CEO, Briefcase Coach

Through her trademarked Career Velocity™ system, Gina has discovered the solution for answering the dreaded “tell me about yourself” question. This book is loaded with frameworks, models, and exercises to simplify and structure the job search. A must read for anyone looking to transition to that next role or career pivot.

—**Lisa Kaplowitz**

Executive Director, Rutgers Center for Women in Business

Qualified Isn't Enough is an incredibly insightful guide that delves deep into the art of strategic self-presentation in the executive job market. Gina Riley's Career Velocity™ method empowers readers to uncover and articulate their unique value, creating compelling narratives that captivate hiring decision-makers. Through practical exercises and real-world examples, this book transforms the job search from a daunting process into a proactive journey, equipping leaders with the tools to stand out, build trust, and secure pivotal roles.

—**John Knotts**

Crosscutter Enterprises

This book is a practical guide for executives navigating career transitions. Gina Riley shares clear and actionable strategies to help professionals define their value and stand out in today's competitive market.

—**Clay McKissack**

Vice President, Schneider Electric

Executive career transitions are so important, and you cannot leave this to chance. Gina Riley in *Qualified Isn't Enough* lays out a practical framework with insightful questions and exercises to empower you to attain your next big role. The examples from decades of senior-level experience assist in bringing this to life and unblocking great stories and approaches for the future.

—**Scott Newton**

Managing Partner, Thinking Dimensions Global

In her book *Qualified Isn't Enough*, Gina Riley shares her wisdom through tested and proven methods in this comprehensive how-to career guide for creating your unique value proposition, marketing yourself, and developing your thought leadership strategy. By following this guide, you're sure to create a compelling story that lands you the job you want—every time.

—**Jana Panfilio**

Cofounder, 6453 ALUMNI

You can't rely on a résumé alone, no matter how well written, to land your next job. You also need to learn job search skills, understand what matters to employers, and talk persuasively about what you offer. Gina Riley shows you how to do all these things so you can stand out from your competitors and get the career you want.

—**Mac Prichard**

Host, Find Your Dream Job Podcast

Qualified Isn't Enough is not about finding your next job. It is an effective tool in defining and growing your career. Riley's insider perspective as an executive recruiter, combined with practical frameworks and exercises, makes this an invaluable resource to delve deep within yourself to become the number one choice for career progression.

—**Angela Shaw**

SVP of Talent, Amplify Credit Union

In *Qualified Isn't Enough*, Gina Riley has created the complete actionable and practical guide for executive career transitions. The Career Velocity™ framework whisks away the noise of novice advice, providing the playbook of choice for the busy leader ready to advance their career.

—**Kristin Sherry**

Creator, YouMap®

Bestselling Author, YouMap and Ready, Set, Coach!

Gina's insights on career advancement are spot-on for today's leaders. In a world where meaningful connections are more powerful than a résumé, *Qualified Isn't Enough* equips executives with the tools to articulate their value and expand their influence. Having led teams through growth and transformation, this book is a must-read for purpose-driven leaders to navigate career transitions effectively.

