

2009-2010

CAREER DEVELOPMENT GUIDE

YOUR HANDBOOK FOR CAREER SUCCESS



University of
West Florida

CAREER SERVICES

uwf.edu/career

2009-2010 Career Development Guide

Your Workbook for Career Success

CAREER SERVICES	2
CAREER ROADWAY TO SUCCESS	4
GETTING STARTED	6
STEP MODEL TO CAREER PLANNING	7
VOLUNTEER UWF!	8
reflection is key	
pre-service...getting started	
WHAT IS EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION?	11
WHY PARTICIPATE IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING?	11
JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES: PROS AND CONS	12
FEDERAL JOBS: WORKING FOR UNCLE SAM	13
INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE JOB SEARCH	14
SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES	16
IS GRADUATE SCHOOL RIGHT FOR YOU?	17
TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WORKSHEET	18
COVER LETTERS	19
RESUMES	20
a marketing tool	
power verbs	
sample resumes	
REFERENCE SHEETS	24
TIPS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CAREER FAIR EXPERIENCE	25
THE INTERVIEWING PROCESS	26
types of interviews	
the STAR technique	
do's and don'ts	
dressing for the interview	
sample interview questions	
your bragging rights: selling yourself	
students with disabilities	
professional etiquette	
thank-you letters	
the benefits of company benefits	
weighing the job offer	
dealing with rejection	
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ADVERTISER INDEX

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CAREER SERVICES

WELCOME

Your Future Starts Here!

Last year, we worked with over 3,600 UWF students and alumni. We're the on-campus specialists for resume writing, job search assistance, internships, cop-ops, and service opportunities as well as interviewing strategies, networking, and resume development. No matter what the economy is doing, our expertise can help you weather the job market.

Come by our office in Building 19 or log on to uwf.edu/career to explore JasonQuest and other career development tools.

SERVICES WE OFFER

Career Coaching

Thinking about switching majors? What can you do with your current major? One thing we know by working with students is that people get stuck when making decisions for a variety of reasons. Make a one-on-one appointment with one of our career coaches to explore these important decisions.

Drop-Ins

Need quick advice or a resume critique? Try a drop-in session. Check out uwf.edu/career for more details.

Employer Connections

Meet employers face to face at various networking events, including career fairs, information sessions and on-campus interviewing. Check out the Career Services calendar at uwf.edu/career for programs like Fall and Spring Career Fairs, Career Advice and a Slice seminars, Construction Career Night and more.



Above: Career coaching and resume reviews are just a couple of the services available through Career Services.

Right: Making employer connections through the Career Advice and a Slice program.



*Visit Career Services
to get more
information about
your options.*

JasonQuest

JasonQuest is an online database system containing student and employer profiles. This system allows students/alumni to view positions (full-time, part-time, seasonal, internships, Cooperative Education and service opportunities). Students/alumni can view on-campus interviews and other important career events. Resumes can be posted in the system once you create a personal profile. JasonQuest may be accessed through our website uwf.edu/career (click on "Student Login") or through the "Services" tab in Argus.

Career Planning

Learn about the tools necessary to be successful in the job search. Attend a workshop or make a one-on-one appointment for help with a resume, cover letter, or letter of intent for graduate school. Job/Graduate School search strategy appointments are also available. If you feel you need help fine tuning your interviewing skills, consider scheduling a mock interview. Career planning events such as the Etiquette Dinner and Mock Interview Day are also valuable resources.

Community Service and Volunteerism

This program provides opportunities for individuals and student groups/organizations. Recurring or one-time opportunities are available with Community Partners and other local nonprofit agencies.

Service Learning

Service learning is a service experience for an individual or a group that is tied directly to an academic course that includes other content. The project should accom-

plish course objectives and include reflection about the experience. Volunteer UWF! connects UWF faculty and their course learning objectives with specific community needs.

Community Work Study

Leadership Opportunity for Federal Work Study students to work with local nonprofits and serve as liaisons between UWF and the local organization. Provides free support staff to our community partners and great experiences to our students.

Field Study

A stand-alone elective course in a student's field of study that is unpaid, independent and with a nonprofit or government agency for 1, 2, or 3 credit hours, where the student completes academic-based volunteer service hours in the community.

Experiential Learning

Gain experience while still in school with programs such as Cooperative Education, Internship and the Disney College program.

Online Mentoring Services

Online mentoring interface meant to assist students in learning more about their career choices. Students can access a list of UWF Alumni mentors, through their JasonQuest account, who share the student's major or career goals in order to learn more about their career field.

To schedule an appointment please call 850-474-2254 or stop by Building 19, North Foyer.



Above: The Etiquette Dinner helps students learn about dining etiquette specifically during the employment process.



Right: Career fairs are your ideal opportunity for face-to-face contact with employers.

CAREER ROADWAY TO SUCCESS

Mapping out your career path can be difficult, challenging, and confusing. Follow the Career Roadway to Success and you'll be ready to drive to your ideal career.

4

FIRST YEAR

Prep

- Explore and consider your interests
- Concentrate on setting a solid base by excelling in your classes
- Develop good college survival skills by taking an Academic Foundations course

Act

- Register an account in JasonQuest to have 24/7 access to career tools, volunteer and job opportunities
- Attend the Part-Time Job Fair at the beginning of the fall semester
- Do volunteer work to start building your resume and to explore your major/interest areas
- Attend Career Services events to explore career possibilities and develop professionally

Explore

- Get familiar with campus by participating in Welcome Week and Beyond events
- Check out clubs and student organizations
- Meet with your academic advisor and research majors and careers at Career Services
- Stop by Volunteer UWF! to explore volunteer opportunities and learn how to record and track your volunteer hours in JasonQuest

SECOND YEAR

Prep

- Continue to explore your growing interests and related career choices and possibilities
- Concentrate on setting a solid base by excelling in your classes

Act

- Update your profile in JasonQuest
- Continue to volunteer in areas that interest you and track your hours through Volunteer UWF!
- Attend the Part-Time Job Fair at the beginning of the fall semester to find relevant employment related to your interests
- Start creating your resume with your skills, experiences and achievements
- Attend Career Services events to explore career possibilities and develop professionally
- Talk with your academic department and Career Services about co-op and internship opportunities

Explore

- Use JasonQuest to explore mentor relationships
- Consider serving as a student organization officer or leader
- Make contacts with and consider shadowing a professional in a career field that interests you

ONE
WAY
→

NO
STANDING
ANY
TIME
↔

SLOW DOWN: CONSTRUCTION AHEAD!

*Look to the future while anticipating curves and detours in your route.
Keep your eyes on the road and know your destination.*

5

THIRD YEAR

Prep

- Map out your progress toward graduation and a career by identifying your skills, experiences and areas in need of improvement
- Start planning for the job search or graduate school and set personal deadlines
- Begin doing research on specific companies that interest you within your field of study

Act

- Update your profile in JasonQuest
- Make an appointment with a Career Services professional to clarify your career objectives
- Talk with your academic department and Career Services about co-op and internship possibilities
- Revise your resume and have it critiqued by Career Services staff
- Attend Career Services events to explore career possibilities and develop professionally
- Continue to track your volunteer hours through Volunteer UWF!
- Build transferrable skills and experience for your resume through hands-on experience and service

Explore

- Use JasonQuest to explore mentor relationships
- Network and form relationships with professors and area leaders in your field
- Serve as a student organization officer or leader

FOURTH YEAR

Prep

- Assess what you need to do prior to graduation
- Identify your employable skills and how to market them
- Re-examine your future academic and career goals
- Set up your job search strategies

Act

- Attend Career Services workshops and conduct a mock interview
- Meet required deadlines for graduate school or job search
- Have your resume critiqued by a Career Services professional
- Continue to look on JasonQuest for on-campus interview possibilities
- Determine if there are volunteer/service requirements for graduate school/awards/recognition/graduation
- Meet with Volunteer UWF! to ensure that you have recorded your service hours completed through Volunteer UWF! and that your hours are reflected in JasonQuest

Explore

- Use JasonQuest to explore mentor relationships
- Research and make contact with specific companies that interest you
- Research graduate school options

GETTING STARTED

Are you having trouble choosing a major or deciding where you want to go in life? It might be time to start examining your values, interests, personality, and skills. You will then have a foundation to start creating goals and focusing on the road ahead. Check out uwf.edu/career for more information and the tools to get started. Consider making an appointment with a Career Coach by calling Career Services at 474-2254 or stop by Building 19, North Foyer.

A. How Well Do I Know Myself?

Values: What is important to me and therefore what will be important work for me? Think about what motivates you (example: earning a high salary, helping others, being creative, having time to spend with family).

Interests: How can you combine what you truly love to do in or out of school into a career that will fit with your personality. If you feel that you have trouble pinpointing your interests, you may want to take an interest inventory. (Hint: What classes did you enjoy most/least? What are your hobbies?)

Personality: What are the dominant aspects of my personality? Do I need to work in a team environment or more by myself? Take a personality assessment to see where you rank to know if a career will fit with your personality or not.

Skills: What unique skills do you possess? Are you good working with tools or analyzing situations?

B. How Well Do I Know How I Take in Information? (Circle which one you feel you are)

Visual learners need to “see” the information to understand it. These learners do best understanding classroom material if it is presented through PowerPoint or another form of handout for the student to read themselves.

Auditory learners need to “hear” the information to best understand it. These learners do best in lecture-style classes. They may need to audiotape lectures and listen numerous times to take in the information.

Kinesthetic/Tactile learners need to “experience” the information to best understand it. These learners do best in smaller classes with active participation or doing a service learning project through a class to best understand the material.

C. Next, move over to the STEP model and start your way up the ladder of success!



The Service Connection Between University Students and the Outside World...

VOLUNTEER UWF! MISSION

To engage and empower the university community by serving both the needs of the university students and the outside world, providing service and learning opportunities that encourage civic engagement.

VOLUNTEER UWF! PROGRAMS

- Volunteerism and Community Service
- Service Learning
- Break Away! Alternative Spring Break Program
- Community Work Study
- Field Study

GET INVOLVED TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE!

Get in touch with us to find out how!

DID YOU KNOW ???

- ✓ Throughout the last year, we had over **2,000** students register and complete over **68,000** total service hours through Volunteer UWF!
- ✓ All service hours must be recorded on a Volunteer UWF! timesheet and turned in to Volunteer UWF! by the Monday *PRIOR* to Final Exam Week.
- ✓ Any service above 20 hours in a semester will be reflected on the students' official university transcript.
- ✓ Each semester when you turn in a timesheet to Volunteer UWF!, we record and track those hours through your JasonQuest account.
- ✓ When you are logged onto JasonQuest, you can review your service hours by clicking on the "My Activity" tab on your account.



How can I get involved in service?

- Contact Volunteer UWF! and set up an appointment with someone in our office to discuss your service interests
- Our office can assist you in locating information about specific Community Partners or local nonprofit agencies that fit your interest areas
- Register in JasonQuest, keep your JQ profile information up-to-date, and remember to check JasonQuest often for available upcoming one-time event and recurring volunteer service opportunities

Service Can...

- Expose you to new career fields
- Develop your leadership skills
- Build valuable skills and enhance your resume
- Help you get an internship or job
- Help you network in the community
- Make a difference in someone's life
- Improve the community

Service Is...

- Determined and driven by community needs
- Population focused and a means for social change
- A tool to give back and develop personally and professionally

Service is not...

- Just unpaid labor
- Driven by your own desires
- Simply monetary donations

STUDENT ORGANIZATION SERVICE

Volunteer UWF! is here to help student organizations find and make the most of opportunities to serve.

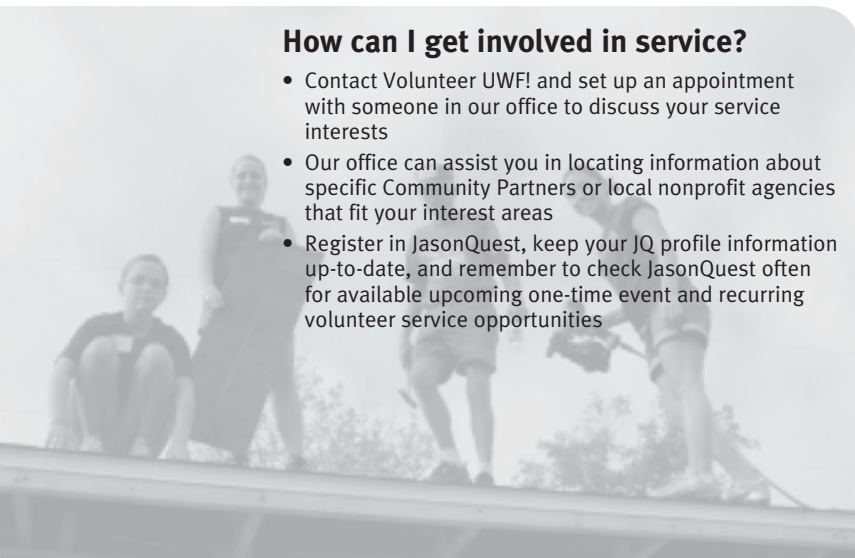
- All student organizations must register with Volunteer UWF! at least once a year.
- To register, stop by our office or visit our website at uwf.edu/volunteer to complete your Student Organization Registration Packet and to receive your Student Organization Event Forms and Timesheets.
- Volunteer UWF! staff are eager to assist Student Organization members and will be happy to schedule an appointment to discuss available service options, how to get involved in service, how to register your organization, etc.

Volunteer UWF! can assist you with...

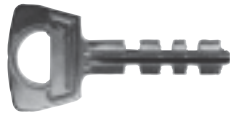
- Tracking and recording service hours
- Planning your service events
- Team-building and organizational activities
- Reflections on your service experiences

For Student Organizations, Service is...

