

# Table of Contents

Get Your Career on Track with CareerTrax . . . . .	2
An Overview of Career Services . . . . .	3
Plan for Success at PUC! . . . . .	5
Professional Correspondence . . . . .	6
Power Verbs for Your Resume . . . . .	7
Transferable Skills . . . . .	8
Resume Blueprint . . . . .	9
Sample Resumes . . . . .	10
Sample Cover and Thank-You Letters . . . . .	14
Letters of Recommendation . . . . .	15
Professional Work Experiences: Invest in Your Future Today . . . . .	16
Job Search Strategies: Pros and Cons . . . . .	17
Network Your Way to a Job . . . . .	18
Social Networking Websites . . . . .	19
International Students and the Job Search . . . . .	20
Turning Your Internship Into a Full-Time Position . . . . .	21
Shining a Light on Job Shadowing . . . . .	22
Federal Jobs: Working for Uncle Sam . . . . .	23
Is Graduate School Right for You? . . . . .	24
Prepping for Graduate School . . . . .	25
Ten Rules of Interviewing . . . . .	26
Professional Attire . . . . .	27
Behavioral Interviews: Using the STAR Method . . . . .	28
Sample Interview Questions . . . . .	29
Questions to Ask Employers . . . . .	29
Students With Disabilities: Acing the Interview . . . . .	30
Your Bragging Rights: Selling Yourself . . . . .	31
Planning Your Elevator Pitch . . . . .	31
Professional Etiquette . . . . .	32
Dining Out . . . . .	33
Evaluating an Offer of Employment . . . . .	34
The Art of Negotiating . . . . .	35
The Benefits of Company Benefits . . . . .	36

## CAREER SUCCESS GUIDE

2011-2012

Office of  
Career Services

Purdue  
University  
Calumet



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### ADVERTISER INDEX

ArcelorMittal . . . . .	Inside Front Cover
Earth Share . . . . .	2
U.S. Marine Corps . . . . .	Inside Back Cover
World Wildlife Fund . . . . .	26

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# Get Your Career on Track with CareerTrax

## Begin Your Journey at [www.pucjobs.com](http://www.pucjobs.com)

### Create Your CareerTrax Account TODAY!

CareerTrax is an online career management system that enables you to search for jobs, upload your resume, sign up for recruiting events and on-campus interviews, and apply directly for on-campus jobs, off-campus jobs, and internships.

Register online 24/7 at [www.pucjobs.com](http://www.pucjobs.com) or visit us at the office of Career Services in SUL 349

Participation is free and EVERY Purdue University Calumet student already has a CareerTrax account. All you need to do is activate your account! *Enrollment is easy!*

- Visit [www.pucjobs.com](http://www.pucjobs.com) • Click the link underneath "Student CareerTrax login options" • A new page will open • Click the "forgot your password?" link located below the username and password fields
- Once the new page opens, enter your career account username (Example: jsmith—the same as your computer login) and click "Reset Password"
- Log into your personal Student Gmail account • Find the email titled "Password Reset". This email contains your new CareerTrax password. Located in the email is a link to take you back to the CareerTrax homepage • Click the link.

- Once at the CareerTrax homepage, enter your career account username and new CareerTrax password
  - Congratulations, you are now a CareerTrax user!
- You can now fill out your personal CareerTrax profile, **change your password**, upload your resume and begin your job search.

*CareerTrax offers you the ability to:*

- View job opportunities 24/7
- Inquire about or apply for jobs online
- Participate in career fairs, interviews and other career events
- Manage multiple resumes, cover letters and other employment related documents

*Note:*

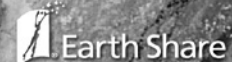
- The more detailed your profile, the better we will be able to assist you!
- When you submit your resume your account will be in pending status. Once your resume is approved you will receive an email notification. If you have questions about your CareerTrax account, please contact the Office of Career Services at (219) 989-2600.
- When uploading more than one document, make sure your most generic resume is selected as your default. Your default resume is the document that employers can view when accessing our system.



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WE ALL BUILD.

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# An Overview of Career Services

Career Services offers a variety of services to PUC students and alumni. We also offer select services to community members. Here are a few of the services we offer:

- **Career Services and Student Employment Center:** Our office is located in SUL 349, where our resource library (containing hundreds of career-related books and other publications, searchable online at [www.librarything.com/catalog/purduecalumet](http://www.librarything.com/catalog/purduecalumet)) and state-of-the-art computer workstations are available for daily use in a warm and inviting atmosphere.
- **CareerTrax:** Our online job database has been recently updated and now offers many additional features. Log on to CareerTrax using the guide on the previous page and by visiting [www.pucjobs.com](http://www.pucjobs.com). In addition to job postings on- and off-campus, CareerTrax offers the following features:
  - **Career Insider Online Career Library:** Available through CareerTrax, Career Insider is an online library service containing 20 Career Insider career/industry guidebooks; 3,000 company profiles; 50 gold company profiles with Career Insider employee surveys; 1.5 million postings on the message boards; and 1,100 career advice articles.
  - **On-Campus Interviewing:** Students registered with CareerTrax have the first opportunity to sign up with employers for on-campus interviewing throughout the Fall and Spring semesters.
  - **Resume Referral:** Not all employers are able to visit campus, so they request that resumes be sent to them. Registering with CareerTrax allows your resume to be sent to employers requesting your major or skill set.
  - **Online Credential/Portfolio Service:** Students interested in maintaining a credential file or online portfolio can create one with assistance from the Career Services staff or students can upload documents to the site on their own. Transcripts, letters of recommendation, cover letters, personal statements, and other important materials can be stored for future use in this independent location that is accessible 24/7.
  - **MonsterTrak:** MonsterTrak, a division of Monster.com, is a recruitment portal that streams job postings straight to your CareerTrax homepage. MonsterTrak customizes the job listings on your page based on the searches you conduct through CareerTrax.
- **Partner Sites:** Easily register with Internships.com and CareerRookie by linking your CareerTrax profile to these sites. With one log in, instantly gain access to additional career resources and job postings, including internships, part-time, and entry-level.

- **Optimal Services:** This program offers a variety of tools to assist you at every step of the job application process. Services include:
  - **Resume Builder:** Simply and quickly create an impressive, professional resume to share online or download and print.
  - **Letter Builder:** Write almost any kind of professional letter, including cover and thank-you letters.
  - **Portfolio Builder:** Assemble an online gallery of your work that can be displayed as a page on your Optimal Resume website, shared as a link, or downloaded as a ZIP file.
  - **Skills Assessment:** Identify and present your transferable skills and abilities to prospective employers, which is especially helpful for creating targeted resumes and cover letters and preparing for job interviews.
  - **Interview Preparation/Virtual Mock Interviews:** Easily refine your interviewing skills from the comfort of your own home or office. You control all aspects of your interview practice session, including interview type, number of questions, response format, and interviewer.
  - **Video Resume:** Record a cutting-edge video resume with various styling options to introduce yourself and highlight your professional capabilities to prospective employers.
  - **Website Builder:** Design a customized website that includes a variety of professional documents, as well as links to your social-networking profiles, like LinkedIn and Twitter.
- **Alumni Career Network:** Volunteer alumni serve as a resource for career information and advice for current students and alumni at various stages of their professional development. Find out more on our website by clicking "**Students** • **Alumni Career Network.**"
- **Regularly Scheduled Resume and Cover Letter Workshops:**

Tuesday: 10 AM and 2 PM  
Wednesday: 12 PM and 6 PM\*  
Thursday: 9 AM and 4 PM

*\*Wednesday 6 PM workshops are not offered during summer hours.*

- **Mock Interviews:** A mock interview is a great way to practice interviewing skills before the real thing. Interviews can be done one-on-one with a Career Services professional or through **InterviewStream.**

InterviewStream offers virtual interviews that are recorded through a webcam for personal review or for review by counselors, professors, parents, or employers for feedback. InterviewStream is available both in our office and in the privacy of your own home.