—**David Siegel**

Former CEO, Meetup; Investopedia

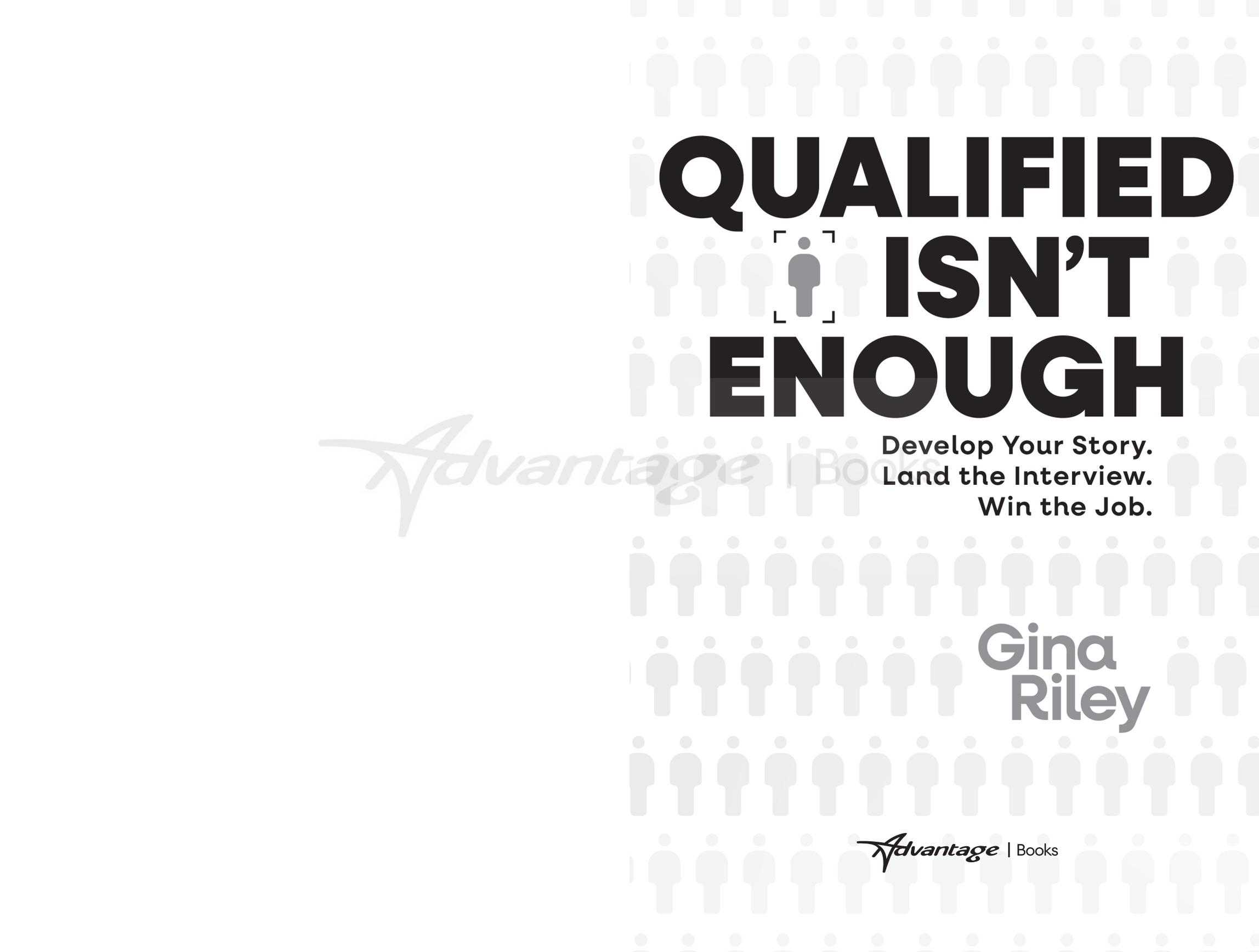
Gina Riley offers a novel and effective way for leaders to tell their stories and maximize the power of personal branding. This book is filled with opportunities for active reflection, catalyzing leaders at every step to rethink the job hunt entirely—it is no longer about showing results or the size of your network alone. Today, finding one's next role is about inspiring what's possible from what's been, and Riley has the blueprint for senior leaders and executives on how to do this effectively.

—**Annie Tsai**

Chief Operating Officer, Interact

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Land the Interview.
Win the Job.