- A tool to grow, build and bond your student organization
- A fun way to interact with friends
- A great way to build contacts and gain experiences within your organization's interest area



REFLECTION IS KEY



Facilitating Learning Connections With Service Experiences

Much of what we learn in life comes from reflecting on our experiences. Guided reflection will help you generate connections between your volunteer and service-learning experiences, your academic course content, and your career-related goals.

Reflection is most effective when...

- It is done before, during, and after your service activities.
- It is well-organized, intentional, and continuously occurring throughout the entire experience.
- It involves your experiences, the community agency you worked with, as well as the people you are serving (possibly even your academic instructor, class members, or student organization members)

A. PRE-SERVICE ACTIVITY—CREATE A “KWL” CHART

Before you begin your service, make a chart indicating what you *know* (K) before your service, what you *want to know* (W), and then once you have completed your service experience, fill in what you have *learned* (L) through your service experience.

(K) What I Know	(W) What I Want to Know	(L) What I Have Learned Through My Service Experience
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

Over time you can fill in the KWL Chart, providing a visual reminder of what you are learning through your service, and understand aspects from both pre- and post-service.

B. PRE-/POST-SERVICE ACTIVITY—COMPARE & CONTRAST—WHAT? SO WHAT?? NOW WHAT???

This activity allows you to compare and contrast what you expect from your service prior to your experience, to what you actually experience during your service, allowing you the opportunity to think, reflect and discuss.

Pre-Service:

What do you anticipate from the experience? _____

What do you expect to encounter? _____

How do you expect to act/interact? _____

What do you know about the organization/ issues/people you will be working with?

Post-Service:

What connectors do you see between this experience and what you have learned in your academic courses? _____

How has your service connected to your growth in any of these areas: professional development, career development, academic development, social understanding, intellectual pursuit, or civic responsibility?

What surprised you about your experience?

How are you different than when you left the service location, compared to when you entered? _____

What have you learned about yourself?

What have you learned about a particular community or societal issue? _____

How does this experience compare to others you've had? _____

How do you define service? How do you define community? _____

Is there anything you would do differently in the future? _____

PRE-SERVICE... GETTING STARTED

For completing the following activities of pre-service, during service, and post-service reflections you will have a better understanding and a greater foundation for facilitating the learning connections with your service experiences. Check out the Volunteer UWF! website at uwf.edu/volunteer for more information and the tools to get started on your service activity. Consider making an appointment with Volunteer UWF! in Career Services by calling 850-474-2254, 850-474-3114 or stopping by Building 19, North Foyer.

SERVICE INTEREST INVENTORY

To make the most out of your service experience answer these questions before engaging in service (Pre-Service):

Why am I interested in volunteering?

- For personal, self-interest?
- As an individual volunteer?
- For a service learning or field study course requirement?
- As part of a student organization, group, or sports team?
- Other reason (please explain)? _____

How many hours am I interested in volunteering? or How many hours am I required to complete (for an academic requirement, organization requirement, etc.)? _____

What do I hope to accomplish through my service experience? _____

How do I want to make a difference in the world? _____

How does this desire intersect with my major or career choice? _____

What are my interest areas outside of my major? _____

What types of service relate back to my major or interest area? _____

What will service add to my educational experience? _____

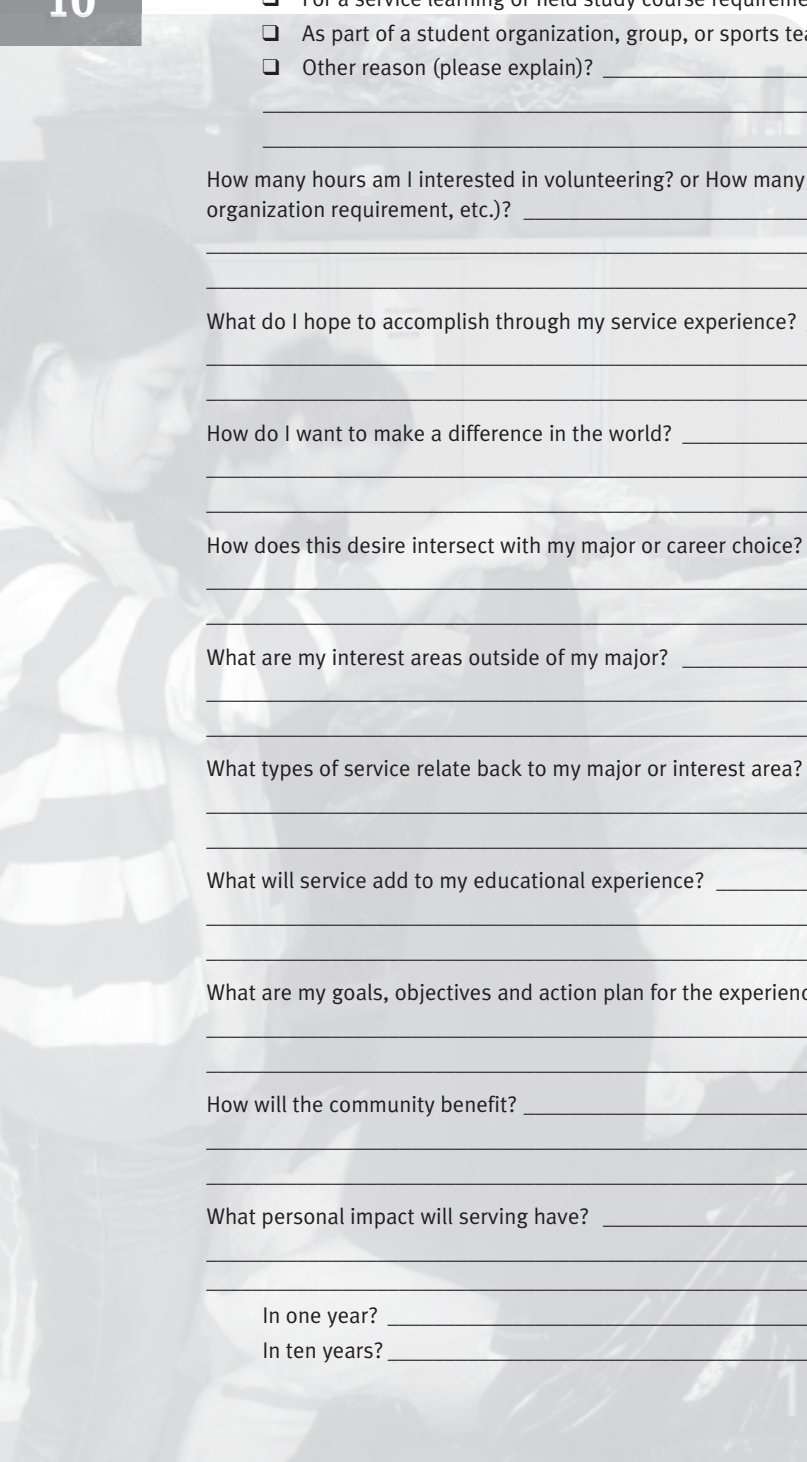
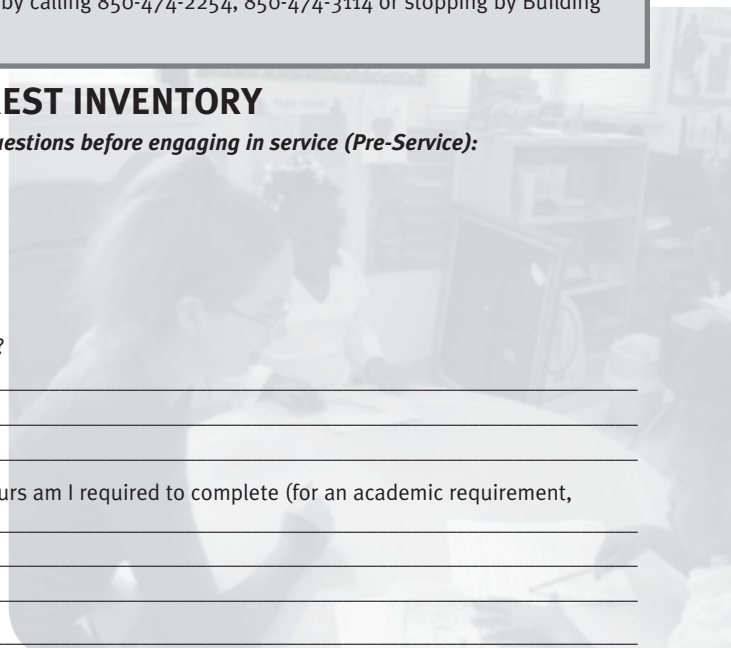
What are my goals, objectives and action plan for the experience? _____

How will the community benefit? _____

What personal impact will serving have? _____

In one year? _____

In ten years? _____



WHAT IS EXPERIENTIAL EDUCATION?

Experiential Education is a work-based learning experience that combines theory from the classroom with hands-on experience in the workforce.

In addition to your on-campus experiences, it is important to have some practice in your field before you graduate. Experiential learning and professional practice programs come in many forms at UWF including:

Cooperative Education (Co-Op)

- Multi-semester
- Always paid
- Always for academic credit

Internship

- Usually required to work only one semester
- May or may not be paid
- May or may not be for credit

Disney College Program

The Disney College Program offers you the chance to get a hands-on work experience at one of the Walt Disney World resorts or parks in Orlando, Florida. This is a paid,

residential program that allows you to be immersed in the Disney experience. A special one credit hour class is available to maintain your full-time UWF enrollment while you are on your work assignment.

Informational Interview

- Generally one or two hours
- Not for credit
- Not paid

Job Shadow

- Generally one day or one week
- Not for credit
- Not paid

While formal co-ops and internships must meet specific program and University guidelines, job shadowing and informational interviews are encouraged at any time during your educational career. All for-credit internships must be pre-approved by your academic department's internship advisor.

Learn more about Experiential Learning at uwf.edu/coopeducation

WHY PARTICIPATE IN EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING?

Experiential Learning gives you an opportunity to “try out” a career before making a full-time commitment.

Some of the hidden benefits are the ability to learn interpersonal skills such as:

- Teamwork
- Customer service/relations
- Employee dynamics
- Corporate hierarchy

During evaluations you receive feedback not only about your work, skills and technical performance, but about:

- Attendance
- Punctuality
- Appearance
- Attitude
- Sense of responsibility
- You also learn how to balance the many facets of your life...family, school, career, and leisure time

Bottom line... students who participate in experiential learning:

- Can earn while they learn*
- Are less apt to drop out of school
- Are more likely to be hired upon graduation

- Generally have a higher starting salary
- Generally advance more quickly in their careers

**Not all experiential learning opportunities are paid, but a salary or stipend is strongly encouraged*

Don't let the time get away from you! Undergrads must have AT LEAST 24 credit hours remaining in their degree to start co-op. Make sure you start the process early. Contact Career Services 474-2254 to get the process started.

“At the end of last semester, I accepted an engineering position in the highly-sought Air Force Palace Acquire Program, and it was all thanks to my co-op experience.... The UWF Co-Op Program provided me with the resources and connections to engineering companies to get started in my co-op, and I continued to work with that employer until graduation. Five months before I even graduated, I had accepted a job. Meanwhile, some of my classmates who graduated a year before me without any co-op/work experience are still looking for employment now.”

—Jeff Gibson (former Cooperative Education student)

JOB SEARCH STRATEGIES: PROS AND CONS

There are many ways to look for a job, some of which are better than others. Presented below are some of the most popular ways, as well as helpful hints and pros and cons of each.

STRATEGY	TOOLS	PROS	CONS	HELPFUL HINTS
WANT ADS Scan want ads. Mail resume with cover letter tailored to specific job qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Newspapers • Journals • Newsletters • Trade magazines • Cover letters • Resumes 	Involves minimal investment of time in identifying companies. Resume and cover letter are sent for actual job opening.	Resume and cover letter will compete with large number of others. Ads follow job market; least effective in times of economic downturn.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use as a meter on the job market in a certain career field. • Try to get your materials in as early as possible.
EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES Respond to employment agency ads in newspapers; check phone book for names of agencies to contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resumes • Business attire 	Fee-paid jobs for graduates in technical fields or those with marketable experience.	May be less help to non-technical/inexperienced graduates. Be wary if you, instead of the employer, have to pay a fee.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify agencies that specialize in your field. • Make frequent contact with your counselor to obtain better service.
INTERNET Search online job banks and company Web sites. Submit resume online/post on job boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to the Web • Electronic resume 	Actual job openings. Many employers use a wide variety of job listing services. Many listings have free to low-cost access. Worldwide geographic reach.	Competition is growing as use of the Web increases. Many jobs listed are technical in nature, though the visibility of nontechnical fields is growing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the Web frequently as information and sites change quickly. • May need to conduct your search at off-peak times (early morning or late at night).
TARGETED MAILING Develop a good cover letter tailored to a specific type of job and the needs of the company. Send letter with resume to selected companies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of well-researched companies • Tailored cover letters • Resumes 	Better approach than the mass-mailing method. Investment of time and effort should merit stronger response from employers.	Requires a significant investment of time in researching companies and writing cover letters as well as following up with contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Try to find out who is in charge of the area in which you want to work; send your materials to that person. Great method when used in conjunction with networking.
IN-PERSON VISIT Visit many companies. Ask to see person in specific department. Submit resume and application, if possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business attire • Company address list • Resumes 	Resume and application are on file with the company.	Requires a great deal of time to make a relatively small number of contacts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the companies prior to your visit. Ask for a specific person or ask about a specific type of job.
NETWORKING Talk to everyone you know to develop a list of possible contacts; ask for information on job/companies and to circulate your resume.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List of contacts • Resumes • Business attire 	May learn of unadvertised openings. May result in a courtesy interview. Often results in a closer match of your interests to a job.	A contact in itself is not enough to get you a job. You may exhaust all leads without landing a job. Quite time-consuming.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow through on all leads. • Keep broadening your network of contacts.
ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING Follow specific procedures to secure on-campus interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling interviews • Employer literature • Resumes • Business attire 	One of the primary ways in which companies recruit for technical and business positions.	May be less effective for nontechnical/nonbusiness candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the interview schedule as a way to identify possible employers, even if you don't get to interview on campus with those employers.
RESUME REFERRAL Register with one of the many national referral services. As jobs are listed by employers, the data bank of registrants is searched for matches. If your materials match, they are sent to the employers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration form supplied by service 	Another way to monitor the job market and get your qualifications to the attention of employers.	May involve a fee. Often more helpful to those in technical or specialized fields. May not learn of the status of your materials.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use only in conjunction with other job search strategies.