- **Individual Career Advising:** Staff professionals are available to assist with your career exploration, planning, and searching by personal appointment or to answer general questions on a walk-in basis.
- **Career/Internship Fairs, Roundtables, and Other Networking Opportunities:** All of these opportunities are available during the Spring and Fall semesters, offering you face-to-face interactions with potential employers and mentors.
- **Webshops, Workshops and Presentations:** Available throughout the year both in person and on the web, there are numerous opportunities for additional training and learning through our online workshops and other presentations. Workshops include our Backpacks to Briefcases, Get SET: Student Employment Training, GSI: Graduate School Investigation Series, and Inspired Leaders. Visit “Webshops” under **Interactive Resources** on our website.
- **Career Advisor and CareerTV Videos:** Available in our office and from the comfort of your own home, these videos offer advice and other tips on a variety of career-related topics, including “Cleaning Up Your Digital Dirt,” “Green Collar America,” and “Acing the Interview.”
- **The BIG Guide to Living and Working Overseas:** The BIG Guide offers expert advice for anyone considering going abroad to study, volunteer, intern, teach, travel or work! Register online to access The BIG Guide for free.
- **Do What You Are® Personality Type and Career Interest Assessment:** A personality type and career choice assessment tools by CollegeScope. Do What You Are® is an online program that provides a statistically-accurate representation of your personality type and attitude toward career direction. For career counseling and a more in-depth look into your personality type and strong interests, see the Counseling Center in Gyte 5 or call (219) 989-2366 for more information.
- **PEPS Learning Style Inventory:** An online learning inventory, offered by CollegeScope, that helps you identify the kind of environment in which you prefer to work or learn.
- **What Can I Do With This Major?:** For each major of interest, you can choose either the PDF or HTML version of an outline of common interest areas, typical employers, and strategies designed to maximize career opportunities. Find out more by visiting “What Can I Do With This Major?” under **Interactive Resources** on our website.

- **Student Employment:** Student Employment creates a one-stop shop for your on-campus employment needs. You may search online for campus employment and apply directly to job openings through CareerTrax. Our goal is to provide meaningful employment that will correlate with your educational goals while helping you connect to the campus. Here are a few of the services we offer:

- **On-Campus Employment:** On-campus employment includes Federal Work Study, Non-Federal Work Study, temporary positions, project work, and graduate aide positions, to name a few.

**Federal Work Study:** The Federal Work Study (FWS) program is a type of financial aid that provides the opportunity to earn money toward the cost of school by working on campus or at a qualifying community agency. In order to apply for FWS, you must file a Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) every year. Visit [www.fafsa.ed.gov](http://www.fafsa.ed.gov) to learn more and to fill out an application online or to request a paper copy. **Be sure to answer “Yes” to the question, “Are you interested in being considered for work-study?”** (question #31 on the PDF and print versions). Priority consideration for FWS will be given to students who file their FAFSA prior to March 10 each year.

- **National Student Employment Week:** Each year, colleges and universities across the country recognize the importance of student work experience with National Student Employment Week. Here at PUC, we celebrate during this week by hosting a variety of events to recognize outstanding student workers. This year’s festivities will be from April 9 – 15.

For more information about any of these services, please visit [www.purduecal.edu/careerservices](http://www.purduecal.edu/careerservices). To schedule an appointment or to speak with someone in our office, please stop in SUL 349 or call (219) 989-2600.

Find us on:



# Plan for Success at PUC!

## First Year

- Work on getting to know who you are and what you want. Determine what fields of interest or majors may be right for you. Consider completing the “*Do What You Are*” personality assessment in SUL 349.
- Get a good start on your academic career by developing sound study habits, managing your time well, getting tutoring for difficult courses, and meeting with your professors.
- Research on-campus student employment in SUL 349 and develop a resume to start applying. Try the Resume Builder in our Optimal Services.
- Join at least one club or student organization. Start networking, developing leadership qualities and gaining more knowledge.
- Visit your academic advisor early to find out what courses to take next semester.
- Register for access to our online job listing service, *CareerTrax*, at [www.pucjobs.com](http://www.pucjobs.com) to find out about the services we offer, and how to participate in career development workshops and programs.
- Review career literature and research companies. Career Services offers resources such as “*What can I do with this major?*” and the *Career Insider Online Career Library* to help you get started.
- Avoid the freshmen 15 and get fit by becoming active at the Fitness and Recreation Center.
- Get involved in intramurals. With over 40 different activities to choose from there is something for everyone. This is a great way to make new friends. Visit the FRC for more information.
- Get involved in a social, service, or professional student organization at PUC or start your own. These activities are great resume and character builders, so visit SUL 104B to get started.
- When you are feeling under the weather, visit the Student Health Services Center located in the Gyte Annex 34. Don’t forget to pick up a list of services and hours so you are well equipped with the information when you really need it.
- If you are a first generation, income qualified, or student with a documented physical, emotional, or learning disability be sure to visit Student Support Services. Contact SSS to find out about the many programs available including tutoring, reading and writing assistance, strategies for success workshops, and so much more.

## Sophomore Year

- Obtain information about volunteering, internships, cooperative education, and the requirements you must meet to get started with these programs.
- Take an elective in a major you are considering as a great way to affirm your interests.
- Talk with professors and advisors about required course work and future career possibilities in majors of interest and declare a major if you haven’t already.
- Speak to people in the field, including alumni, and set up informational interviews.
- Begin attending workshops on resumes, interview skills, and networking events offered by Career Services.
- Stay active in student organizations and consider taking on a leadership role.
- Update your resume (this is a process that should be repeated often, at least every semester).
- Consider completing a mock interview. Try a Virtual Mock Interview through our Optimal Services.

- Explore and participate in at least two of the following:
  - On-campus, part-time or summer employment
  - Externship, job shadowing or informational interviewing
  - Volunteer work or service learning
  - Internship, cooperative education, or other experiential learning
  - Study Abroad or international volunteer experience
  - Career and leadership development workshops
  - Career and internships fairs

## Junior Year

- Become a leader in one of the organizations you have joined.
- Obtain information about on-campus student employment, career-related summer work, volunteering, internships, cooperative education, project employment, and the requirements you must meet to get started with these programs. Visit a Career Services professional in SUL 349 or your advisor for more information on these opportunities.
- Access your *CareerTrax* account at [www.pucjobs.com](http://www.pucjobs.com) to find the internship or job you seek.
- Investigate graduate school programs.
- Check out *The BIG Guide to Living and Working Overseas* to find out about opportunities abroad.
- Obtain recommendations/reference letters from professors and administrators.
- Choose elective courses that will help you develop transferable skills that appeal to most employers (computer, public speaking, etc.).
- Develop a mentor relationship with a professional.
- Complete a mock interview or two. This will help prepare you for your internship search.
- Update and enhance your resume by finding an experiential learning opportunity for the summer.

## Senior Year

- Continue attending workshops on leadership, interview skills, job searches, and networking.
- Attend all applicable Career Fairs, Roundtables, and other networking opportunities.
- Review the graduate school application process OR tell everyone you are graduating and looking for employment.
- Schedule mock interviews and have a Career Services professional look over your resume.
- Make a list of employers who hire college graduates in your field and start making contact.
- Obtain additional recommendations/reference letters from professors and administrators.
- Utilize Career Service’s *On-Campus Recruitment Program* by scheduling interviews with visiting employers and attending information sessions.
- Send resumes and cover letters to prospective employers and set up interviews on your own.
- Match your job offers to your needs, values, and interests. Learn about compensation packages rather than salary only so you can make an educated decision about potential job offers.
- Get hired or go to graduate school!
- Don’t forget to celebrate your successes!

Written by Shelly L. Robinson, Director of Career Services, Purdue University Calumet.

# Professional Correspondence

## Cover Letters

A cover letter serves as a brief introduction of yourself and your resume. Your goal is not to restate what your resume has to say but to instead offer a more personal view of yourself and highlight some of your key qualities or skills that make you perfect for the job. Your cover letter should be around three paragraphs, each serving a specific purpose.