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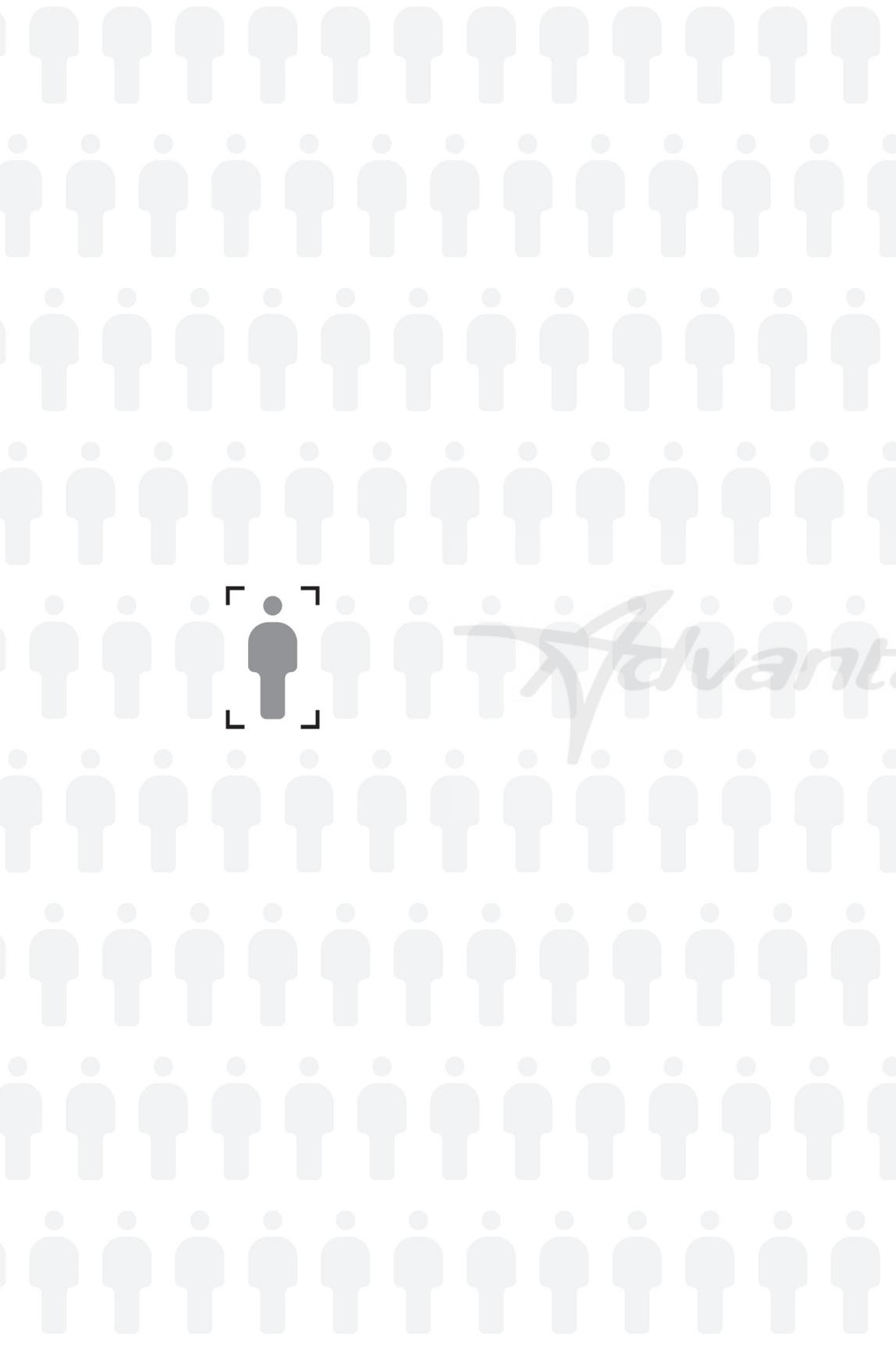
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For my husband, Sean Riley, and my sons, Keegan and Addison, who always believe in me—even when I’m in full “Gina-freaking-Riley” mode. Your unwavering support for my bold, get-it-done spirit keeps me going.





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
PHASE 1	9
Develop Your Story	
CHAPTER 1	11
Identifying Your Unique Differentiators	
CHAPTER 2	35
Understanding Your Leadership Approach	
CHAPTER 3	53
Developing Your Career Story	
CHAPTER 4	67
Build Your Career Data Vault	
CHAPTER 5	83
Develop Your “Tell Me About Yourself” Answer	