Adapted and reprinted with permission from Career Services, Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

FEDERAL JOBS: WORKING FOR UNCLE SAM

So you want to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 1.8 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2006 they earned an average salary of \$63,125. As the largest employer in the U.S., the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. No matter what your degree or level of experience, there is a job for you with the feds. Federal employees work with (and create) cutting-edge technology. They create policy, programs and services that impact the health, safety and welfare of millions of people in the U.S. and abroad.

But with these benefits come bureaucracy. If you do not like working within a system and following a defined chain of command, a federal job might not be for you. This bureaucracy is evident in the hiring process as well. Federal agencies follow strict hiring procedures, and applicants who do not conform to these procedures are left by the wayside. Typically, the federal hiring process can stretch on for months. In fact, many career professionals recommend that students applying for federal jobs begin the process at least two semesters before their graduation date.

TYPES OF FEDERAL JOBS

Federal jobs are separated into two classes: competitive service and excepted service positions. Competitive service jobs, which include the majority of federal positions, are subject to civil service laws passed by Congress. Job applications for competitive service positions are rated on a numerical system in which applications are awarded points based on education, experience and other predetermined job qualification standards. Hiring managers then fill the position from a pool of candidates with the highest point totals.

Hiring managers for excepted service agencies are not required to follow civil service hiring procedures or pick from a pool of candidates who have been rated on a points system. Instead, these agencies set their own qualifications requirements, as occurs in private industry. However, both competitive service and excepted service positions must give preference to veterans who were either disabled or who served in combat areas during certain periods of time. The Federal Reserve, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency are examples of some excepted service agencies. (For a complete list, visit www.usajobs.opm.gov/EI6.asp.) It's important to note that even agencies that are not strictly excepted service agencies can have excepted service positions available within them.

OPM AND USAJOBS

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) acts as the federal government's human resources agency. OPM's Web site (www.opm.gov) is expansive and contains a wealth of information for anyone interested in federal jobs, including federal employment trends, salary ranges, benefits, retirement statistics and enough links to publications and resources to keep a research librarian busy for days. Linked to the OPM site is the recently launched USAJOBS site (www.usajobs.opm.gov), which has its own set of tools and resources. Of particular interest to job applicants is "The Career Interest Center" page, which contains tools to help applicants find jobs that match their education, skills and interests. More importantly, USAJOBS acts as a portal for federal employment with thousands of job listings at any one time.

SEARCHING FOR FEDERAL JOBS

Federal agencies now fill their jobs like private industry by allowing applicants to contact the agency directly for

job information and applications. However, most of these positions can be accessed through the USAJOBS site. All competitive service positions must be posted on the USAJOBS site, and although agencies are not required to post their excepted service positions on USAJOBS, many do.

Registered visitors to USAJOBS can create and post up to five resumes, which can be made searchable, allowing recruiters from federal agencies to find resumes during applicant searches. Applicants can also use these resumes to apply directly to jobs that have an online application option. In addition, job applicants can create as many as ten "search agents," which search for job openings using certain criteria (such as location, job type, agency, salary requirements), and email matching postings directly to their inbox. Applicants can also search for jobs directly using the "search jobs" button on the USAJOBS homepage.

Remember, excepted service positions are not required to be posted on the USAJOBS site. If you are interested in employment with an excepted service agency, be sure to visit the recruitment section of its Web sites for postings that may not have made it onto the USAJOBS site. It is often worthwhile to look at the sites of agencies that you do not associate with your field of study. "If students are interested in the environment, they should definitely visit the EPA's Web site," says Briane K. Carter, M.S., former Director of Career Services at the University of Texas, El Paso. "But they should also make sure to visit the Web sites of other agencies that they don't associate with their major. It's not unusual for biology major, for example, to find a job with Homeland Security or the Department of Defense."

HOW TO APPLY

There is no general way to submit an application to OPM or to individual federal agencies. Instead, students should refer to each job posting for specific directions. Whether for competitive service or excepted service positions, federal job postings can be intimidating. A typical posting can run over 2,000 words and include sections on eligibility requirements, educational requirements, necessary experience, salary range, job duties and even a description of how applicants are evaluated.

Most importantly, all federal job postings include a section titled "How to Apply." Instead of letting this avalanche of information overwhelm you, use it as a resource to help you put together the best application possible, paying particularly close attention to the "How to Apply" section. If you do not follow the instructions and procedures closely, your application may not be processed. "I would emphasize that applicants should carefully read the 'fine print' of all printed and online materials and applications," says Dr. Richard White, Director of Career Services at Rutgers University. "Applicants who dot all their i's and cross all their t's gain a competitive advantage and rise to the top of the application pool."

The OPM created an "Optional Application for Federal Employment Form-OF 612," which applicants can fill out instead of submitting a resume for many positions. However, the OPM Web site states that resumes are preferred in most instances. As with all jobs, make sure to create a tailored resume for any federal job that you apply for. Federal agencies require specific information on your resume before it can be processed. The OF 612 form and the specific job posting can be used together to ensure that your resume has all the sections and information necessary for your resume to be considered.

Written by Chris Enstrom, a free-lance writer from Nashville, Ind.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AND THE JOB SEARCH

Looking for a job is seldom easy for any student. For you, the international student, the job search process can be especially confusing. You may lack an understanding of U.S. employment regulations, or perhaps you are unaware of the impact your career choice has on your job search. You may also be unsure about your role as the job-seeker and the resources used by American employers to find candidates.

The following is an overview of the issues most relevant to international students in developing a job search strategy. Additional information about the employment process and related topics can be found through your career center and on the Internet.

BUREAU OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES REGULATIONS

As an international student, you should only obtain employment-related information from an experienced immigration attorney or your campus USCIS representative. Advice from any other resource may be inaccurate. Once you have decided to remain in the United States to work, contact the international student services office or the office of human resources on your campus and make an appointment with your USCIS representative. In addition to helping you fill out necessary forms, the USCIS representative will inform you of the costs associated with working in the United States.

IMPORTANCE OF SKILLS AND CAREER FIELD

Find out if your degree and skills-set are currently in demand in the U.S. job market. An advanced degree, highly marketable skills or extensive experience will all make your job search easier. Find out what region of the United States holds the majority of the jobs in your field; you may need to relocate in order to find the job you want. Learn all you can about your targeted career field by talking to professors, reading industry publications and attending professional meetings and regional conferences.

ROLE OF EMPLOYERS

It is the employer's responsibility to find the right people for his or her company—not to help you find a job. The interview is successful when both of you see a match between the employer's needs and your interest and ability to do the job.

The employer (through hiring managers, human resources staff or employment agencies) will most likely use several resources to find workers, including:

- College recruiting
- Campus or community job fairs
- Posting jobs on the company Web site or on national job posting sites on the Internet
- Posting jobs in major newspapers or trade publications
- Posting jobs with professional associations
- Resume searches on national online services
- Employee referrals
- Regional and national conferences
- Employment agencies ("headhunters")

Are you accessible to employers through at least some of the above strategies? If not, develop a plan to make sure your credentials are widely circulated. Notify as many people as possible in your field about your job search.

STRONG COMMUNICATION SKILLS

You can help the employer make an informed hiring decision if you:

- Provide a well-prepared resume that includes desirable skills and relevant employment experiences.
- Clearly convey your interests and ability to do the job in an interview.
- Understand English when spoken to you and can effectively express your thoughts in English.
- It's important to be able to positively promote yourself and talk with confidence about your education, relevant skills and related experiences. Self-promotion is rarely easy for anyone. But, it can be especially difficult for individuals from cultures where talking about yourself is considered inappropriate. When interviewing in the United States, however, you are expected to be able to explain your credentials and why you are suitable for the position.

Be sensitive to the interviewer's verbal and nonverbal cues. Some international students may not realize when their accent is causing them to be misunderstood. Interviewers are sometimes too embarrassed or impatient to ask for clarification, so be on the lookout for nonverbal clues, such as follow-up questions that don't match your responses or sudden disinterest on the part of the interviewer. Also, make sure you express proper nonverbal communication; always look directly at the employer in order to portray confidence and honesty. If your English language skills need some work, get involved with campus and community activities. These events will allow you to practice speaking English. The more you use the language, the more proficient you will become. These activities are also a great way to make networking contacts.

CAREER SERVICES

The career center can be a valuable resource in your job search. Be aware, however, that some employers using the career center won't interview students who are not U.S. citizens. Though this may limit your ability to participate in some campus interviews, there are numerous ways to benefit from the campus career center:

- Attend sessions on job search strategies and related topics.
- Work with the career services staff to develop your job search strategy.
- Attend campus career fairs and company information sessions to inquire about employment opportunities and to practice your networking skills.

It's a good idea to get advice from other international students who have successfully found employment in this country and to start your job search early. Create and follow a detailed plan of action that will lead you to a great job you can write home about.

Written by Rosita Smith.

START
WHERE?

RIGHT
HERE



HERE at CareersAndColleges.com. We're the *only* site with interactive tools for searching scholarships, exploring graduate schools and researching careers.

>> **Explore** graduate schools and programs and conduct a truly personalized search using the widest range of criteria available online.

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We also offer graduate school admissions advice, details on student loans, and career advice such as interview and job-seeking tips. Whether you're about to start your career or enter graduate school, turn to **CareersAndColleges.com** for great advice and tools you can really use.

Start
NOW

careers AND **colleges**

SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

Career professionals—and parents—are warning young job seekers that using social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace, may be hazardous to your career. After all, do you want your potential employer to see photos of you at last weekend's party? Certainly, those photos could diminish your prospects of landing a job. But, while some online content can put job searchers at a disadvantage, more are using social networking to enhance their preparation for interviews, garner an advantage over less-wired peers, and even gain an edge with recruiters.

One example of a positive use of social networking websites is gathering background information about the recruiters with whom you will interview. By finding out about topics that will interest the recruiter, you may gain an upper hand in the interview process. In addition, stronger connections with a potential employer can be made by talking about the clubs he or she belongs to and even friends you have in common—information that can be discovered on Facebook.

Facebook research can also be used to prepare for site visits. By using the alumni connections available through Facebook, you can gain added insight into potential employers. If you are interviewing with a company, search for alumni who are working there. You can have conversations with alumni via Facebook that you wouldn't have in an interview, such as, "do you like it at the company" or "can you negotiate salary?"

Networking Rules

When you seek and maintain professional connections via social networking sites, follow the same etiquette you would if you were networking by phone and in person. Remember that every contact is creating an impression. Online, you might tend to be less formal because you are communicating in a space that you typically share with friends. However, any time you are communicating with a potential employer, you want to maintain your professionalism. Just as you would not let your guard down if you were having dinner with a potential employer, you must maintain a positive and professional approach when conversing with networking contacts online. Ask good questions, pay attention to the answers, and be polite—this includes sending at least a brief thank-you note anytime someone gives you advice or assistance.

Strategies for Safe and Strategic Social Networking

1. Be aware of what other people can see on your page. Many recruiters are now using these sites and other recruiters ask their colleagues to do searches on candidates.
2. Determine access intentionally. Some career counselors advocate deactivating your Facebook or MySpace pages while job searching.
3. Set a standard. If anything appears on your page that you wouldn't want an interviewer to see, remove the offending content.
4. Use social networking to your advantage. Use these sites to find alumni in the companies that interest you and contact them before you interview in your career center or before a site visit. In addition, use social networking sites and Internet searches to learn more about the recruiters who will interview you before the interview.

If It's OK for Mom, It's OK for Facebook

The more controversial aspect of the interplay between social networking and job searching is the privacy debate. Some observers, including career counselors, deans, and parents, worry that students put themselves at a disadvantage in the job search by making personal information available on Facebook and MySpace pages. More and more companies are using such websites as a screening tool.

Concern about privacy focuses on two areas: social life and identity/affiliations. Parents and career counselors argue that job searchers would never show photos of themselves at a party in the middle of an interview, so why would they allow employers to see party photos on a Facebook page? Students often respond that most employers do not even use social networking sites and that employers already know that college students drink.

While it may be true that senior managers are less likely to be on Facebook, young recruiters may be active, and in many cases, employers ask younger employees to conduct web searches of candidates. Why risk losing a career opportunity because of a photo with two drinks in your hand?

It's easy to deduce that if an employer is comparing two candidates who are closely matched in terms of GPA and experience, and one has questionable photos and text on his or her online profile and the second does not (or does not have an accessible page at all), that the second student will get the job offer.

Identity—Public or Private?

Identity and affiliations are the second area where social networking and privacy issues may affect your job search and employment prospects. Historically, job searchers have fought for increased protection from being asked questions about their identity, including religious affiliation and sexual orientation, because this information could be used by biased employers to discriminate. Via social networking sites, employers can now find information that they are not allowed to ask you.

Employers can no longer legally ask these questions in most states, however, some students make matters like religion, political involvement, and sexual orientation public on their web pages.