1. The first paragraph should let the employer know that you've done your research: you know what the company is and the position for which you're applying. You should also mention how you heard about the position, whether it was from a job listing, their company website, or a friend.
2. In the second paragraph, briefly describe your specific qualifications that make you a standout for this job. Don't just repeat what's in your resume: make it personal. What do you have to offer that will lead the employer to look over your resume?
3. Finally, your third paragraph should indicate what you hope to achieve by submitting your resume. Would you like to set up an interview? Say so! Make sure you list your contact information, like your phone number and email, as well.

Take a look at the example cover letter found in this *Guide* to assist you as you write your own.

## Thank-You/Follow-Up Letters

Congratulations! You landed the interview, and you think it went well. The best way to keep up your positive first impression is to send a follow-up or thank-you letter to the interviewer. Like a cover letter, these letters should have three paragraphs or so.

1. In your first paragraph, thank the interviewer for his or her time. Remind him or her when you interviewed (maybe "yesterday" or "this past Monday") and for what position you interviewed.
2. If you're writing a thank-you letter, your second paragraph should restate your interest in the position and why you would be a good fit. Use examples based on key points that the interviewer stated during the interview. For a follow-up letter, you should include your additional questions or an explanation of qualifications that you failed to mention during the interview itself.
3. The third paragraph should be brief, thanking the interview once more and providing your contact information, such as your phone number and email.

Be sure to check out the example thank-you/follow-up letter found in this *Guide*.

## Email Etiquette

hey!! :) emails R casual & fun, rt?

**Wrong!** Well, at least in the case of business email. The above example is great for communicating with your friends,

but if you're emailing a potential employer, you'll need to use a more professional approach. Before you hit "send," take note:

1. Know why you're emailing. Research the company website first to see if you can answer your own questions, or you risk being labeled as "**that guy who didn't know the CEO's name.**"
2. Know whom you're emailing. If you email a random address you found on a website, your request is sure to be dragged **straight to the recycle bin.**
3. Know what you're emailing. Including an attachment? Think twice! If you can include the information in the body of the email, do it. If it's a resume that has special formatting, make sure you send it as an easy-to-open file, like a **Word document or PDF.**

The following guidelines will help you make a positive impression during your job search:

- Use proper **spelling, grammar, and punctuation** conventions. Apostrophes, commas, and the dictionary are your friends!
- **DO NOT USE ALL CAPS.** This is considered shouting. Unless you want a boss who'll shout at you, don't shout in your emails.
- Correspond using a professional sounding email address. "**Rockstarr@2cool4you.com**" may be cute, but an employer will be much more impressed by "**john.smith@gmail.com**" or "**jsmith@purduecal.edu.**"
- Be specific in the subject line. "**Plz interview me**" won't cut it. Tell the recipient exactly what they'll find in your email, such as "**Application for Resident Nurse position.**"
- **Ditch the clip art, photos, and background images.** These files increase the size of your email, which could overload the recipient's inbox. Goodbye, good first impression!
- **Choose fonts wisely.** *Is this Lucida Handwriting font easy to read?* No, but Arial is. And **goudy old style** is too much! Same goes for colors. Stick with **black**, except for hyperlinks.
- **For a cover/thank-you letter**, type your letter directly into the body of the email. **Do not include it as an attachment.** You'll need to write something in the email itself, anyway, so why not place it there and save the recipient some trouble?
- If possible, include your resume as an attachment. If the recipient requests that you add your resume into the body of your email, make sure to clean it up and remove as much formatting as possible, since "**--> Education & Academic History**" could come out as "**<div style='padding-left: 30px;'>à Education & Academic History</div>.**"

- Provide hyperlinks, when possible. The recipient will be able to **click your links with ease** instead of going through that whole copy/paste hassle.

### Electronic/Scannable Resumes (Plain Text/ ACSII)

Electronic/scannable resumes are designed to be scanned into an employer’s database and then searched and evaluated. These resumes are unique because they must be formatted for easy interpretation by a computer. Scanning resumes is not the most common practice, but if a potential employer requests it, it’s best to be prepared. Additionally, this format will make “cutting and pasting” your resume into online applications a breeze. Here are a few pointers for creating a scannable resume\*:

- **Remove all design elements**, such as horizontal lines, graphic elements, and special characters.
- **Do not format words** using underline, **bold**, or *italics*. To highlight a word or phrase, use CAPITALS (but sparingly).
- **Use Courier text** (if available) between sizes 10 and 14.

- **Do not use bullets.** Instead, use non-special characters, such as plus signs (+), hyphens (-), or asterisks (\*) when making a list.
- **Use keywords and applicable industry jargon** found in job descriptions for the type of position you’re seeking. The computer will single out these words during resume searches.
- **Use nouns instead of verbs** whenever possible, as the computer will often search for important noun phrases. For example, try “team leader” instead of “led a team.”
- **Preview what your resume will look like** to the computer by saving your document as Plain Text, Text Only, or DOS Text. Correct all errors before saving your submission copy in one of these formats.

\* Please note that these guidelines are *only* for scannable resumes and do not apply to other types of professional correspondence or when asked to submit a resume via Word or PDF format.

*Written by Megan Varney, Office of Career Services, Purdue University Calumet.*

### Power Verbs for Your Resume

accomplished	coached	drafted	increased	operated	scheduled
achieved	collaborated	edited	informed	orchestrated	secured
adapted	collected	educated	initiated	organized	served
added	communicated	employed	innovated	performed	solved
addressed	compared	engineered	inspected	pioneered	sought
administered	compiled	enhanced	instituted	planned	spearheaded
advised	composed	established	instructed	prepared	spoke
aided	computed	examined	integrated	processed	strengthened
analyzed	confirmed	excelled	interviewed	produced	studied
appointed	consolidated	executed	introduced	programmed	submitted
appraised	constructed	expanded	invented	projected	supervised
arranged	contributed		investigated	publicized	supplemented
assembled	converted	fabricated		purchased	surveyed
assessed	coordinated	facilitated	launched		sustained
assigned	corresponded	familiarized	lectured	raised	tabulated
assisted	counseled	formulated	led	recruited	tailored
attained	created	founded		refined	trained
audited				reformed	transformed
authored	dedicated	generated		regulated	translated
	delegated	guided		remodeled	
balanced	demonstrated			repaired	updated
booster	designated	hired		reported	upgraded
budgeted	designed			represented	
built	determined	identified		researched	validated
	developed	illustrated		resolved	verified
calculated	devised	implemented		reviewed	
catalogued	directed	improved	negotiated		wrote

*Adapted with permission from the Career Resource Manual of the University of California, Davis.*

# Transferable Skills

If you're wondering what skills you have that would interest a potential employer, you are not alone. Many college seniors feel that four (or more) years of college haven't sufficiently prepared them to begin work after graduation. And like these students, you may have carefully reviewed your work history (along with your campus and civic involvement) and you may still have a difficult time seeing how the skills you learned in college will transfer to the workplace.

But keep in mind that you've been acquiring skills since childhood. Whether learning the value of teamwork by playing sports, developing editing skills working on your high school newspaper or developing countless skills while completing your coursework, each of your experiences has laid the groundwork for building additional skills.

## What Are Transferable Skills?

A *transferable* skill is a "portable skill" that you *deliberately* (or inadvertently, if you haven't identified them yet) take with you to other life experiences.

Your transferable skills are often:

- acquired through a class (e.g., an English major who is taught technical writing)
- acquired through experience (e.g., the student government representative who develops strong motivation and consensus building skills)

Transferable skills supplement your degree. They provide an employer concrete evidence of your readiness and qualifications for a position. Identifying your transferable skills and communicating them to potential employers will greatly increase your success during the job search.

Remember that it is impossible to complete college without acquiring transferable skills. Campus and community activities, class projects and assignments, athletic activities, internships and summer/part-time jobs have provided you with countless experiences where you've acquired a range of skills—many that you may take for granted.

## Identifying Transferable Skills

While very closely related (and with some overlap), transferable skills can be divided into three subsets:

- Working With People • Working With Things
- Working With Data/Information

For example, some transferable skills can be used in every workplace setting (e.g., organizing or public speaking) while some are more applicable to specific settings (e.g., drafting or accounting).