PHASE 2 97

Marketing, Interview Prep, and
Job Search Strategy

CHAPTER 6 99

Prepare to Market Yourself

CHAPTER 7 125

Interviewing to Win the Job

CHAPTER 8 151

Job Search Strategy

PHASE 3 179

Thought Leadership

CHAPTER 9 181

Your Thought Leadership Strategy

APPENDIX I 197

The Career Story Four-Step Process

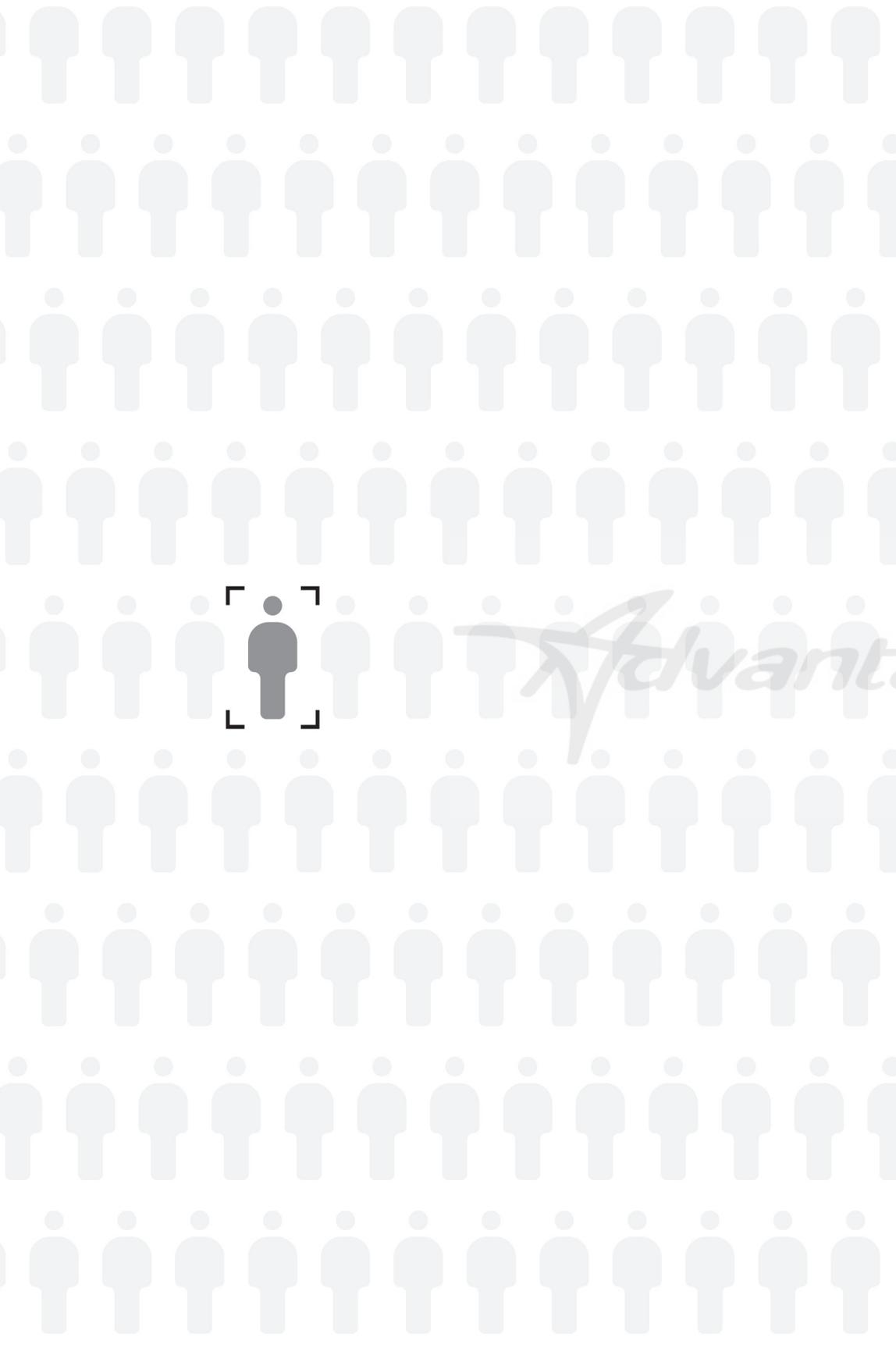
APPENDIX II 205

The Career Velocity UVP Scorecard™

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS 209

ABOUT THE AUTHOR 211





INTRODUCTION

“Tell me a little about yourself.”

I sat across from the CEO candidate, my eyes shifting between his animated face and the ticking clock. I started interviews the same way for each candidate: “Given we have a lot to cover in the next hour, please give me a five-minute career overview—tell me a little about yourself.” And now, twenty minutes had passed, and he was still answering my opening question.

As a lead recruiter for Talence Group collaborating with a board of directors to hire their next healthcare leader, I had prepared eight skill-based questions for our interview. We had narrowed hundreds of applicants to a dozen, each of whom had been selected for an intensive, hour-long interview. While assessing technical expertise was straightforward, the board relied on my ability to evaluate and advise on the candidates’ leadership qualities and alignment with the organization’s values and culture. One critical aspect of effective CxO leadership is having the emotional intelligence to adapt your behaviors and communication to each set of stakeholders. In the case of this memorable candidate, I couldn’t gather enough information to adequately compare him to the other candidates because he spent a third of the hour introducing himself.

This experience highlighted a common misstep I've seen repeatedly in executive searches and my career coaching practice: **Excessive rambling is the top deal killer in interviews and networking.** I've watched countless CxOs undermine themselves with ineffective communication. Sadly, many don't realize it until they repeatedly lose out to other candidates or seek candid feedback on how their communication is being perceived.