Just as you consider whether or not to include religious and political affiliations as well as sexual orientation or transgender identity (GLBT) on your resume, you must consider whether you want this information to be available via social networking sites. There are two strategies to consider. One approach is that if you wish to only work for an employer with whom you can be openly religious, political, or GLBT then making that information available on your web page will screen out discriminating employers and make it more likely that you will land with an employer open to your identity and expression.

A second approach though, is to maintain your privacy and keep more options open. Investigate potential employers thoroughly and pay special attention at site visits to evaluate whether the company would be welcoming. This strategy is based on two perspectives shared by many career professionals. First, as a job searcher, you want to present only your relevant skills and experience throughout the job search; all other information is irrelevant. Second, if you provide information about your identity and affiliations, you may be discriminated against by one person in the process even though the company overall is a good match.

Written by Harriet L. Schwartz.

IS GRADUATE SCHOOL RIGHT FOR YOU?

At some point in your college career, you must decide what you would like to do after graduation—and that includes whether or not to attend graduate school. If you're trying to determine whether graduate school is right for you, here are some pointers to help you make an enlightened decision.

1. Should I consider going to graduate school?

Going to graduate school might be a good idea if you...

- want to be a professor, lawyer, doctor, investment banker or work in any profession that requires a post-secondary education.
- wish to develop additional expertise in a particular subject or field to maximize your future earning potential and opportunities for career advancement.
- are deeply interested in a particular subject and wish to study it in-depth—AND have the time and financial resources to devote to further education.

Going to graduate school might not be a good idea if you...

- are trying to delay your entry into the “real world” with real responsibilities and real bills.
- are clueless about your career goals.
- aren't prepared to devote the time and hard work needed to succeed.
- want to stay in school longer to avoid a poor job market.

2. Is it better to work first or attend graduate school immediately after I complete my undergraduate degree?

Work first if...

- you would like to get some real-world work experience before investing thousands of dollars in a graduate degree.
- the graduate school of your choice prefers work experience (most MBA and some Ph.D. programs require this).
- you cannot afford to go to graduate school now, and you haven't applied for any scholarships, grants, fellowships and assistantships, which could pay for a great deal of your education.

Go to graduate school now if...

- you are absolutely sure you want to be a college professor, doctor, lawyer, etc., and need a graduate degree to pursue your dream job.
- you have been awarded grants, fellowships, scholarships or assistantships that will help pay for your education.
- you're concerned that once you start earning real money, you won't be able to return to the lifestyle of a “poor” student.
- your study habits and mental abilities are at their peak, and you worry whether you'll have the discipline (or motivation) to write papers and study for exams in a few years.

3. I am broke. How will I pay for tuition, books, fees and living expenses?

Family: You've likely borrowed from them in the past; maybe you're lucky enough for it to still be a viable option.

- Student Loans: Even if you've taken out loans in the past, another \$50,000 - \$75,000 may be a sound “investment” in your future.

- Fellowships/Scholarships: A free education is always the best option. The catch is you need a high GPA, good GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT scores and the commitment to search out every possible source of funding.
- Teaching/Research Assistantships: Many assistantships include tuition waivers plus a monthly stipend. It's a great way to get paid for earning an education.
- Employer Sponsorship: Did you know that some companies actually pay for you to continue your education? The catch is they usually expect you to continue working for them after you complete your degree so they can recoup their investment.

4. What are the pros and cons of going to graduate school full-time vs. part-time?

Benefits of attending graduate school full-time:

- you'll be able to complete your degree sooner.
- you can totally commit your intellectual, physical and emotional energy to your education.
- ideal if you want to make a dramatic career change.

Benefits of attending graduate school part-time:

- work income helps pay for your education.
- you can take a very manageable course load.
- you can juggle family responsibilities while completing your degree.
- allows you to work in the function/industry/career of your choice while continuing your education.
- employer will often pay for part (or all) of your graduate degree.

5. Assuming I want to go to graduate school in the near future, what should I do now?

- Identify your true strengths, interests and values to help you discover what is right for YOU—not your friends or parents.
- Keep your grades up and sign up (and prepare) to take the required standardized tests.
- Talk to faculty, friends and family who have gone to graduate school to get their perspective about the differences between being an undergraduate and a graduate student.
- Talk to faculty, friends and family who are in your targeted profession to get a realistic sense of the career path and the challenges associated with the work they do.
- Investigate creative ways to finance your education—by planning ahead you may reduce your debt.
- Research graduate schools to help you find a good match.
- Investigate the admissions process and the current student body profile of your targeted schools to evaluate your probability for admission.
- Have faith and APPLY! Remember, you can't get in unless you apply.

Written by Roslyn J. Bradford.

TRANSFERABLE SKILLS WORKSHEET

Transferable skills are skills that could be utilized in many different situations. Use this worksheet to see how your classes, part-time work experience, extra-curricular activities, internships, co-ops, and other experiences have provided you with skills that organizations value when they are hiring. Use the list below as a tool to assist you in prepping for interviews and writing your resume and cover letter!

Organizational Skills

- Meeting deadlines and managing time
- Working under pressure
- Multi-tasking
- Prioritizing activities to be accomplished
- Working effectively in a team
- Illustrating fortitude and stamina
- Evaluating the progression of the task
- Developing goals

Interpersonal Skills

- Maintaining team cooperation
- Interacting with and appreciating people from diverse backgrounds
- Interacting and working professionally with team members and group leaders
- Illustrating leadership skills
- Delegating tasks
- Instructing skills or concepts

Critical Thinking Skills

- Quickly and accurately identifying the key issues when making a decision or solving a problem
- Interpreting the validity of theories
- Analytically creating solutions to problems
- Examining underlying analyses or conclusions effectively
- Critically evaluating theories and research and applying the results to solve problems

Oral and Written Communication Skills

- Presenting impromptu speeches
- Composing reports in appropriate format
- Effectively debating issues while respecting others
- Brainstorming ideas in a group
- Illustrating appropriate telephone skills
- Delivering group presentations clearly
- Defending ideas in a professional, appropriate manner
- Utilizing a variety of resources for organization promotions

Research Skills

- Developing unique hypotheses
- Varying research sources
- Analyzing and interpreting statistical data
- Conducting a review of literature prior to making assumptions
- Applying a variety of research methods
- Developing and interpreting questionnaires or surveys

Computer Skills

- Utilizing computer programs to prepare documents, graphs, pamphlets, etc.
- Conducting effective Internet research
- Illustrating computer programming
- Designing web pages

Additional Skills I've Developed

COVER LETTERS

A well-written cover letter should complement your resume and will help paint a more complete picture of who you are as a person and candidate. Each cover letter should be specific to the position you are applying for, therefore there are no generic cover letters! When writing a cover letter make sure you write it from the employer's perspective, i.e. what unique contributions are you going to bring to the job/company? Try to keep your letter to one page and include at least three paragraphs.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF COVER LETTERS

Application Letter: You are applying for a job you saw advertised. In this case you can use the job description to help draw a connection between what the company is looking for and your unique skills and experiences.

Prospecting Letter: In this case there is not an open position, but you are interested in working for that company. You will need to highlight your unique contributions. In your concluding paragraph, you will need to make mention of the next step and be prepared to take matters into your own hands.

Networking Letter: Your main objective is to draw a specific connection between you and the reader. Make sure to mention this connection early on in the cover letter. The rest of the letter should be written as a prospecting letter.

COVER LETTER BASICS

- Distinguish yourself by addressing your cover letter to a specific individual if possible. Call or visit the company to get the appropriate person's name and title.
- Don't just reiterate your resume—make sure you touch upon aspects of your character and personality.
- If you heard about the position through networking, make sure you state that early in your letter.
- Show that you've done your research by mentioning what interests you most about the position/company.
- Use the same high-quality paper for your resume, cover letter, and reference sheet.
- Include your cover letter in the body of the e-mail if you're e-mailing your resume to an employer.

11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514

September 25, 20__

Ms. Lauren Loeffler
Assistant Director of Career Services
University of West Florida
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514

Dear Ms. Loeffler,

First Paragraph. Your main objective in this opening paragraph is to give your cover letter focus (i.e. the position or type of work you are applying for). You also want to let the reader know where you found the ad or how you heard about the opening/company (friend, news media, online job board). It is also advantageous to mention at least something about the company or position that interests you. This shows that you have done some research about the position and/or employer.

Second Paragraph. This is where you pull out the “big guns.” Make sure you draw a specific connection to the position/company and your qualifications and experiences. One of the most common pitfalls in cover letter writing is detailing how working for that company will benefit you. The employer really needs to know what unique contributions you are going to bring to the position/company. This is a great time to talk about educational experiences (i.e. special projects done in a specific class). Make sure you can cite specific examples of demonstrated behavior. For example, if you say that you are an organized person, make sure you follow that statement with a specific example of how/when these organizational skills have helped you or been recognized by others. The cover letter is the time to speak about the “intangibles” about your character and personality whereas the resume is simply a listing of your experiences.

Third Paragraph. Refer the reader to the enclosed resume that summarizes your qualifications, training, experiences, etc. Assure the employer that you are the right person for the job by continuing to draw a connection between your unique skills and the position/employer.

Concluding Paragraph. Make mention of the next step. If there is an open requisition that has been posted it probably means that there is a process already in place. In this case it is acceptable to say, “I look forward to setting up an interview whereby we may discuss my qualifications further.” If you are prospecting or networking to find a job, make sure you mention how you will follow up, i.e. “I will call you...,” “I will be in your city on a certain date and would like to meet...” Make sure to indicate your flexibility, repeat your phone number (or add a different number where you can be reached during certain hours) and offer any assistance necessary to help obtain a speedy response.

Sincerely,

(make sure you hand sign the letter as well)

Susie Jobseeker

Enclosure

YOUR RESUME AS A MARKETING TOOL

Your resume is one of your most important initial job search tools. The main goal of the resume is to get you to the interview stage. The interview is where you will sell yourself and your unique experiences. Your resume promotes you by highlighting your skills, accomplishments, attributes, and key capabilities in a clear, concise, and compelling way.

One thing to keep in mind is that there is no one right way to write a resume. There are a few absolutes: **a resume should be absolutely error-free and absolutely truthful.** One of the keys of writing an effective resume is choosing the format that fits you best.

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

- Emphasizes employment history
- Lists positions, employers in reverse chronological order
- Describes activities and accomplishments in each job
- Used by people changing jobs, advancing within a career field
- Preferred by defense contractors

FUNCTIONAL RESUME

- Emphasizes skills, de-emphasizes job history
- Presents skills, experiences grouped by specific functions
- Used by career-changers and those wanting to summarize, not reiterate, the same experiences

After you decide what type of resume works best for you, it's a good idea to reflect on your list of accomplishments both in and out of the classroom. What have you done in your life that would make you valuable in this industry, organization, and position? Take some time to reverse the situation and think about what an employer may be looking for from the ideal candidate. The best place to find this information is on the job description. When thinking about employment history, focus on the most relevant information for the job which you are applying.

Successful resumes have two key elements:

- They include an employer-centered objective which helps give the resume focus
- They show evidence that you have the necessary background for the position

RESUME CONTENT

The Heading. Include important contact information. Use common sense when choosing phone numbers to put on a resume. Think about the voicemail attached to that phone number. Is that the first impression you want an employer to have of you? Career Services recommends not putting a cell phone number on your resume,

because generally we tend to be more casual on a cell phone. In addition, be careful about personalized e-mail addresses. It might be best to use your UWF issued student account or create a new e-mail account just for job searching. Try using something that makes sense with your name; it will be easier for an employer to remember it. If your current address and permanent address are different, you may include both on the resume. If you have a website that can help you make your case as a strong candidate, include the URL on your resume. Be careful to direct employers to the site only if it includes professional images and information.

The Objective. Your objective is a short and realistic statement of your interest. Often people write objectives that are either too broad or too narrow. To avoid this, develop a targeted and balanced objective, "Pursuing a research and development position in electrical engineering." Include the job title and the name of the organization if you know them, such as "Seeking a position as a Management trainee at Target Corporation." You should have a variety of objectives that you can use to tailor your resume to the job or organization.

The Body of Your Resume. After the objective, the listing of the other headings should start with the most relevant and end with the least relevant for the job which you are applying. For example, if you are applying for a job requiring an Accounting degree and proficiency using Quickbooks, make sure to include your Education and Computer Skills on top. Here are some other examples of resume headings:

- Education
- Related Course Work
- Honors and Achievements
- Work Experience
- Volunteer Experience
- Activities
- Related Experience
- Military Experience
- Community Involvement
- Internship Experience
- Leadership Activities
- Accomplishments
- Professional Affiliations
- Publications
- Presentations

References. It is appropriate to write "available upon request" on a resume. You do not want to list references on the resume so that you can give your references a heads up in terms of the time the employer asks for them. If you are in a space crunch, you do not need to include any information at all on the actual resume.

Other Considerations:

- Use a bulleted list to describe activities and accomplishments. Start these using action verbs.
- Use present tense action verbs to describe current or in-progress experiences, and past-tense action verbs to describe completed tasks.
- Include key words and descriptive words. These may include job titles, technical or non-technical skills, academic degrees, occupational functions, etc. If specific words and skills are emphasized in the job description, include them in your resume.
- Quantify results whenever possible. For example, if you increased profit by 15%, state that.
- Use a font and font size that is easy to read, i.e. Times New Roman, 12 pt.
- Use bolding to make things stand out. Stay away from italics and underlining that may damage your formatting.
- Write your resume yourself, do not hire someone to write it for you, you know yourself and your qualifications best.
- Use quality, conservative paper and a laser printer if you will be hand delivering or sending your resume through the mail.
- Remember that your resume is a summary, not an autobiography. Try to keep it as concise as possible, most employers prefer one page resumes.
- Be consistent across sections; i.e., dates in same style, position on page and months written out or numerical.