The following are examples of skills often acquired through the classroom, jobs, athletics and other activities. Use these examples to help you develop your own list of the transferable skills you've acquired.

### Working With People

- Selling • Training • Teaching • Supervising
- Organizing • Soliciting • Motivating • Mediating
- Advising • Delegating • Entertaining
- Representing • Negotiating • Translating

### Working With Things

- Repairing • Assembling parts • Designing
- Operating machinery • Driving
- Maintaining equipment • Constructing • Building
- Sketching • Working with CAD • Keyboarding
- Drafting • Surveying • Troubleshooting

### Working With Data/Information

- Calculating • Developing databases
- Working with spreadsheets • Accounting • Writing
- Researching • Computing • Testing • Filing • Sorting
- Editing • Gathering data • Analyzing • Budgeting

## Easy Steps to Identify Your Transferable Skills

Now that you know what transferable skills are, let's put together a list of your transferable skills. You may want to work with someone in your career services office to help you identify as many transferable skills as possible.

**Step 1.** Make a list of every job title you've held (part-time, full-time and internships), along with volunteer, sports and other affiliations since starting college. (Be sure to record officer positions and other leadership roles.)

**Step 2.** Using your transcript, list the classes in your major field of study along with foundation courses. Include electives that may be related to your employment interests.

**Step 3.** For each job title, campus activity and class you've just recorded, write a sentence and then underline the action taken. (Avoid stating that you *learned* or *gained experience* in any skill. Instead, present your skill more directly as a verifiable qualification.)

*"While working for Jones Engineering, I performed 3D modeling and drafting."*

*NOT "While working for Jones Engineering, I gained experience in 3D modeling and drafting."*

*"As a member of the Caribbean Students Association, I developed and coordinated the marketing of club events."*

*NOT "As a member of the Caribbean Students Association, I learned how to market events."*

**Step 4.** Make a list of the skills/experiences you've identified for future reference during your job search.

## Using Transferable Skills in the Job Search

Your success in finding the position right for you will depend on your ability to showcase your innate talents and skills. You will also need to demonstrate how you can apply these skills at an employer's place of business. Consult the staff at your career services office to help you further identify relevant transferable skills and incorporate them on your resume and during your interviews. During each interview, be sure to emphasize only those skills that would be of particular interest to a specific employer.

Transferable skills are the foundation upon which you will build additional, more complex skills as your career unfolds. Start making your list of skills and you'll discover that you have more to offer than you realized!

### Additional Tips to Help Identify Your Transferable Skills

1. Review your list of transferable skills with someone in your field(s) of interest to help you identify any additional skills that you may want to include.
2. Using a major job posting website, print out descriptions of jobs that interest you to help you identify skills being sought. (Also use these postings as guides for terminology on your resume.)
3. Attend career fairs and company information sessions to learn about the skills valued by specific companies and industries.

*Written by Rosita Smith.*

# Resume Blueprint

**NOTE:** Extra tips appear in *[brackets!]*  
Do not type these into your resume.

## YOUR NAME HERE

Street Address, City, State Zip Code  
(Area Code) Phone Number and email@email.com

**[Remember: this is just a generic sample. Your resume is a very personal document that might have many variations from the information listed below. Even if you use these resume tips, you should still seek the advice of a career professional before finalizing your resume.]**

### OBJECTIVE

Write one or two short, simple statements that state which position you are applying for and what skills you have that you plan to utilize in that position. Be as specific as possible while keeping your statements brief—do not generalize with statements like, “Seeking a position at ABC Company where I can apply my knowledge, education, and experience for the best of the company.”

### EDUCATION *[List all of your degrees in reverse chronological order]*

**Name of School, City, State of School**

*Type of Degree, Type of Major*

Graduation Date or Expected Graduation Date, GPA: #.##/4.00

*[If you have little work experience that pertains to the job you are seeking, you might want to add a “Relevant Coursework” category to list specific classes you took that will benefit you at your new position.]*

### SKILLS

- If you have any special skills that will help you on the job, list them here
- Skills to include may be computer skills, foreign language proficiencies/fluencies, machinery skills, special certifications, and more
- Some abilities, like good communication skills or attention to detail, can apply to any job

### EXPERIENCE *[List applicable jobs in reverse chronological order]*

**Company, City, State of Company**

Start Month, Year—End Month, Year

*Job Title*

*[put “Present” as the end date  
if you are currently employed  
in this position]*

- List successful accomplishments and responsibilities in short, concise statements
- Remember to highlight how your contribution has affected the “big picture” of your company
- Start statements with powerful action verbs *[see “Power Verbs for Your Resume”]*
- Use present-tense verbs (“manage”) for current employment and past-tense verbs (“managed”) for previous employment
- Include accomplishments and responsibilities that relate to the job you’re seeking
- Provide quantifiable data when possible

### ACTIVITIES/HONORS

- You have probably been involved in more than you know!
- Consider all areas of your professional, academic, and social life
- List activities and memberships that apply most directly to the job first
- Include clubs, organizations, committees, leadership positions, volunteer activities, and more
- Add honors, such as “Dean’s List” and “Semester Honors”
- Only add hobbies and personal interests if they relate to the job—don’t include activities that might have a negative impact on the decision to offer you a job

### More Tips

- Do not include “References available on request.” You will most likely list your references on the application form
- Format your resume using easy-to-read text
- Do not use graphics or decorative elements. These can be distracting and make your resume too confusing
- Do not include a personal photo, unless you are applying for a job with a modeling agency
- Do NOT include the address and phone number of your current or previous employer—this information will appear on the application form or *separately* with your references

## Political Science/Criminal Justice

### STANFORD JUSTICE

4A Safe Place, Merrillville, IN 46410  
219/555-4444 or justice@yahoo.com

#### OBJECTIVE

To obtain an entry-level position in a field relating to political science or criminal justice.

#### EDUCATION

**Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN**  
*Bachelor of Arts in Political Science with Concentration in Criminal Justice*  
December 2011 GPA: 3.13/4.0

#### Relevant Coursework:

*Politics in Policing, Criminal Justice, Criminology, Criminal Investigation, Victimology, Juvenile Delinquency, Law and Society, Judicial Politics, and Constitutional Law*

#### EXPERIENCE

**Lake Superior Court, County Div. 3, Julie N. Cantrell, Presiding, Gary, IN**

Summer 2011

*Clerk/Intern*

- Retrieved criminal histories, processed various forms of paperwork, and answered phones as needed
- Accompanied public defender during negotiation of plea agreements with county prosecutor
- Observed all courtroom processes including: argument of cases, sentencing, and intake of new inmates
- Assessed offender risk level in order to determine frequency of contact with probation officer
- Coordinated probation activities for new probationers in programs including work release, LADOS, and community service
- Reviewed and audited probation officers' client folders to ensure required activities had been completed by probationers
- Ensured offenders paid assessed fines to clerk's office and updated appropriate paperwork

**Alverno Clinical Laboratories, Hammond, IN**

December 2008 – Present

*Customer Service Representative*

- Report daily laboratory distribution to physicians, clinics, and hospitals
- Notify physicians of stat or alert laboratory results by acting as a liaison between laboratory staff and physician or hospital
- Act as call center representative using GAJEMA operating system

#### ACTIVITIES

**Vice President**, International Relations Club

**Secretary**, Criminal Justice Club

**Member**, Pi Sigma Alpha National Honor Society

**Research Assistant**, Encyclopedia of Domestic Violence

## New College Student

### TRUE LEE GNU

5610 W. Avenue St., Crown Point, IN 46307  
Home: 219-555-1245/Cell: 219-555-4444  
Email: lp@yahoo.com

#### OBJECTIVE

Seeking a part-time position on campus to gain valuable experience toward my future career.

