Example Narrative

Below is an example of a narrative document we recommend you make early on in your job search process. This is the one Stepan wrote for himself.

Why did you join your last job?

I loved startups, and I was building a service business with my co-founder in China. We were beginning to be successful, but I realized two things. First, we wanted to solve ambitious and large problems, and both of us knew this business not one of those. Second, I realized I was growing in sales and marketing, but I was no longer growing technically. With that, we decided to wind down the business. I decided that I would dive deeper technically, and go where the biggest problems are being solved — San Francisco.

I found a company where all of us were weird in the same way. We were solving an ambitious machine learning problem, with technology that proved to be very well chosen. We were one of the first .ai domains, one of the first docker users, and one of the pioneers of Clojure — a functional language in Lisp.

A year in, we got a call from Facebook, they acquired us to apply our expertise in productizing NLP within messenger. I was worried at first, it was a big company, but I soon found that I *loved it* — we were given enormous support and latitude to solve problems that I will be proud of for the rest of my life.

What did you do at your last job?

During my time at the Startup, I was the primary owner of the UI in Wit. I migrated our app from Angular to React, and built the Tagger — a rich-text-editing piece that let users annotate data.

When I joined Facebook, for the first 2 years I was the UI lead on Oz – a service that facilitated "customer service on steroids". We built a system that a team of 60 agents used to answer questions. We helped agents automate as much as possible — from detecting parts of the conversation, to logging every single mouse movement, to phone calls to emails. This is the time that I reached my zenith in UI engineering, and gave talks around the world on React.

After that, I went on a 2-year long mission.

The first, was to find product-market fit internally for Wit. I patented, tech-led, and launched two products, which integrate Wit with different orgs across Facebook.

Second, I owned, what I termed "The Great Migration". This was a multi-phased migration, spanning over a year and a half and 6 people, with the goal of moving Wit business logic from our legacy infrastructure to Facebook.

Why are you leaving your job?

I finished The Great Migration in November. When I finished, I opened my eyes to breathe again. I had finished the commitment I had made, and I knew that

the next commitment I would make would have a similar commitment of a few years. I decided then, before diving deeper, I should reflect — Do I want to dive deeper at Facebook, do I start a company, or do I join another company?

What are you looking for in your next opportunity?

I know that at the end of the day I want to start a company. At first, I thought that I would start one in November. I realized though, that I didn't yet have a *burning* vision, for something that *had* to be done as a company. I also realized, that there could be a 2-year commitment I could make, where I could grow considerably at the next company. There were 3 dimensions:

Technical Growth: I have gotten to work on technical problems that I am very proud of, but there's still room on my technical mountain for growth. I could see myself getting excited about leading teams to build distributed systems and heavy client-side applications.

Product Growth: I was fortunate to have immense support at Facebook to build new products. However, one thing with building an API for NLP is that it's not often highly critical to the customer. I could grow building a product that is essential for customers, and essential for the business.

People Growth: This, I want to continue from my time at Facebook. I want to work with people who are on a mission, and know why they come into work each day. I want us to become a mafia, to support empower each other. Spending 2 more years growing my community, will pay immense dividends down the road.