POWER VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

Creative

acted
composed
conceived
conceptualized
conducted
created
designed
developed
directed
established
fashioned
founded
illustrated
improvised
instituted
integrated
introduced
invented
originated
performed
planned
revitalized
shaped

Financial

accounted for
adjusted
administered
allocated
analyzed
appraised
audited
balanced
budgeted
calculated
computed
controlled
developed
financed
forecasted
managed

marketed
monitored
planned
procured
projected
purchased
reconciled
researched

Helping

advised
advocated
assessed
assisted
clarified
coached
counseled
demonstrated
diagnosed
educated
ensured
evaluated
expedited
facilitated
familiarized
fostered
guided
observed
provided
rehabilitated
represented
supported

Management

administered
analyzed
appointed
approved
assigned
assumed
attained

chaired
contracted
consolidated
consulted
delegated
designated
determined
developed
directed
evaluated
executed
formulated
managed
organized
oversaw
planned
prioritized
produced
recommended
recruited
scheduled
supervised

Communicative

addressed
arbitrated
arranged
authored
briefed
communicated
composed
contacted
convinced
described
developed
directed
documented
drafted
enlisted
formulated

influenced
informed
interpreted
interviewed
lectured
marketed
mediated
moderated
motivated
negotiated
persuaded
presented
promoted
publicized
published
reconciled
recruited
reported
spoke
summarized
translated
wrote

Research

acquired
analyzed
calculated
clarified
collected
compared
conducted
critiqued
diagnosed
designed
determined
evaluated
examined
extracted
formulated
identified
inspected
interpreted

interviewed
investigated
located
modified
organized
processed
reviewed
researched
summarized
surveyed
systematized

Results

achieved
accelerated
accomplished
attained
awarded
completed
contributed
decreased
eliminated
enlarged
established
expanded
improved
increased
initiated
introduced
launched
pioneered
recognized as
reduced
resolved
selected as
succeeded

Organizational

approved
arranged
catalogued
classified

collected
compiled
consolidated
dispatched
distributed
enlisted
executed
expedited
generated
implemented
inspected
monitored
operated
organized
prepared
processed
purchased
recorded
revamped
revised
retrieved
scheduled
screened
specified
systematized
tabulated
updated
validated

Teaching

adapted
advised
applied
clarified
coached
communicated
coordinated
developed
enabled
encouraged
evaluated

explained
facilitated
guided
implemented
incorporated
informed
initiated
instructed
integrated
modified
motivated
persuaded
reinforced
set goals
stimulated
taught
trained
tutored

Technical

assembled
built
calculated
computed
designed
devised
engineered
fabricated
maintained
operated
overhauled
programmed
remodeled
repaired
solved
trained
upgraded

CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

A **SUSIE JOBSEEKER**

1010 University Road, Apt. B
Pensacola, FL 32514

B (850) 777-7777
sjobseeker@students.uwf.edu

OBJECTIVE

C

To obtain a professional position in marketing utilizing my strong communication skills and knowledge of successful marketing practices.

EDUCATION

D

Bachelor of Science in Business Administration December 2010
University of West Florida - Pensacola, FL

Major: Marketing Minor: Communication Arts
Overall GPA: 3.5

Honors & Achievements:

E

- Dean's List, last 3 semesters
- Maintained full course load while working 30 hours per week
- Financed 100% of university expenses through employment

EXPERIENCE

Marketing Intern

Summer 2008

G

XYZ Corporation – Atlanta, GA

F

- Researched demographics of consumers in target market area
- Helped develop strategies for reaching target segment of consumer population
- Assisted with design of promotional package for new product

Part-Time Sales Associate

May 2006-April 2008

Dillard's Department Store – Pensacola, FL

- Provided quality service to dozens of customers each week
- Assisted with design and set-up of merchandise displays
- Balanced cash drawer averaging \$1,200 per day

COMPUTER SKILLS

Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Pagemaker

ACTIVITIES

H

Big Sister for YWCA, 2005-2006
Coached 5th grade girls soccer team, Fall 2005

REFERENCES

Available upon request

A Your name should be the biggest and boldest thing on the page.

B Contact information should include current/permanent address (if applicable), phone number, and e-mail address.

C Targeted objective for the candidate's field.

D Education section should include proper name of your degree. Consult the UWF catalog if you are unsure. Indicate anticipated date of graduation. Include your GPA if it is above a 3.0, cumulative or major GPA can be used and should be properly labeled.

E Honors and Achievements are those that speak to our character and work ethic and in this case are education related because they fall under that heading.

F Use active, past tense verbs to describe activities performed in the past.

G Include the months and years of jobs worked to be specific about longevity.

H Activities section should include group affiliations and other non-work experiences and interests.

FUNCTIONAL RESUME

ANITA JOB

1101 Creek Bridge Rd.
Pace, FL 32570
(850) 777-7777
ajob@hotmail.com

OBJECTIVE Management position in human services field requiring organizational abilities and strong interpersonal skills.

EDUCATION

A **Master of Science, Counseling** 12/2010
University of West Florida – Pensacola, FL **B**
Graduated Summa Cum Laude - Overall GPA 3.98

Bachelor of Science, Education 8/2005
University of South Alabama – Mobile, AL
Graduated in 4 years while working 25-30 hours per week

SKILLS & ABILITIES

C Counseling & Assessment

- Advised students on career fields related to academic major
- Administered career assessment inventories and Graduate Record Examination
- Advised students on resumes, interviewing, and job-search strategies

Budget Management

- Managed annual financial aide budget of \$850,000
- Projected fiscal year financial requirements and wrote supporting justification
- Developed monthly, quarterly, and annual reports using standard office software

Marketing & Communication

- Coordinated publicity for programs through group presentations, direct mail campaigns, public-service announcements and press releases
- Edited promotional pieces ranging from brochures to course catalogues
- Created online guide outlining student employment policies and procedures

EMPLOYMENT **Education Services Specialist** 8/2004-8/2007
Eglin Air Force Base – Ft. Walton Beach, FL

D **Intern, Career Services** 8/2002-6/2004
University of South Alabama – Mobile, AL

Waitress 7/2000-8/2001
Peg Leg Pete's – Pensacola Beach, FL

REFERENCES Available upon request
E

A List education and degrees in reverse chronological order.

B Keep dates consistent across sections. If you choose to write them out, make sure they are in the same format.

C Instead of a chronological list of jobs, use functional categories to summarize work experience or relate other non-work related functions. You can relate class projects or volunteer experiences to these functional categories. Using this format of resume can help career changers and those with very little work experience. Make sure you highlight all the transferable skills that relate to the functional categories.

D Include an employment listing to your experiences in the world of work even if they are not related.

E Include References "Available upon request" on the resume if there is room to do so.

REFERENCE SHEETS

PURPOSE

The purpose of a reference sheet is to have a list of people who can verify and elaborate on your professional experience for a potential employer. Past employers, professors, and advisors are the best professional references to have. It is important to have a reference sheet because potential employers will often ask for a list of references they can contact. If you included a statement such as "References Available Upon Request" on your resume, you should be able to produce a reference sheet as soon as one is requested.

THINGS TO REMEMBER

Make sure to include people who know what type of person you are and have familiarity with your work. It is important to select individuals who know your distinctiveness so that they can provide a positive and accurate description of you to the employer or company in which you are seeking employment. You should ALWAYS contact your references before including them on a reference sheet. It is also a good idea to give them a copy of your resume and talk to them about the job you are seeking so they will know how to best represent you.

WHAT TO INCLUDE

- Your name
- Your present and permanent address(es)
- Your reference person's information, which includes their:
 - Name
 - Department/Company
 - Title/Position
 - Address
 - Telephone number (whichever they feel appropriate sharing)
 - Brief statement as to how you know this person

Reference Sheet Tips

- Use a list of 3-5 professional references.
- Make sure you ask permission from a reference before putting his/her name on your reference sheet.
- Give the reference a copy of your resume.
- Examples of references include former employers, professors, a co-worker, a coach or an advisor.
- Do not send references with your resume. Take your reference sheet to the interview.
- If an employer asks if they can call your references, let your references know that they may be called. Tell them the name of the person calling and the job for which you applied. If possible, give them a copy of the job description.

DANNY DeVITAE

17 Bayou Texar – Pensacola, FL 32510
(850) 777-7777 ddevitae@students.uwf.edu

PROFESSIONAL REFERENCES

Martin L. Smith, Ph.D. Professor, Programming Class
Computer Science Department
University of West Florida
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514-5750
(850) 474-2345
msmith@uwf.edu

Jayne E. Franklin Supervisor, UWF Computer Lab
Information Technology Services
University of West Florida
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514-5750
(850) 474-9876
jfranklin@uwf.edu

Jason Jones Client, Web Design Consulting
JJ s Pizzeria
12 E. Main Street
Smalltown, FL 32512
(850) 455-1452
jjones1225@aol.com

TIPS FOR THE SUCCESSFUL CAREER FAIR EXPERIENCE

Attending a career fair can be a great asset in your job search. The emphasis of a career fair is to network—you can gather information about potential employers and make contacts that can lead to landing a part-time job, internship, Co-Op, or full-time position. For more advice, ask a Career Services staff member or attend workshops like, “How to Work a Job Fair” before the event. Here’s some quick advice on how to make the most of your time.

BE PREPARED

Prepare to sell yourself. Remember: you are the product—employers are the customers. Here’s how:

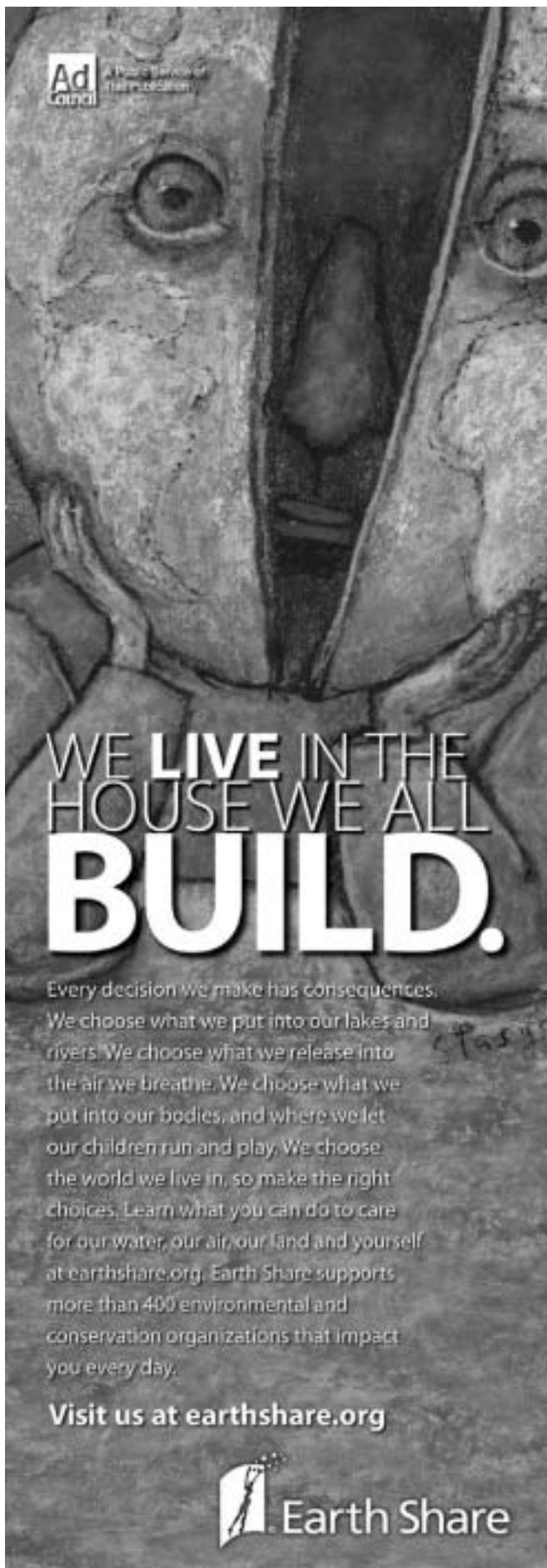
- **Know the attending employers.** Check with Career Services and JasonQuest to view a list of employers expected at the career fair and focus your research on the three or four employers that interest you most. Go to the fair knowing something about each of these organizations. Good research will allow you to show your desire to be a part of the industry and the organization. Do check out their website, but going beyond this resource is optimal.
- **Know what you want.** A common question posed by recruiters is, “What types of positions are you interested in?” Saying, “I’ll take anything,” or “I don’t know,” to a recruiter can show a desperate candidate or a candidate that has done little or no research.
- **Dress professionally.** A career fair is like a mini-interview, so attend a career fair as if you were interviewing. This is your first impression on the employer—you want to look like you are serious. Employers share with us that a common mistake students make is not being dressed professionally.
- **Pack the essentials.** Be able to supply employers with a resume. If you are looking at several career options, you may want to have two or more targeted resumes with different career objectives. Students may also bring reference lists, their professional portfolios, transcripts, and completed job applications depending on their career area. Completing applications online ahead of time, if the employer has the capability, is always suggested.

MANNERS MATTER

- **Pack credentials in a professional way.** Don’t carry your backpack, large purse, or workout bag with you. Carrying your resume in a professional-looking portfolio or small briefcase is a good idea. It will keep your resume neat and handy, and it gives you a place to file business cards of recruiters that you meet.
- **Come early.** Don’t arrive 30 minutes before the end of the event and expect to talk to employers. Some will have planes to catch; others will be tired and ready to wind up a long day of chatting with students. Come early while employers are less likely to be tired—and hit the booths of employers you are most interested in working for first.
- **Have a strong handshake and a positive attitude.** Greet each employer with a smile and an enthusiastic 30-second “commercial”—your name, your major, and your career interests as they relate to the organization.
- **Collect the cards.** Collect business cards from recruiters that you meet. Take notes on the recruiter and the organization on the back of the card. Use these notes—and the information on the front of the card—to personalize your thank-you letters.
- **Don’t forget to ask for the next step.** At the end of a conversation with a recruiter, ask what the next step is in the hiring process.