#### EDUCATION

**Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN**

Currently taking general studies classes

**Crown Point High School, Crown Point, IN**

Diploma June 2011

GPA 3.13/4.00

A-B honor roll

#### EMPLOYMENT HISTORY

**Natty's, Crown Point, IN May 2010 – June 2011**

*Waitress*

- Maintained high levels of customer service
- Handled all aspects of cash management
- Acted as head waitress for dinner hour and supervised bus staff
- Set up and took down salad bar

**Nottingham English Cottage Gardens, Crown Point, IN May 2009 – Oct 2010**

*Customer Service Representative*

- Completed planting, watering and fertilizing perennial and annual stock
- Loaded and unloaded stock for farmers market
- Completed customer transactions including sales, service, and cash management

**Agriculture Building at Lake County Fair, Crown Point, IN Aug 2009 – Aug 2010**

*Customer Service Representative*

- Completed set up in the agriculture building, checked in agricultural items for public display, and assisted in judging process
- Worked on the children's programs
- Acted as point of contact answering questions for the public
- Disassembled on the last day of the fair

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

Microsoft Office, Word, Excel, and PowerPoint

# Sample Resumes

## Internship or Co-op

### ELLA TRICAL

111213 Engineering Blvd., Hammond, IN 46324  
Tel: 219-555-1415 or ellat1@purduecal.edu

#### OBJECTIVE

To obtain a summer internship in electrical engineering that will provide challenging opportunities and has the potential for long-term career growth and professional development.

#### EDUCATION

**Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN**  
*Bachelor of Science in Electrical Engineering*  
Expected Graduation Date: December 2011  
GPA: 3.6/4.0

#### Relevant Courses

*Analog and Digital Integrated Circuits, Electronic Systems, Microprocessors, Switching Theory and Logic Design, Solid State Devices and Circuits, VLSI Technology, Automatic Control System, Power Electronics, Electric Machines and Drives, Antenna and Wave Propagation, Analog and Digital Communication Systems, Microwave Propagation, Signals and Systems*

#### PROJECTS

##### Senior Design Project, Team Leader

*Designing and implementing a robotic arm that can be attached to a wheelchair which assists in the normal day-to-day activities of the user*

##### Robotics Project, Team Member

*Designed and assembled electronic components on remote control robotic car*

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

*Languages: C/C++, HTML, VHDL, MATLAB  
Circuit Simulation & HDLs: Altera MAX-Plus II & Quartus, VHDL & Verilog HDL, PSpice  
Databases: SQL, dBASE, FOXPRO  
Operating Systems & Office Suites: MS Windows, Mac OS X, MS Office  
Image Editors: Adobe Photoshop, Macromedia Fireworks*

#### EXPERIENCE

##### Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN September 2010 - Present

- MET Intern, Department of Mechanical Engineering Technology (January 2010-Present)*
- Restoring a small scale steel rolling mill as an independent project/internship
  - Troubleshooting mechanical flows of system and modify conveyor belt
  - Designing schematics of steel rolling mill machinery using PSpice
- Student Aide, Educational Media Lab (September, 2009-Present)*
- Assisting students with problems or concerns in regards to software and hardware
  - Designing education department website on *Adobe Dreamweaver*
  - Editing various video and audio productions for instructors across the university

##### Hutch India, Cellular Network Provider, New Delhi Summer 2008

- Technical Support/Customer Service Representative*
- Handled technical calls related to problems with network and cell phone usage
  - Provided excellent customer service to internet and external network users
  - Mastered the interpersonal skill of handling people effectively and working in teams

#### ACTIVITIES

Member, IEEE  
Member, Society of Hispanic and Professional Engineers  
Member, Purdue Intern Students Association

## Education

### ED JUCATOR

9876 Golden Rule Road, Highland, IN 46322  
Home (219) 555-4321  
jucator@purduecal.edu

#### Objective

To obtain a full-time position as an elementary educator, preferably in grades K-3 contributing to overall student success.

#### Education/Certification

*Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN*  
**Bachelor of Arts, Elementary Education** **May 2010**

Certified in Indiana - Indiana Professional Educator's License No: 123456

#### Experience

*Harding Elementary School, Hammond, IN*

##### Student Teacher

**Spring 2009 - Present**

- Create, develop, and implement lessons for first grade students during 15 week term
- Assess students on knowledge of math, science, language, reading, and social studies
- Participate in extracurricular activities to learn more about the profession and build bridges with parents by showing student support

##### Volunteer Reading Tutor

- Work with struggling first grade students on developing alphabet and letter/sound recognition skills
- Create and develop activities and lessons based on individual student needs
- Contribute to successful reading experiences allowing students to gain confidence and build skills

*School of Hammond, Hammond, IN*

##### Substitute Teacher

**Fall 2008 - Spring 2009**

- Managed classrooms for grades 1-3
- Instructed students on various topics as directed by home room teacher

*Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN*

##### Math Teaching Intern

**August 2006 - May 2007**

- Provided remedial math instruction for class of 20-30 students
- Taught mathematics concepts such as measurement, fractions, and decimals

*Town of Highland, Highland, IN*

##### Title One Tutor

**Fall 1996 - Fall 2004**

- Tutored small groups and individual students in various subjects
- Instructed ESL students for last two years

# Sample Resumes

## Accounting

### ADAM UPSUM-NUMBERS

1234 Accounting Avenue  
Hammond, IN 46324  
219.555.5678

upnumbers1@purduecal.edu

#### OBJECTIVE

To obtain a challenging entry-level position as a Staff Accountant utilizing outstanding analytical, accounting, and leadership skills.

#### EDUCATION

##### **Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN**

*Bachelor of Science in Accounting*  
May 2012 GPA 3.5/4.0

##### **Related Coursework**

*Economics, Legalities of Business, General Accounting I & II, Management Accounting, Statistics, Financial Management, Marketing, Operations Management, Advanced Management and Financial Accounting, Accounting Practice, Auditing, Tax Accounting, et al.*

#### WORK HISTORY

##### **Meier's Landscaping Service, Hammond, IN April 2005 – Present**

###### *Crew Leader / Landscaper*

- Supervise daily crew of three (3) employees to ensure they work effectively
- Train new hires on processes and procedures
- Provide excellent customer service to our clients
- Maintain and repair equipment
- Plan, manage, and organize job duties and responsibilities for crew members
- Ensure all projects are completed in a timely manner and within budget

##### **Lesniak Tax Service, Highland, IN Summer 2011**

###### *Tax Assistant Intern*

- Prepared personal income tax returns
- Inputted tax data into tax software program
- Collated and check tax returns for accuracy
- Reconciled cash receipts and record cash-disbursement journals
- Reconciled bank statements and provide financial information to auditor

#### RELATED SKILLS

- Proficient in Microsoft Office including Outlook, Word, Excel, Access, and PowerPoint
- Experienced in Quick Books
- Loyal and dedicated employee
- Strong organizational skills and time management abilities
- Exceptional communication and interpersonal skills
- Responsible, reliable, and dependable

## Nursing

### JUANA B. ANURSE

12345 Healthy Way, Crown Point, IN 46307

Phone: (219) 555.6789 or Email: anurse@purduecal.edu

#### PROFESSIONAL GOAL

To obtain a full-time position facilitating patient care as a registered nurse accomplishing employee goals and gaining further knowledge and work experience while contributing to organizational success.