From my experience, how you answer the question "Tell me a little about yourself," which you will be asked repeatedly, makes or breaks your chances of advancing in a competitive CxO interview. While you can't control every aspect of the interview process, effectively preparing to answer a standard question such as this is something you can master. It sets the tone in every interview.

With over a decade of corporate HR and recruitment expertise, I have led CEO, COO, and CFO searches and helped place transformative leaders across various industries, such as healthcare, high tech, and even a Napa Valley winery. I've developed and delivered training for hundreds of employees on effective interviewing and talent selection techniques. My experience in the executive selection process of observing firsthand how CEOs secure (or lose) job offers has shaped my approach to career coaching. I have translated these insider insights into actionable strategies that have helped countless clients and job seekers navigate their career paths.

I've experienced feeling stuck and unseen in my career. I think most of us have. The turning point came when I took the advice of mentors and made the necessary changes to open doors to my desired role. In this book, I share these lessons and those from my clients to help you avoid waiting to be "plucked from obscurity." As HR leader Angela Shaw, SVP of Talent at Amplify Credit Union states, "People

are not going to level the playing field for you, which is why you need to be putting in work to create those opportunities for yourself."

Qualified Isn't Enough is not a guide to résumé writing. Instead, it addresses a critical gap in executive career advisement: helping you become the relevant candidate of choice by using the Career Velocity™ system. This unique blueprint goes beyond résumé advice, providing a step-by-step approach to identifying and securing pivotal CxO roles—often within the hidden job market, where opportunities are filled before being publicly advertised. By clearly articulating your value and engaging effectively with key connectors and decision-makers, this book enables you to build the trust and confidence needed to stand out in the fiercely competitive executive job market. It will prepare you to seize emerging opportunities and secure top executive roles.

Control Your Destiny with Career Velocity

Finding your next ideal job can feel like trying to boil the ocean. If you're tired of the crowded, dismal "spray and pray" method of endless applications and hoping for calls, you're not alone. This defensive strategy creates the illusion of progress, but more often than not, your résumé just gets lost in the shuffle.

To take control of your destiny, preparation must meet opportunity. This involves a proactive, structured job search strategy focused on impactful success metrics, such as the number of informational interviews or conversations you have each week and the secondary leads or warm introductions that advance your journey. This path enhances your visibility, showcases your expertise through thought

leadership, engages you in meaningful conversations, and builds relationships that truly matter.

This book is for you if you are a leader or aspiring leader who is

- getting interviewed but not receiving job offers;
- regularly autorejected after applying through job boards;
- not being found by recruiters or tapped for opportunities;
- struggling to jump from director to VP or VP to CxO;
- unsure of what to research and prepare for interviews;
- an adaptable “Swiss Army knife” full of tools but unsure how to position yourself; or
- wanting to maximize your financial potential to support retirement or college funding.

You might not be ready for this book if you

- believe a perfect résumé is the golden ticket to your next job;
- are unwilling to leverage your network and build relationships with strangers;
- have successfully applied for jobs online (you are one of the lucky ones!); or
- have no idea whatsoever what you want to do next. (In that case, I recommend first reading the books *What Color Is Your Parachute?* by Richard N. Bolles and *Designing Your Life* by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans.)

This book is divided into three parts and designed to be read sequentially, with lessons carefully layered to build chapter by chapter.

In addition to drawing on insights from over fifteen top career professionals in chapter 6, I also share anonymized client stories throughout the book to demonstrate the transformative power of the frameworks. However, suppose you’re planning a less linear career move, such as changing industries or functional jobs. In that case, I recommend starting with chapter 8 to learn how to hold informational conversations to gain more insight before you start.