FOLLOW-UP


- **Write a thank-you note.** Send a thank-you note to every employer you speak to at the career fair. Some employers prefer notes by mail; some are happy for an e-mailed thank you—check with Career Services for advice on which type note to send.



WE LIVE IN THE HOUSE WE ALL BUILD.

Every decision we make has consequences. We choose what we put into our lakes and rivers. We choose what we release into the air we breathe. We choose what we put into our bodies, and where we let our children run and play. We choose the world we live in, so make the right choices. Learn what you can do to care for our water, our air, our land and yourself at earthshare.org. Earth Share supports more than 400 environmental and conservation organizations that impact you every day.

Visit us at earthshare.org



THE INTERVIEW PROCESS

So you have applied for a job and the employer has called and wants to interview you. Now what? The interview process can be intimidating and confusing if you have never been through it. Understanding the different types of interviewing, the stages of the interview process and interviewing etiquette can help you become more familiar with this process, and make you more confident in the interview.

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

Traditional and behavioral are the two most common formats employers use when interviewing candidates for a job. Each of these formats is used in a different way to assess a candidate's skills and abilities. The differences in these two formats are described below:

Traditional interviews tend to focus on your resume. These interviews use your resume as a guide to explore your decisions and achievements through academics, work, campus, and community involvement. The interview questions focus on your beliefs, attitudes, professional or management styles, interactions with others, and how you would handle or behave in hypothetical situations. A benefit of traditional interviews is that they allow the interviewer and the job candidate to get to know each other in a less intense environment than a behavioral interview.

Even though traditional interviews are not as intense as behavioral interviews, you still need to prepare for the interview. Here are some tips that will help you with this type of interviewing:

- Always answer the question directly. If the interviewer asks you how you feel about an issue in the workplace, be sure to give a clear and concise answer to the question.



- Try not to ramble. Many times when interviewers ask open ended questions, you may feel the urge to give long wordy answers. Remember to give clear, concise answers that are directly related to the questions the interviewer asked.
- If the interviewer doesn't ask you for specific examples of situations, try to give examples when they are appropriate for the question. By giving examples that support your beliefs, you are showing analytical skills that will only strengthen your presentation.

Have Your One-Minute Commercial Ready

Many times an interviewer will ask you to describe yourself. By using a one-minute commercial you summarize your abilities, skills, goals, accomplishments, and interests. You also want to highlight your background and different types of experience. The goal of the one-minute commercial is to give the interviewer enough information that they will want to learn more about you and what you can offer the company. Some items to highlight in your commercial are:

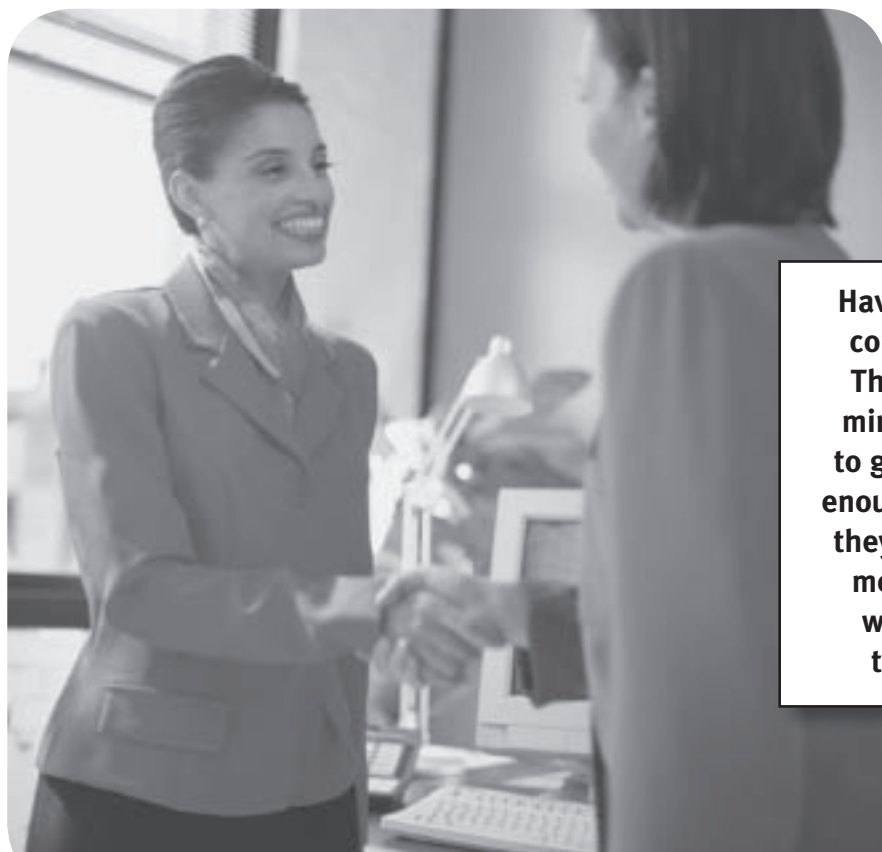
- Your name
- Your major
- Type of position you are seeking
- Work experience
- Class projects
- Community involvement
- How your background and goals fit in the company/organization's needs

Behavioral interviews focus on actions and behaviors and not on hypothetical situations. The purpose of this type of interviewing is to evaluate past behaviors and use them as predictors of future behavior. Instead of concentrating on how you *would* handle a situation, the interviewer focuses on how you *did* handle the situation. They will ask you about details and not generalizations concerning events. Typically, interviewers who conduct behavioral interviews are trying to collect and evaluate information about behaviors that are needed to be successful on the job.

In these types of interviews, you will be asked to give examples of how you handled certain situations. These questions may range from, "Tell me about a time you were in conflict with a co-worker" or "Tell me about a time when you demonstrated leadership skills." When you are asked questions of that nature, remember to use the STAR* technique.

**Development Dimensions International, Inc. of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, claims the STAR technique as their "Copyrighted Intellectual Property."*

Interviewing information adapted with permission from Claremont University.



Have your one-minute commercial ready.... The goal of the one-minute commercial is to give the interviewer enough information that they will want to learn more about you and what you can offer the organization.

The STAR Technique

STAR stands for:

- **Situation:** Define the situation or “set the stage”
- **Task:** Identify the task or the problem that needs action
- **Action:** Describe the action that you took, illustrating the skills you used
- **Result:** Summarize the outcome of the situation

Below is an example of how you might use the STAR technique to answer the question, “Tell me about a situation in which you demonstrated leadership skills.”

- **Situation:** “Last year my fraternity sponsored a fundraising project for a local after school program.”
- **Task:** “I was asked to organize the project.”
- **Action:** “I recruited and chaired a committee of eight. We had to work under deadlines, which we successfully met. We also developed a fundraising plan, which included a budget. We proposed this plan to the Student Activities Board for approval.”
- **Result:** “Our plan was approved and the campaign generated over \$3,000 for the after school program. Because the plan worked so well, I was asked to be the chair of the Interfraternity Council fundraising campaign next fall.”

You may also use this technique when addressing tough questions like, “Tell me about a time you had a conflict with a manager or co-worker,” or “Tell me about a time you made a mistake in the classroom or on the job.” By describing what you learned in the Results step, you may be able to demonstrate how you turned a negative situation into a positive one.

INTERVIEWING DO'S AND DONT'S

Interview Do's

- 👉 Know the exact time and location of the interview. Know how long it takes to get there and alternate routes in case the roads you usually take are blocked and you need to take a different route. Also find out where you need to park and where the nearest restroom is in case you need to freshen up.
- 👉 Arrive at least 15 minutes early. Also know the interviewer's phone number in case there is a problem and you are going to be late. Call ahead and inform the interviewer of your delay.
- 👉 Treat everyone in the office with respect. You never know whose opinion may be solicited during the hiring process.
- 👉 Make eye contact, offer a firm handshake, and have a friendly expression when you greet the interviewer.
- 👉 Listen to the interviewer's name and pronunciation. Always address the interviewer by his/her title (Ms., Mrs., and Mr.) and last name, unless you are invited to do otherwise.
- 👉 Sit still in your seat and don't fidget or slouch. Remember to maintain good eye contact.
- 👉 Be thorough in your responses, but be concise in the wording. Be sure to give detailed examples when asked.
- 👉 If you don't understand a question, ask for clarification.
- 👉 Be honest about yourself and your abilities. If you are dishonest and the interviewer discovers it, your job offer maybe withdrawn or worse, you may be fired. You want to make sure that you and the company are a good match. If the company hires you when you are acting like someone other than yourself, you and the employer will be unhappy.
- 👉 Treat the interview seriously. If you are not interested in the employer, don't waste your time and the company's time on interviewing for a position you are not seriously considering.
- 👉 Have a positive attitude. The interviewer is evaluating your potential as a co-worker. Behave like someone you would want to work with.
- 👉 Research the company and prepare questions that you did not find in your research. This will show the interviewer you have taken the initiative to find out about the details of the company, i.e., mission and goals.

- 👉 Know about the next steps in the hiring process; know when and whom you expect to hear from next.
- 👉 When the interview is complete, make sure to offer a firm handshake to the interviewer and thank them for considering you for the position.
- 👉 Make sure to write notes after the interview, so you don't forget valuable information.
- 👉 Remember to ask for business cards from each person who is interviewing you. You will want to write them a thank-you note for their time and consideration of you for the open position.

Interview Don'ts

- 👉 Don't make negative remarks about past employers or companies.
- 👉 Don't make excuses about your behavior or actions. Take responsibility for your decisions.
- 👉 Don't lie on the application or answers to interview questions.
- 👉 Don't treat the interview casually. You are wasting the interviewer's and company's time.
- 👉 Don't give the impression that you are only interested in the position's salary. Don't ask about the salary or benefits until the interviewer brings the subject up.
- 👉 Don't chew gum or smell like smoke.
- 👉 Don't answer your cell phone during the interview. If you have a cell phone, turn it off before the interview begins.
- 👉 Don't act like you are desperate for employment or that you would take any job offered to you.
- 👉 Don't be unprepared for typical interview questions. You might not be asked all of the questions, but being unprepared looks foolish.
- 👉 Don't exhibit frustrations or negative attitudes in the interview process.
- 👉 Don't go to extremes with your posture. Don't sit on the edge of your chair and don't slouch.

Interviewing Do's and Don'ts adapted with permission from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech)

DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

What your clothes say about you:

- Appropriate attire supports your image as a person who takes the interview process seriously and understands the nature of the industry in which you are trying to become employed.
- Be aware that in some industries, customer contact and image presented to the customer is critical. In such industries, your attire will be judged more critically.
- Your attire should be noticed as being appropriate and well-fitting, but it should not take center stage.
- If you are primarily remembered for your interview attire, this is probably because you made an error in judgment!
- Dressing nicely and appropriately is a compliment to the person you meet, so if in doubt, err on the side of dressing better than you might need to.
- Even if you are aware that employees of an organization dress casually on the job, dress up for the interview unless you are specifically told otherwise by the employer.
- Never confuse an interview or business function with a social event. Don't dress for a party or a date.

So, how much will this cost me?

You are not expected to be able to afford the same clothing as a corporate CEO. However, do invest in quality that will look appropriate during your first two or three years on the job. One good quality suit is sufficient for a job search if that is all your budget allows. You can vary your shirt/blouse tie/accessories.

INTERVIEW ATTIRE FOR MEN

- **Suit:** A two-piece matched suit is always the best and safest choice. Don't combine a suit jacket with pants that don't match.
- **Conservative colors / fabric:** Navy and dark gray are safe and are the most conservative for men. Black for men was once considered severe or overly formal, and may still be considered so in very conservative industries, although it is commonly worn by many. Other color trends may come and go; avoid the extremes. Choose a solid or very subtle weave pattern or plaid (the kind that looks solid across a room). Wool, wool blends, or very high quality blends with natural fiber, are the only acceptable fabrics for a conservative men's suit.
- **Ties:** Tie styles come and go. Select good quality silk ties. Avoid fashion extremes, like character ties, in interviews. Notice what men in your industry wear on the job, at career fairs, at information sessions, and when they meet with clients.
- **Shirts:** Long-sleeved shirts, even in summer. Choose white or light blue solid, or conservative stripes.
- **Socks:** Dark socks, mid-calf length so no skin is visible when you sit down.
- **Shoes:** Leather, lace-up or slip-on business shoes, preferably black or cordovan. Invest in a good pair; even if you don't wear them daily on the job, you'll need them for other occasions and you should expect to get lots of years out of good shoes.
- **Belt:** Black or cordovan leather, to match your shoes.
- **Facial hair:** If worn, should be well-groomed. Observe men in your industry if you are unsure what's appropriate or are considering changing your look.
- **Jewelry:** Wear a conservative watch. If you choose to wear other jewelry, be conservative. Removing earrings is safest. For conservative industries, don't wear earrings. Observe other men in your industry to see what is acceptable.