#### EDUCATION

##### **Purdue University Calumet, School of Nursing, Hammond, IN**

*Bachelor of Science in Nursing, Minor in Spanish*

Expected Graduation Date: May 2012 GPA: 3.7/4.0

#### CLINICAL EXPERIENCE

##### **Pediatric Rotation, St. Anthony Hospital, Chicago, IL (Spring 2012)**

**Maternity Nursing Rotation, St. Mary's Hospital, Hobart, IN (Fall 2011)**

**Medical Surgical IMCU, St. Mary's Hospital, Hobart, IN (Spring 2011)**

**Medical Surgical Nursing Rotation, Community Hospital, Munster, IN (Fall 2010)**

###### *Student Nurse*

- Assisted nurses and doctors with procedures under the supervision of licensed nursing staff
- Demonstrated exceptional patient care for up to 5 patients as assigned
- Provided comfort and advocacy for all patients and family members
- Assisted with medication administration, wound care, and prepping patients for procedures
- Performed clinical tasks such as checking vitals, bladder scans, sterile procedures, catheters, IV's, traction, fill head to toe assessments according to school and hospital policies
- Conducted prenatal assessments on both mother and baby
- Acted as team leader and evaluated co-workers in direct patient care

#### LANGUAGE AND COMPUTER SKILLS

Proficient in MS Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel, Publisher, Outlook), AS400, FoxMed, and Carenotes

Fluent in Spanish and English

#### WORK EXPERIENCE

##### **Community Hospital, Munster, IN (Nov 2010 – Present)**

###### *Nurse Fellow / Unit Secretary*

- Establish rapport and communicates well with clients, families, and healthcare members
- Perform patient care and applies appropriate interventions where applicable
- Prioritize goals and meets client needs using time-management skills
- Demonstrate critical thinking skills
- Schedule tests, procedures, labs, x-rays, CT scans, MRIs, etc.
- Chart patient medical records, files, and documents of history care

##### **Dr. M. J. Smith's Office, Crown Point, IN (Sept 2006 – Oct. 2010)**

###### *Medical Secretary*

- Entered and tracked patient demographics and medical records with confidentiality
- Assessed and charted patient vitals (including blood pressure and patient weights)
- Scheduled and confirmed patient appointments / procedures
- Answered calls and prepared messages for doctor and staff to review

#### ACTIVITIES AND HONORS

Recipient, Academic Honors, School of Nursing Dean's List and Semester Honors (Fall 2008 – Present)  
Member, Nursing Club, Purdue University Calumet (Oct 2009 – Present)  
Volunteer, Service Learning Project, St. Michael's Assisted Living Center (Spring 2009)

# Sample Resumes

## Marketing

### MARK ATTING

9876 Sales Street, Merrillville, IN 46410  
Cell: (219) 555-5432  
Email: Mark.Atting@hotmail.com

#### OBJECTIVE

Obtain a position in sales and marketing where my interpersonal skills, education, and past experience can be applied to benefit company growth and success.

#### EDUCATION

**Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, IN**  
*Bachelor of Science in Management, Concentration in Marketing*  
December 2012  
GPA 3.45/4.0

#### EXPERIENCE

- Benchmark/Staff Source, East Chicago/Hammond, IN** Fall 2011 to Present  
*Marketing Intern*
- Develop and implement new marketing strategies to increase company exposure and name
  - Assist sales staff as needed with special promotional events and projects
  - Visit and review properties to ascertain value for resale or lease
- T-Mobile USA, Hammond, IN** May 2010 to Present  
*Retail Sales Representative*
- Maintain and grow existing customer base
  - Market, sell, and lead team to meet and exceed assigned sales quotas
  - Provide high levels of customer service including conflict resolution and customer complaints
  - Assess individuals and team performance to initiate developmental plans to narrow competency gaps
  - Train new employees on policies and procedures
  - Develop relationships, build rapport, and acquire new business accounts
  - Provide customer follow-up to ensure customer retention
  - Achieved 120% average sales quote during the work period
  - Received 100% on customer service scores

#### **The Mobile Solution, South Bend, Merrillville, IN** June 2008 to May 2010

- Retail Sales Rep/District Manager*
- Exceeded average sales quota by 50% during work period
  - Named Top Sales Representative/Sales Manager in the Chicago market for several months
  - Trained current top sales rep in Chicago market
  - Managed the #1 store in the Chicago market numerous months
  - Coached and developed other managers in the Chicago market
  - Analyzed staffing needs of store, made hiring decisions, and initiated progressive discipline as needed
  - Handled employee relations including: development, training, motivating, and coaching sales team to produce high performance results
  - Conducted role playing activities, leading by example, and assessing strengths and weakness of reps to achieve continuous employee improvement
  - Transformed the lowest producing store by 150%

#### COMPUTER SKILLS

- Proficient in MS Word, Excel and PowerPoint
- Experienced in Adobe InDesign, Illustrator, and Photoshop

#### ACTIVITIES AND HONORS

- Member and President, Purdue University Marketing Association (PUMA)
- Volunteer, Charity Event Committee Board, B-Ball for a cause- PUMA
- Member, American Marketing Association (AMA)
- Received *Rookie of the Year Award* (The Mobile Solution Chicago Market)
- Honored for Leadership, *Mr. ZIP Award* (Zeal Inspiration Perspiration)

## Hospitality

### COLLIN NERRY

13 Hospitality Court, Lowell, Indiana 46356  
(219) 555-1313 or tours@gmail.com

#### OBJECTIVE

To obtain an entry-level management position in the hospitality industry using my education, experience, and customer service skills.

#### EDUCATION

**Purdue University Calumet, Hammond, Indiana** May 2012  
*Bachelor of Science, Hospitality and Tourism Management*

**Related Professional Development Courses and Certifications**  
*ServSafe, Controlling Alcohol Risks Effectively, Basic and advanced Shift Management*

#### EXPERIENCE

**Flying J Travel Center, Lowell, Indiana** Nov 2010 - Present

*Line Cook*

- Prepare, cook, and plate customers' food orders
- Maintain a safe and clean work environment
- Complete necessary pre-prep work daily

**Don Pablo's Restaurant, Merrillville, Indiana** May 2010 - Oct 2010

*Server*

- Provided excellent customer service to all patrons
- Promoted specials and increased ticket orders through sales techniques
- Handled all aspects of cash management
- Maintained a clean environment and stocked restaurant as needed

**McDonald's, Lowell, Indiana** Aug 2007 - May 2010

*Second Assistant General Manager*

- Coordinated weekly crew schedules based on sales projections
- Managed human resource functions such as hiring, firing, new hire orientation and progressive discipline
- Trained new employees in correct procedures and increasing responsibilities
- Monitored monthly inventory counts and food cost
- Supervised night/weekend crew trainers, ensured they followed the training program, and verified them for advancement

**Crew Trainer, Shift Manager** Aug 2007 - Jul 2009

- Prepared for all shifts by making position sheets and doing pre-shift checklists
- Coached and lead the crew by setting and communicating goals to deliver quality service, cleanliness, and value
- Monitored sales to ensure the restaurant's profitability
- Promoted from Cashier after 6 months of service

# Sample Resumes

# Sample Cover and Thank-You Letters

Ima Jobhunter  
5442 Resume Way  
Hammond, IN 46323

November 20, 2011

Mr. Perry Grinn  
Human Resource Manager  
Luxury Home Builders  
13135 Career Path  
Hammond, IN 46323

Dear Mr. Grinn:

Luxury Home Builders is one of the progressive manufacturing/ construction companies in the nation. Its management training and development program makes it the type of organization I am interested in joining. I am specifically interested in the Manufacturing Engineer position I viewed through the CareerTrax job database at Purdue University Calumet.

I have a Bachelor's degree in Engineering from Purdue University Calumet and one year of manufacturing experience as an intern with Johnson & Johnson. Part of this work included heavy manufacturing operations and value analysis. Additionally, I served as the team leader for my Senior Design Project on Manufacturing Quality Control, also done in conjunction with Johnson & Johnson. I believe that all of these factors make me well-suited for a position with your organization. I am confident that my knowledge and professionalism will exceed your expectations.

I look forward to hearing from you in regard to this position and would like to learn more about Luxury Home Builders. If you would like to meet in person to further discuss my qualifications, I can be reached at (555) 555-1234.

Sincerely,

*Ima Jobhunter*

Ima Jobhunter

Ima Jobhunter  
5442 Resume Way  
Hammond, IN 46323

November 28, 2011

Mr. Perry Grinn  
Human Resources Manager  
Luxury Home Builders  
13135 Career Path  
Hammond, IN 46323

Dear Mr. Grinn:

I wish to take a moment of your time to thank you and your staff for the opportunity to interview yesterday for the Manufacturing Engineer position. I enjoyed talking to you very much and learning more about Luxury Home Builders.

Your organization appears to be growing in a direction that parallels my interest and career goals. The interview with you confirmed my initial positive impressions of Luxury Home Builders, and I want to reiterate my strong interest in working for your organization. From my resume and our discussion, I believe my prior experience with customer service, heavy manufacturing operations and value analysis will enable me to progress steadily through your training program and become a productive member of your team.

Again, thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions or concerns, or need any additional information please feel free to call me at (555) 555-1234.