The Career Velocity™ System

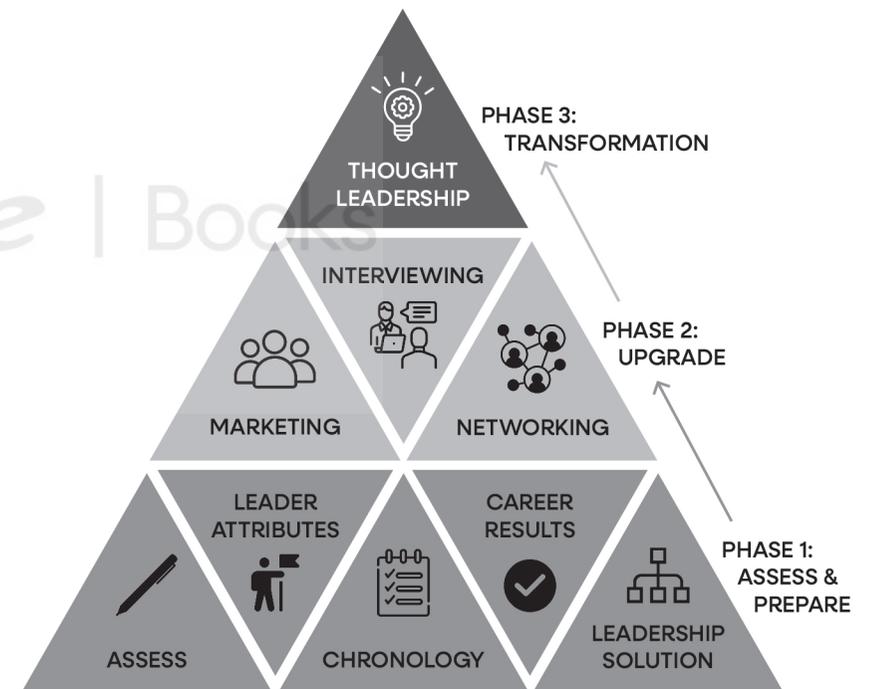


Figure 0.1: The Career Velocity™ system, the basis for the structure of *Qualified Isn't Enough*

“**Phase 1: Develop Your Story**” helps you unpack your talents and story. By the end, you’ll have a career “throughline” and a clear “Tell me about yourself” narrative that sets you apart. In “**Phase 2: Marketing, Interview Prep, and Job Search Strategy**,” you’ll learn how to use your unique value proposition (UVP) to refine your résumé and LinkedIn profile, prepare for interviews, and master job search and networking strategies. Finally, in “**Phase 3: Thought Leadership**,” we’ll combine all these concepts to help you develop a thought leadership strategy to establish yourself as a recognized expert in your field, positioning you for long-term success.

To fully engage with the Career Velocity™ system, you’ll need to make a few small but essential investments. “Chapter 1: Identifying Your Unique Differentiators” is centered around the YouMap® Profile assessment. You’ll find instructions and a discount code within chapter 1 for purchasing and taking YouMap. While you can certainly find value in the chapter and the book as a whole without taking the assessment, much of the work we’ll do together in these pages hinges upon what you learn about yourself through YouMap. If you’re truly ready to take your career to the next level, you should consider the cost of the YouMap Profile an investment in yourself. Two other resources I highly encourage you to invest in are the books *The 2-Hour Job Search* by Steve Dalton and *Pay Up!* by Kate Dixon. “Chapter 8: Job Search Strategy” is heavily influenced by Dalton, and reading *The 2-Hour Job Search* will help accelerate your job search approach. And while I won’t cover salary negotiation in this book, I highly recommend *Pay Up!* in my work with my clients and would be remiss not to do so here as well.

The methods and insights I share in this book are recognized across the industry. As a LinkedIn Top Voice, an Official Member of Forbes Coaches Council, an international speaker, and a featured expert in respected publications such as *Authority*, *Authoritti5.0*, and *Industry*

Expert, I’ve had the opportunity to refine and validate these strategies. With a master’s in Whole Systems Design and my YouMap certification, I’ve established a reputation as a trusted career coaching authority committed to transforming careers. Central to my approach is crafting a UVP that sets you apart in today’s rapidly evolving job market.

In an era of continual change, one thing remains constant in executive-level career transitions: the need for a relevant, memorable UVP to win job offers. Despite advancements in hiring technologies and practices, the human element—your ability to articulate your value and build trust—is more crucial than ever. To succeed, you must have self-awareness and effectively communicate to inspire trust among stakeholders who need to know, like, and trust you.

There is no doubt that the most important currency in business and in life is trust.

—Adam Witty and Rusty Shelton, *The Authority*

Advantage

There is no one right way to write a résumé, search for a job, or make a career transition. This book presents not only my insights but also opinions from respected experts. You must apply judgment when applying the information to your unique circumstances. A successful career transition hinges on your ability to gather and assimilate information and continuously refine your approach.

So now, it’s time to activate! Do not wait to get “plucked out of obscurity.” Career Velocity equips you to proactively manage your career journey, create your own luck and opportunities, and shape the future you envision for yourself so that when someone says to you, “Tell me a little about yourself,” you’ll be ready with a compelling narrative that sets you apart and opens doors to new opportunities.