INTERVIEW ATTIRE FOR WOMEN

- **Suit:** Wear a two-piece matched suit.
- **Suit - pants / skirts:** Tailored pant suits are appropriate for women. Pants suits can be an excellent choice for site visits, particularly if the visit involves getting in and out of vehicles and/or the site is (or includes) a manufacturing plant or industrial facility. If you wear pants, they should be creased and tailored, not tight or flowing. If you are pursuing a conservative industry and are in doubt, observe well-dressed women in your industry on the job, at career fairs, at information sessions, etc.
- **Skirt lengths:** Much of what you see on television shows that masquerades for professional attire is actually inappropriate for a work environment. Your skirt should cover your thighs when you are seated. High slits in skirts are not appropriate. A small back, center slit in a knee-length skirt is appropriate.
- **Color / fabric:** Navy, dark gray, brown and black are safe. Other color trends may come and go; avoid the extremes. Women generally have more options with suit color than men. For example, while a woman could look conservative in a slate blue or light gray suit, these colors would be inappropriate for men. Choose a solid or very subtle weave pattern or plaid (the kind that looks solid across a room). Wool, wool blends, and high quality blends and synthetics are appropriate for women's suiting.
- **Shirts / sweaters:** Underneath the suit jacket, wear a tailored blouse in a color or small print that coordinates nicely with your suit. A fine gauge, good quality knit shell is also appropriate underneath your suit jacket. Don't show cleavage.
- **Jewelry / accessories:** Wear a conservative watch. Jewelry and scarf styles come and go. Keep your choices simple and leaning toward conservative. Avoid extremes of style and color. If your industry is creative, you may have more flexibility than someone pursuing a conservative industry.
- **Cosmetics:** Keep makeup conservative. A little is usually better than none for a polished look. Nails should be clean and well groomed. Avoid extremes of nail length and polish color, especially in conservative industries.
- **Shoes:** Should be leather or fabric / micro fiber. Shoe styles and heel heights come and go. Choose closed-toe pumps. Regardless of what is in style, avoid extremes; no stilettos or chunky platforms. Make certain you can walk comfortably in your shoes; hobbling in uncomfortable shoes does not convey a professional appearance.
- **Hosiery:** Should be plainly styled (no patterns), sheer (not opaque), and in neutral colors complementing your suit. Avoid high contrast between your suit and hosiery color.
- **Purse / bag:** If you carry a purse, keep it small and simple, especially if you also carry a briefcase. Purse color should coordinate with your shoes. You may choose to carry a small briefcase or business-like tote bag in place of a purse. Leather is the best choice for briefcases; micro fiber or fine wovens are also acceptable.

THE FINAL CHECK

- Neatly trimmed hair
- Conservative makeup
- No runs in stockings
- Polished shoes (some suggest wearing your sneakers on the way to an interview and changing before you enter the interview site)
- No excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing earrings
- No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint
- Perfume or cologne should be used sparingly. Don't smell like smoke.

You want your experience and qualifications to shine. Your appearance should enhance your presentation, not overwhelm it.

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS ASKED BY EMPLOYERS

1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your long range and short range goals?
3. What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
4. Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
5. Which is more important to you, the money, or the type of job?
6. What is your greatest strength/weakness?
7. What do you perceive to be your greatest accomplishment so far?
8. What motivates you to put forth your greatest effort?
9. Why should I hire you?
10. What qualifications do you have that make you think you will be successful in this career?
11. How do you determine or evaluate success?
12. What is your perceived role when working in a team? Tell me about a time a co-worker/group member did not fulfill their responsibilities. How did you react?
13. Tell me about a time when you felt you were in conflict with a supervisor or co-worker. How did you react? How was it resolved?
14. What qualities do you believe a great leader possesses? Of those, what qualities do you see in yourself?
15. What interests you most about this position/company?
16. Describe the relationship that should exist between a supervisor and those reporting to him/her?
17. In what kind of work environment are you the most comfortable?
18. How do you work under pressure?
19. What are two or three things that are most important to you in your job?
20. Are you willing to travel?
21. What have you learned from your mistakes?
22. What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction? Why?
23. What do you see yourself doing five years from now?
24. What do you know about our company?
25. What questions do you have for me?

QUESTIONS TO ASK EMPLOYERS

1. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
2. What type of training does your organization offer?
3. How many people are employed within the company, business, organization, or department?
4. Where does this position fit in the overall organization of the company? Who will the person in this position report to?
5. What types of assignments might I expect during the first six months?
6. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
7. What are the strengths of the organization of department? In what areas of the company do you expect growth?
8. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
9. What is the organization's plan for the next five years, and how does the department fit in?
10. What is the reporting structure in this department? What are the acceptable channels of communication?
11. Describe the team/project assignments and the mix of people involved.
12. What is the management philosophy of this organization?
13. What is the company's view on continued education?
14. How would you describe the company culture?
15. How is the economic climate affecting your organization?
16. How often are performance reviews given?
17. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
18. Do you have plans for expansion?
19. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
20. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
21. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
22. What characteristics do achievers in this company seem to share?
23. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
24. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
25. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

YOUR BRAGGING RIGHTS: SELLING YOURSELF

For the most part, modesty is an admirable trait. But it's of little use during a job interview. The purpose of an interview is to find the best candidate for a particular job. Employers want to know about the knowledge, skills, attributes, and experience that distinguish you from other job candidates, and they won't know what makes you special unless you tell them. However, most employers won't go out of their way to hire someone who comes across as cocky or arrogant. So how do you balance the two? How do you put your best foot forward without seeming conceited and egotistical?

CHOOSE WHAT TO TALK ABOUT

Start with the job posting and make a list of all the preferences and requirements. Then try to match them with your own knowledge, skills, and experience. Make sure that you have examples ready for as many of the preferences listed as possible. If leadership experience is preferred, scrutinize your past for examples of it. If the job requires good teamwork skills, be prepared with examples from your past. But also be prepared to talk about things not listed specifically in the job posting. Find out all you can about the company and the job you are interviewing for. If you have certain experience or knowledge that you think would make you do the job better, don't hesitate to talk about it. The employer is looking for the best candidate for the job. Looking beyond the job posting could help separate you from other applicants.

Make sure that everything you discuss is relevant to the job. It's not easy to do, but you may have to leave out some of your most impressive skills and achievements. Talking about skills, accomplishments, or experience with no relevance to the job does not help the interviewer identify you as a strong job candidate, and could easily be interpreted as bragging.

Many recent college graduates make the mistake of limiting their discussion to their college coursework, or jobs they had that are directly related to the one they are applying for. But this is a mistake. "Students should be willing to talk about any type of knowledge or skills that they have acquired that are relevant to the job they are interviewing for," says Micael Kemp, Director of Career Services at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Volunteer experience, leadership positions in a sorority or a fraternity, extracurricular activities, and even work experience at retail or fast-food jobs can be sources of information. "Many students underplay work experience gained at places like grocery stores or fast-food restaurants," she continues. "But employers deeply appreciate people who have gotten their hands dirty and aren't afraid to work hard."

STORY TIME

Reading off a list of knowledge, experience, and accomplishments makes for a short and boring interview. Your job during the interview is to keep the interviewer interested in what you are saying. Many career advisors suggest that job candidates prepare a reservoir of stories that they can pull from during the interview. People are naturally drawn to stories. It's why we read novels and why we watch movies. Also, stories allow job candidates

to show interviewers their skills and knowledge instead of just telling them. "Interviewers need more than just your word that you have a particular skill or attribute. They need specific examples, and stories are a good way of providing that," says Cynthia Redwine, Director of the Engineering Career Resource Center at the University of Michigan, College of Engineering.

Stories have the added benefit of being easy to remember—for you, as you use a particular story to demonstrate your qualifications during the interview—and for the interviewer who must access your skills and attributes after the interview is completed. Demonstrating a particular job attribute through a story has the added benefit of sounding less boastful than stating the qualification directly. Saying that you are a good leader sounds boastful; explaining how you led a team of volunteers during a record food drive is admirable.

Once you have created a list job skills and requirements from the job posting and your own research of the company and the position, sit down and try to come up with stories to demonstrate each. Of course, certain things you cannot really demonstrate through a story (a high GPA, or a certain degree or academic specialty), but that information is already apparent to the interviewer from your resume. However, stories can be used in situations that at first might not be apparent. For example, instead of simply stating that you are proficient with a particular piece of software, you can tell the interviewer how you applied the software to accomplish a particular task. Keep your stories short and to the point. An interview is not a creative writing class. There is no need to supply vivid descriptions or unrelated background information. In fact, many career advisors suggest that students keep their stories limited to one minute.

FINAL ADVICE

Take time to prepare for the interview. Never walk into an interview with the intention of "winging it" no matter how qualified you think you are for the position. If you are having trouble coming up with stories or examples for the interview, make sure you talk to friends, family members, coworkers, professors, and career advisors. Often those around us can see skills and attributes that we do not.

Students sometimes make the mistake of telling employers about job-related knowledge or experience that they don't have. While candor is an admirable trait, such frankness is out of place in a job interview. Employers don't want to know why you can't do the job, but why you can do it.

Employers want to hire people who are excited and proud of the work that they have done. They want to know that you will bring that same type of proficiency and enthusiasm to their company. "You have a responsibility during the interview—not to brag, but to give the employer the best picture you can of what they will get if they hire you," says Kemp. "It's your responsibility to make sure they get that information, whether or not they ask good questions."

Written by Chris Enstrom, a free-lance writer in Nashville, Ind.

STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: ACING THE INTERVIEW

The traditional face-to-face interview can be particularly stressful when you have a disability—especially a visible disability. Hiring managers and employers may have had little prior experience with persons with disabilities and may react with discomfort or even shock to the appearance of a wheelchair, cane or an unusual physical trait. When this happens, the interviewer is often so uncomfortable that he or she just wants to “get it over with” and conducts the interview in a hurried manner. But this scenario robs you of the opportunity to present your credentials and could prevent the employer from identifying a suitable, qualified candidate for employment.

It is essential that you understand that interviewing is not a passive process where the interviewer asks all the questions and you simply provide the answers. You, even more than applicants without disabilities, must be skilled in handling each interview in order to put the employer representative at ease. You must also be able to demonstrate your ability to manage your disability and be prepared to provide relevant information about your skills, experiences and educational background. In addition, you may have to inform the employer of the equipment, tools and related resources that you will need to perform the job tasks.

TIPS ON MANAGING THE INTERVIEW

Prior to the Interview

1. Identify a career services staff person to help you prepare employers for their interview with you.
2. Arrange for several taped, mock interview sessions to become more confident in discussing your work-related skills and in putting the employer representative at ease; rehearse ahead of time to prepare how you will handle inappropriate, personal or possibly illegal questions.
3. If your disability makes oral communication difficult, create a written narrative to supplement your resume that details your abilities.
4. Determine any technical support, resources and costs that might be necessary for your employment so that you can respond to questions related to this topic.
5. Be sure that your career center has information for employers on interviewing persons with disabilities.
6. Seek advice from other workers with disabilities who have been successful in finding employment.
7. Review the general advice about interviewing outlined in this career guide.

During the Interview

1. Put the interviewer at ease before starting the interview by addressing any visible disability (if you have not done so already).
2. Plan to participate fully in the discussion (not just answer questions); maintain the appropriate control of the interview by tactfully keeping the interview focused on your abilities—not the disability.
3. Inform the employer of any accommodations needed and how they can be achieved, thereby demonstrating your ability to manage your disability.
4. Conclude the interview by reiterating your qualifications and giving the interviewer the opportunity to ask any further questions.

TO DISCLOSE OR NOT TO DISCLOSE

To disclose or not to disclose, and when and how to disclose, are decisions that persons with disabilities must make for themselves during the job search process.

Under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you are not legally obligated to disclose your disability unless it is likely to directly affect your job performance. On the other hand, if your disability is visible, it will be evident at the time of the interview so it may be more prudent to acknowledge your disability during the application process to avoid catching the employer representative off guard.

REASONS FOR DISCLOSING

You take a risk when you decide to disclose your disability. Some employers may reject your application based on negative, preconceived ideas about persons with disabilities. In addition, you may feel that the issue is too personal to be publicized among strangers. On the other hand, if you provide false answers about your health or disability on an application and the truth is uncovered later, you risk losing your job. You may even be held legally responsible if you failed to inform your employer and an accident occurs that is related to your disability.

TIMING THE DISCLOSURE

The employer’s first contact with you will typically be through your cover letter and resume, especially if you initially contacted the organization. There are many differing opinions on whether one should mention the disability on the resume or in the cover letter. If you are comfortable revealing your disability early in the process, then give careful consideration to where the information is placed and how it is stated. The cover letter and resume should primarily outline relevant skills, experiences and education for the position for which you are applying. The reader should have a clear understanding of your suitability for the position. Therefore, if you choose to disclose your disability, the disclosure should be brief and placed near the end of the cover letter and resume. *It should never be the first piece of information that the employer sees about you. The information should also reveal your ability to manage your disability while performing required job functions.*

When You Get the Interview

As stated earlier, it may not be wise to hide the disability (especially a visible disability) until the time of the interview. The employer representative may be surprised, uncomfortable or assume that you intentionally hid critical information. As a result, more time may be spent asking irrelevant and trivial questions because of nervousness, rather than focusing on your suitability for the position. Get assistance from contacts in human resources, your career center or workers with disabilities about the different ways to prepare the interviewer for your arrival. Take the time to rehearse what you will say before making initial contact. If oral communication is difficult for you, have a career services staff person (or another professional) place the call for you and explain how you plan to handle the interview. If you require support for your interview (such as a sign language interpreter), contact human resources in advance to arrange for this assistance. Advance preparation puts everyone at ease and shows that you can manage your affairs.

Written by Rosita Smith.

PROFESSIONAL ETIQUETTE

Your academic knowledge and skills may be spectacular, but do you have the social skills needed to be successful in the workplace? Good professional etiquette indicates to potential employers that you are a mature, responsible adult who can aptly represent their company. Not knowing proper etiquette could damage your image, prevent you from getting a job and jeopardize personal and business relationships.

MEETING AND GREETING

Etiquette begins with meeting and greeting. Terry Cobb, human resource director at Wachovia Corporation in South Carolina's Palmetto region, emphasizes the importance of making a good first impression—beginning with the handshake. A firm shake, he says, indicates to employers that you're confident and assertive. A limp handshake, on the other hand, sends the message that you're not interested or qualified for the job. Dave Owenby, human resources manager for North and South Carolina at Sherwin Williams, believes, "Good social skills include having a firm handshake, smiling, making eye contact and closing the meeting with a handshake."