I hope to hear from you in the near future.

With great enthusiasm,

*Ima Jobhunter*

Ima Jobhunter

# Letters of Recommendation

Candidates for employment, graduate school, scholarships or any activity for which others will evaluate their talents and abilities will need to request letters of recommendation. The content and quality of these letters, as well as the caliber of the people who write them, are critical to the selection process.

## Selecting People to Serve as References

Select individuals whom you feel are knowledgeable of your skills, work ethic, talents and future capacity. The selection of your references is critical, as a reference that is ill-informed could sabotage all the great work you have done in a matter of minutes. Choose people who have known you for a minimum of six months. The longer they have known you the better, but they must have had regular contact with you to observe your growth and development. A reference from someone who may have known you several years ago but you have not spoken to in a year or more is not in a position to critique your skills.

If you must choose between several people, select those who know you the best but who also hold a higher rank in their profession. A department head is a better candidate than a graduate assistant or an instructor. Never choose someone on status alone, continue to choose people based on how well they know you and how much they want to assist you in your job search. *Do not choose people who are not committed to you or who are not very familiar with your background.*

## Try to Meet Face to Face

Never assume someone will want the responsibility to serve as your reference. Make an appointment to discuss your career goals and purpose of the letter of recommendation. Determine if the person would want the responsibility of serving as your reference, which involves not only writing a letter supporting your skills, but also handling any phone inquiries and responding to other questions which may be posed by a selection committee. Persons who serve as a reference have responsibilities that go beyond the words they put on paper. They should feel strongly about your success and desire to do whatever they can to assist you in reaching your goals. You have come too far to let someone jeopardize your future.

A personal meeting is always best because you can observe your potential reference's body language to see how interested he or she is in assisting you. A slow response to a question or a neutral facial expression may be this person's way of trying to show you that he/she does feel comfortable serving as your reference. Trust your instincts. If you don't feel that you want to pursue this person as a reference you are not required to inform them of your decision. At any rate, always thank the person and end the meeting on a positive note.

## Help Them Help You

You must assist your reference-givers so they can do the best job possible. Provide them with a copy of your current resume, transcript, job descriptions for the type of employment you desire or other detailed information related to the purpose of the letter. Provide a one-page summary of any achievements or skills exhibited with the person who

will be writing the letter. They may not remember everything you did under their supervision or time spent with you. Finally, provide them with a statement of future goals outlining what you want to accomplish in the next few years.

An employer will interview you and then contact your references to determine consistency in your answers. You should not inflate what you are able to do or what you may have completed in work or school assignments. A reference is looked upon as someone who can confirm your skill and ability level. Any inconsistencies between what you said in your interview and a reference's response could eliminate you from further consideration. The key is to keep your references informed of what you are going to be discussing with employers so there is a clear understanding of what is valued by the employer.

## What's the Magic Number?

Each situation will dictate the appropriate number of references that will be required. The average would be three to five letters of recommendation. Generally, references are people whom you have known professionally; they should not be family or friends. When selecting people as references, choose people who know you well and have the most to say pertaining to the purpose of the letter. One person may be very appropriate for a reference for employment, while another would be best for use in admission to graduate or professional school or a scholarship application.

Encourage your reference to use strong, descriptive words that provide the evidence of your interpersonal skills, initiative, leadership, flexibility, conflict resolution, decision-making, judgment, oral and written communication skills and grasp of your field of study. Education majors are encouraged to request a letter from the cooperating teacher, supervising teacher, professor(s) in your major, and a current or former employer.

## Maintain Professional Courtesy

Give your reference writers ample time to complete their letters and provide a self-addressed stamped envelope. Make it as easy for them as possible so they don't have to spend valuable time searching for the proper return address and a stamp. Follow up with your letter writers and let them know the status of your plans and search. They will want to know how you are doing and whether there is anything else they may do to increase your candidacy. You never know when you will need their assistance again, and it is just good manners to keep those who care about you informed of your progress. Finally, many times when two or more candidates are considered equally qualified, a strong letter of reference can play an important role in determining who is selected for the position.

Maintaining a good list of references is part of any professional's success. Continue to nurture valuable relationships with people who will want to do whatever they can to aid in your success. Your personal success is based on surrounding yourself with positive people who all believe in you. No one makes it alone; we all need a little help from our friends.

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

# Professional Work Experiences: Invest in Your Future Today

In today's job market experience is the key to career success and is the competitive edge needed to succeed once you graduate. At Purdue University Calumet the Professional Work Experience Program for non-credit helps create educational and training partnerships that provide a bridge between theoretical classroom learning and real-world experiential learning. According to learning theory, meaningful learning involves moving from a practical experience through a process of reflection and contemplation, to the development of a theoretical understanding of that experience, to actively testing our understanding in real-life situations. School is great for developing abstract or theoretical understanding and facilitating reflection and contemplation, but the testing of those theories can best be done in internships and other forms of experiential learning. Structured learning opportunities for credit can help the student begin to understand what they are actually going to do after they graduate.

## Non-Credit Professional Work Experience Comes in Many Forms

### Internships

Internships are work or service learning experiences combined with reflective academic study. They provide students with practical, professional work experience in a field related to their major. Most internships are exploratory in nature, allowing the student to test theories, develop skills, receive feedback and counsel, and begin to create a professional network. Internships may be job- or project-based, paid or unpaid, for credit or just for experience, full- or part-time. They are generally designed on a semester-by-semester basis.

### Cooperative Education (Co-op)

A co-op is a formal, structured plan of education in which students alternate periods of full-time classroom study with periods of paid, supervised, and progressively responsible training related to their academic major. A co-op helps students integrate theory and practice, confirm career choices, investigate potential job opportunities, and become better prepared for employment. It allows students to combine work experience and schooling to earn money and help finance their education. A co-op tends to be more formal and structured than an internship. Most co-op programs involve academic credit.

### Volunteer Work, Service Learning, and Field Experience

Volunteerism, service learning, and field experience programs provide students the opportunity for professional work experience, while contributing recently acquired knowledge to the community. These learning opportunities are often found in the human services or nonprofit sector and provide opportunities for career exploration and career networking. They are generally unpaid or involve small stipends, run parallel to the student's regular class schedule, and may offer academic credit.

### Externship and Shadow Programs

Externships and shadow programs are professional learning experiences that allow students to spend between a day and a few weeks observing a professional on the job. These real-world observations provide students the opportunity to gain an overview of various career fields, to experience actual working environments, and to begin career networking.

## Do These Types of Professional Work Experiences Help Me Meet My Experiential Learning Requirement?

Experiential learning is a graduation requirement for Purdue University Calumet students. Students will enroll in two experiential learning courses while completing their degree. While the majority of Purdue University Calumet students hold jobs and many will continue to pursue "traditional" internships as well, experiential learning courses must meet a set of measurable guidelines to fulfill the graduation requirement.

## Why Invest in Experiential Learning for Credit?

- *Designing computer models for a leading electrical company's website and marketing materials.*
- *Developing a business plan for a horse farm.*
- *Providing nursing care for women at a health clinic.*

At Purdue University Calumet, we call this Experiential Learning. To students, it means gaining real-world experience in the disciplines that they're considering for their careers.

Faculty members mentor students throughout the entire Experiential Learning process, helping them to apply the theories and knowledge they learn in the classroom through cooperative education, cultural immersion, design projects, internship, practicum, service learning and undergraduate research courses. Students gain confidence and build relevant business skills that add value to their already powerful Purdue degree.

The best part: Because Experiential Learning is built into our curriculum, all of our students will have this exceptional opportunity. Purdue University Calumet is one of a select few institutions in the country to adopt this approach as a graduation requirement that complies with National Society for Experiential Education standards.

## How Do I Begin for Non-Credit Experiences?

- Contact Career Services or your departmental advisor.
- Develop your resume and have it reviewed.
- Write a cover letter and have it reviewed.
- Register with the Office of Career Services and CareerTrax.
- Apply for opportunities of interest.
- Check with your academic advisor regarding credit for experience.