The following basic rules will help you get ahead in the workplace:

- Always rise when introducing or being introduced to someone.
- Provide information in making introductions—you are responsible for keeping the conversation going. "Joe, please meet Ms. Crawford, CEO at American Enterprise, Inc., in Cleveland." "Mr. Jones, this is Kate Smith, a senior majoring in computer information systems at Northwestern University."
- Unless given permission, always address someone by his or her title and last name.
- Practice a firm handshake. Make eye contact while shaking hands.

DINING

Shirley Willey, owner of Etiquette & Company in Carmichael, Calif., reports that roughly 80% of second interviews involve a business meal. Cobb remembers one candidate who had passed his initial interview with flying colors. Because the second interview was scheduled close to noon, Cobb decided to conduct the interview over lunch. Initially, the candidate was still in the "interview" mode and maintained his professionalism. After a while, however, he became more relaxed—and that's when the candidate's real personality began to show. He had terrible table manners, made several off-color remarks and spoke negatively about previous employers. Needless to say, Cobb was unimpressed, and the candidate did not get the job.

Remember that an interview is always an interview, regardless of how relaxed or informal the setting. Anything that is said or done will be considered by the interviewer, cautions Cobb.

In order to make a good impression during a lunch or dinner interview, make sure you:

- Arrive on time.
- Wait to sit until the host/hostess indicates the seating arrangement.
- Place napkin in lap before eating or drinking anything.

- When ordering, keep in mind that this is a talking business lunch. Order something easy to eat, such as boneless chicken or fish.
- Do not hold the order up because you cannot make a decision. Feel free to ask for suggestions from others at the table.
- Wait to eat until everyone has been served.
- Keep hands in lap unless you are using them to eat.
- Practice proper posture; sit up straight with your arms close to your body.
- Bring food to your mouth—not your head to the plate.
- Try to eat at the same pace as everyone else.
- Take responsibility for keeping up the conversation.
- Place napkin on chair seat if excusing yourself for any reason.
- Place napkin beside plate at the end of the meal.
- Push chair under table when excusing yourself.

EATING

Follow these simple rules for eating and drinking:

- Start eating with the implement that is farthest away from your plate. You may have two spoons and two forks. The spoon farthest away from your plate is a soup spoon. The fork farthest away is a salad fork unless you have three forks, one being much smaller, which would be a seafood fork for an appetizer. The dessert fork/spoon is usually above the plate. Remember to work from the outside in.
- Dip soup away from you; sip from the side of the spoon.
- Season food only after you have tasted it.
- Pass salt and pepper together—even if asked for only one.
- Pass all items to the right. If the item has a handle, such as a pitcher, pass with the handle toward the next person. For bowls with spoons, pass with the spoon ready for the next person. If you are the one to reach to the center of the table for an item, pass it before serving yourself.
- While you are speaking during a meal, utensils should be resting on plate (fork and knife crossed on the plate with tines down).
- Don't chew with your mouth open or blow on your food.

The interviewer will usually take care of the bill and the tip. Be prepared, however, if this doesn't happen and have small bills ready to take care of your part, including the tip. Never make an issue of the check.

Social skills can make or break your career. Kenitra Matheson, human resource director with Dellinger and Deese in Charlotte, N.C., emphasizes, "Etiquette and social skills are a must! Our employees have to exhibit a certain level of professionalism and etiquette, given that we constantly interact with our clients." Be one step ahead—practice the social skills necessary to help you make a great first impression and stand out in a competitive job market.

Written by Jennie Hunter, a professor at Western Carolina University.

THANK-YOU LETTERS

Susie Jobseeker
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514

Mrs. Lauren Loeffler
Assistant Director, Career Services
University of West Florida
11000 University Parkway
Pensacola, FL 32514

Dear Mrs. Loeffler,

Thank you for taking the time to interview me for the Marketing Internship available in the Career Services office at the University of West Florida. I especially enjoyed learning more about your department and your commitment to students.

Based on our conversation, I am confident that with my education and prior work experiences, I could make a considerable contribution to your department and the University as a whole. In addition to the strengths we discussed yesterday, I also wanted to let you know that I have a strong background using Microsoft Publisher to create the monthly newsletter for my sorority.

I look forward to hearing from you regarding the next step in the interview process. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you need additional information about my qualifications.

Thank you again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

(signed name)

Susie Jobseeker

Want to know how to continue to make a good impression? Make sure you write a thank-you letter after your phone and in-person interview. You should use every opportunity possible to reinforce your interest and qualifications for the position. A thank-you note should be sent no later than 48 hours after your interview.

The thank-you letter accomplishes three main things:

- It reminds the employer of your interview and expresses your sincere appreciation.
- It reemphasizes your strongest qualifications. Make sure to draw attention to the match between your qualifications and the job requirements.
- It reiterates your interest in the position. You can also use this time to provide something you may have neglected to mention in the interview.

Many students ask if it is acceptable to e-mail a thank-you note. If you have been using e-mail to communicate with the employer prior to the interview, it is acceptable to e-mail your thank-you note. However, a handwritten or typed note is preferred and recommended.

Make sure you get the correct spelling, proper title, and address for the recruiter(s) who interviewed you. A great way to ensure this information is by collecting business cards from the recruiters who interview you. If you are interviewed by more than one recruiter, make sure you send a thank-you note to each person separately. This will demonstrate your sincere appreciation to that particular person.

A thank-you note should be sent no later than 48 hours after your interview.

THE BENEFITS OF COMPANY BENEFITS

Though promises of high starting salaries or accelerated career growth may entice you as you search for your dream job, don't forget to check out the company's benefits package. These packages are generally designed to provide protection against financial hardship brought about by unforeseen circumstances, such as illness or injury. With the high cost of medical services, even a routine physical exam can set you back several hundred dollars if you don't have coverage. "Most employees today are looking for more than a paycheck," says Amy Roppe, a senior account manager at Benefit Source, Inc., a Des Moines, Iowa-based company that designs and administers employee benefit packages. "Employees are looking for overall job satisfaction, and benefits are a key part of that."

What kinds of benefits can you expect at your first job out of college? That depends. Not all benefits programs are created equal, and most have certain rules, limitations and exclusions, particularly in regard to health plans. Though some employers still provide complete coverage with no out-of-pocket expense to workers, most company plans now require the employee to pay part of the benefits expense, often in the form of payroll deductions. However, the cost is usually reasonable in comparison to footing the entire bill by yourself. The benefits described below will give you a general overview of what many companies offer to their employees:

- **Medical insurance.** This is the most basic (and probably most important) benefit you can receive. Health coverage limits an employee's financial liability in the event of illness or injury.
- **Disability insurance.** Provides an income to the employee in the event of a long-term disability.
- **Life insurance.** Provides a benefit payment to family members in the event of the employee's death.
- **Dental insurance.** Provides basic dental coverage. Though many people agree that dental insurance is overpriced (you'll seldom get more than your premiums back in the form of benefits), you'll be covered for cleanings, scalings and x-rays.
- **Prescription drug plan.** This can save you a bundle, particularly if you require medicine for an ongoing condition. Typically, the employee pays a fixed co-payment—for example, \$25—for each prescription.
- **Vision.** Provides a benefit that helps defray the cost of eye exams and corrective lenses.
- **Retirement plans.** These used to be funded entirely by employers but have been largely replaced by 401(k) plans, which are funded by the employee, often with some degree of "matching" contribution from the employer. However, these matching contributions have limits and the plans vary from company to company. In many companies, there is a specified waiting period before new employees can participate.
- **Flexible spending accounts.** These plans allow you to set aside untaxed dollars to pay for dependent care and unreimbursed medical expenses.

- **Tuition reimbursement.** The employer reimburses the cost of continuing education as long as the classes pertain to your job and certain grade levels are achieved.
- **Vacation.** Most companies will offer paid vacation time to employees. The number of days off is usually determined by how long you've been with the company.
- **Sick time.** Paid leave in the event of illness.

You should also be aware that there is something called "soft benefits." These are usually very popular with employees and cost the company little or nothing. For example, many companies have gone to a business casual dress code, while others may offer what is called "dress-down Fridays." Flextime is another popular soft benefit that many employers offer. This simply means that you don't have to arrive at work at a specific time each day. If it's more convenient for you to start at 10 a.m. to avoid the morning rush hour, for example, you'll be able to do so. However, most companies require employees to be at the office during predetermined "core hours"—usually between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Telecommuting from home is another "benefit" that employers like to tout. However, don't assume you'll be allowed to work from home whenever you want. You'll usually be offered this option when you're too sick to make it to the office, when you're on a tight deadline and your boss wants you to put in extra time, or when you're unable to come to work because of weather-related conditions.

Not all benefits programs are created equal, and most have certain rules, limitations and exclusions, particularly in regard to health plans.

And just what are the most popular benefits among recent college grads entering the work force? "In today's environment, it is assumed that health insurance will be offered," says Amy Roppe, "so most young employees tend to inquire more about retirement or bonus programs. No one is sure whether or not there will be a Social Security benefit when retirement time comes. Workers are taking more personal responsibility for their own financial futures." That sounds like the kind of common-sense advice we should all take.

Written by John Martalo, a free-lance writer based in San Diego.

WEIGHING THE JOB OFFER

You've done it! You impressed the employer with your professional resume and correspondence and aced the interview. You have been offered the job! All you have to do is say, "Yes," right? Not so fast! There are many things to consider before accepting a job. How much the position pays is typically on top of everybody's list. There are other issues that should not be overlooked that can affect your compensation and quality of life. Here's a quick guide to assist you in weighing the job offer.

SEE IT IN WRITING

Secure the details of the offer by seeing it in writing. People are often notified over the phone of the offer. Write all of the details of the offer down for your personal review. This will prevent confusion in the future. Include the basics, starting with your salary, duties, hours, location, supervisor and job title.

THE DETAILS

Now you can ask those questions that are forbidden in the initial interviews. When you have a job offer in hand, ask about vacation, health coverage, education allowance, stock options, bonuses and relocation expenses, if applicable.

CAN I NEGOTIATE SALARY?

Students often ask how to negotiate salary. Make sure that you have realistic expectations with regard to salary first. If you do decide to negotiate, the bottom line is...do your research. You do not want to undersell your skills or price yourself out of the market. Calculate the average salary for candidates with your educational background and experience by using salary surveys and factor in the cost of living for the geographic area. Then tell the potential employer what sets you apart from the pack and why you deserve more.

SET DEADLINES

The prospective employer will want an answer as quickly as possible. If you have another offer, or expect to receive one soon, make sure that you give yourself ample time to consider both. A few days is not an unreasonable request, but be sure not to overdo it. The prospective employer will think you are not serious about the organization.

TAKE A STAND

After careful evaluation of the details, you are left with other things to consider such as the culture and personal "fit" with the organization. Decide what you want, and then take your stand.

ACCEPTING THE JOB

Contact the hiring manager by phone when you accept a position and then follow up with a mailed letter, confirming your acceptance. You'll want to keep the letter short, but state the agreed-upon salary and any other terms along with the start date. Remember, when you've taken a stand, stick to it! Backing out will be detrimental to any work with the organization in the future and potentially harmful to your network.

DECLINING AN OFFER

Don't burn any bridges! Be sure to thank the interviewer. It can take a lot of time in their schedule to conduct interviews. It's hard to turn down a job when you only have one offer, but if you have found another position to be a better choice after evaluation, tell the interviewer why you found another job more challenging and why you accepted it.

DEALING WITH REJECTION IN THE JOB SEARCH

After meticulously preparing your cover letters and resumes, you send them to carefully selected companies that you are sure would like to hire you. You even get a few job interviews. But all of your return correspondence is the same: "Thanks, but no thanks." Your self-confidence melts and you begin to question your value to an employer.

Sometimes, we begin to dread the BIG NO so much that we stop pursuing additional interviews, thereby shutting off our pipeline to the future. We confirm that we couldn't get a job because we stop looking. Remember, fear of rejection doesn't have to paralyze your job search efforts. Let that fear fuel your determination; make it your ally and you'll learn a lot.

EIGHT GUIDELINES TO WARD OFF REJECTION

- 1. Depersonalize the interview.** Employers may get as many as 500 resumes for one job opening. How can you, I and the other 498 of us be no good?
- 2. Don't make it all or nothing.** Don't set yourself up for a letdown: "If I don't get this job, I'm a failure." Tell yourself, "It could be mine. It's a good possibility. It's certainly not an impossibility."
- 3. Don't blame the interviewer.** Realize interviewers aren't in a hurry to think and behave our way. Blame your turndown on a stone-hearted interviewer who didn't flatter you with beautiful compliments, and you will learn nothing.
- 4. Don't live in the past.** When you dredge up past failures, your nervous system kicks in and you experience all the feelings that go with failure. Unwittingly, you overestimate the dangers facing you and underestimate yourself.
- 5. Don't get mad at the system.** Does anything less pleasurable exist than hunting for a job? Still, you must adjust to the world rather than make the world adjust to you. The easiest thing is to conform, to do what 400,000 other people are doing. When you sit down to play bridge or poker or drive a car, do you complain about the rules?
- 6. Take the spotlight off yourself.** Sell your skills, not yourself. Concentrate on what you're there for: to find out the interviewer's problems and to show how you can work together to solve them.
- 7. See yourself in the new role.** Form a mental picture of the positive self you'd like to become in job interviews, rather than focusing on what scares you. All therapists agree on this: Before a person can effect changes, he must really "see" himself in the new role. Just for fun, play with the idea.
- 8. Keep up your sense of humor.** Nobody yet has contracted an incurable disease from a job interview.

Written by Roseanne R. Bensley, Career Services, New Mexico State University.



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