## How Do I Begin For-Credit Experiences?

- Contact your departmental advisor.
- Register for the specific credit course in-line with your graduation requirements.
- Contact Experiential Learning at (219) 989-8350 or [exl@purduecal.edu](mailto:exl@purduecal.edu). Visit EXL at [www.purduecal.edu/exl](http://www.purduecal.edu/exl).

## Who Can I Contact?

For Non-Credit—Career Services: SUL 349, Main Number: (219) 989-2600

For Credit—Departmental Advisor.

## Make the Most of Your Investment

As a participant in the Professional Learning Program at Purdue University Calumet, you are expected to conduct yourself professionally. This means arriving at work on time and when scheduled, dressing according to company policy, etc. You are also expected to establish an agreement with your supervisor, outlining the details of your work assignment, as well as honor those agreed upon rules. It is recommended that you maintain an ongoing evaluation of your experience and keep in contact with the faculty and staff at Purdue University Calumet throughout your employment.

# Job Search Strategies: Pros and Cons

STRATEGY	TOOLS	PROS	CONS	HELPFUL HINTS
<b>WANT ADS</b> Scan want ads. Mail resume with cover letter tailored to specific job qualifications.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Newspapers</li> <li>Journals</li> <li>Newsletters</li> <li>Trade magazines</li> <li>Cover letters</li> <li>Resumes</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Use as a meter on the job market in a certain career field.</li> <li>Try to get your materials in as early as possible.</li> </ul>
<b>EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES</b> Respond to employment agency ads in newspapers; check phone book for names of agencies to contact.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resumes</li> <li>Business attire</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Identify agencies that specialize in your field.</li> <li>Make frequent contact with your counselor to obtain better service.</li> </ul>
<b>INTERNET</b> Search online job banks and company websites. Submit resume online/post on job boards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to the Web</li> <li>Electronic resume</li> </ul>	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. Pay attention to multiple listings—one position posted on a few sites—to avoid applying multiple times.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the Web frequently as information and sites change quickly.</li> <li>May need to conduct your search at off-peak times (early morning or late at night).</li> </ul>
<b>TARGETED MAILING</b> 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"> <li>List of well-researched companies</li> <li>Tailored cover letters</li> <li>Resumes</li> </ul>	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"> <li>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.</li> </ul>
<b>IN-PERSON VISIT</b> Visit many companies. Ask to see person in specific department. Submit resume and application, if possible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Business attire</li> <li>Company address list</li> <li>Resumes</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Research the companies prior to your visit. Ask for a specific person or ask about a specific type of job.</li> </ul>
<b>NETWORKING</b> 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"> <li>List of contacts</li> <li>Resumes</li> <li>Business attire</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Follow through on all leads.</li> <li>Keep broadening your network of contacts.</li> </ul>
<b>ON-CAMPUS RECRUITING</b> Follow specific procedures to secure on-campus interviews.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Scheduling interviews</li> <li>Employer literature</li> <li>Resumes</li> <li>Business attire</li> </ul>	One of the primary ways in which companies recruit for technical and business positions.	May be less effective for non-technical/nonbusiness candidates.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the interview schedule as a way to identify possible employers, even if you don't get to interview on campus with those employers.</li> </ul>
<b>RESUME REFERRAL</b> 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"> <li>Registration form supplied by service</li> </ul>	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"> <li>Use only in conjunction with other job search strategies.</li> </ul>

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

## Job Search Links

As you're conducting your job search and preparing to enter the workforce, check out these useful websites:

**LinkedIn** – [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)

- A professional networking tool

**Indeed** – [www.indeed.com](http://www.indeed.com)

- A search engine for jobs

**Simply Hired** – [www.simplyhired.com](http://www.simplyhired.com)

- A job search engine

**USA Jobs** – [www.usajobs.com](http://www.usajobs.com)

- A Federal job search engine

**CareerTrax** – [www.pucjobs.com](http://www.pucjobs.com)

- PUC's online job database for on- and off-campus employment and internships

**Purdue Calumet Career Services iPhone App**—download through iTunes

- Access the latest career information, recruiting trends, upcoming events, and job postings

**CCO Express** – Click “CCO” under **Interactive Resources** on the PUC Career Services website.

- Purdue West Lafayette's online job database for employment and internships

*\*Don't miss our catalog of “Job Search Resources under **Interactive Resources** on our website.*

# Network Your Way to a Job

**M**any people use the classified ads as their sole job search technique. Unfortunately, statistics show that only 10% to 20% of jobs are ever published—which means that 80% to 90% of jobs remain hidden in the job market. For this reason, networking remains the number one job search strategy.

## Networking Defined

A network is an interconnected group of supporters who serve as resources for your job search and ultimately for your career. Some great network contacts might include people you meet at business and social meetings who provide you with career information and advice. Students often hesitate to network because they feel awkward asking for help, but it should be an integral part of any job search. Though you might feel nervous when approaching a potential contact, networking is a skill that develops with practice, so don't give up. Most people love to talk about themselves and their jobs and are willing to give realistic—and free—advice.

## Eight Keys to Networking

- 1. Be Prepared** First, define what information you need and what you are trying to accomplish by networking. Remember, your purpose in networking is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Some of the many benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding suitable mentors, increasing your chances of promotion and perhaps finding your next job.  
Second, know yourself—your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of areas in which you are interested. Your networking meeting should include the following elements: introduction, self-overview, Q&A, obtaining referrals and closing.
- 2. Be Targeted** Identify your network. For some, “I don't have a network. I don't know anyone,” may be your first reaction. You can start by listing everyone you know who are potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty, neighbors, classmates, alumni, bosses, co-workers and community associates. Attend meetings of organizations in your field of interest and get involved. You never know where you are going to meet someone who could lead you to your next job.
- 3. Be Professional** Ask your networking prospects for advice—not for a job. Your networking meetings should be a source of career information, advice and contacts. Start off the encounter with a firm handshake, eye contact

## Questions to Ask During Networking Meetings

- What do you like most (least) about your work?
- Can you describe a typical workday or week?
- What type of education and experience do you need to remain successful in this field?
- What are the future career opportunities in this field?
- What are the challenges in balancing work and personal life?
- Why do people enter/leave this field or company?
- Which companies have the best track record for promoting minorities?
- What advice would you give to someone trying to break into this field?
- With whom would you recommend I speak? When I call, may I use your name?

and a warm smile. Focus on asking for one thing at a time. Your contacts expect you to represent yourself with your best foot forward.

- 4. Be Patient** Heena Noorani, research analyst with New York-based Thomson Financial, recommends avoiding the feeling of discouragement if networking does not provide immediate results or instant answers. She advises, “Be prepared for a slow down after you get started. Stay politely persistent with your leads and build momentum. Networking is like gardening: You do not plant the seed, then quickly harvest. Networking requires cultivation that takes time and effort for the process to pay off.”
- 5. Be Focused on Quality—Not Quantity** In a large group setting, circulate and meet people, but don't try to talk to everyone. It's better to have a few meaningful conversations than 50 hasty introductions. Don't cling to people you already know; you're unlikely to build new contacts that way. If you are at a reception, be sure to wear a nametag and collect or exchange business cards so you can later contact the people you meet.
- 6. Be Referral-Centered** The person you are networking with may not have a job opening, but he or she may know someone who is hiring. The key is to exchange information and then expand your network by obtaining additional referrals each time you meet someone new. Be sure to mention the person who referred you.
- 7. Be Proactive** Stay organized and track your networking meetings. Keep a list of your contacts and update it frequently with the names of any leads given to you. Send a thank-you note or email if appropriate. Ask if you can follow-up the conversation with a phone call, or even better, with a more in-depth meeting in the near future.
- 8. Be Dedicated to Networking** Most importantly, networking should be ongoing. You will want to stay in touch with contacts over the long haul—not just when you need something. Make networking part of your long-term career plan.

## Do's & Don'ts of Networking

- Do keep one hand free from a briefcase or purse so you can shake hands when necessary.
- Do bring copies of your resume.
- Don't tell them your life story; you are dealing with busy people, so get right to the point.
- Don't be shy or afraid to ask for what you need.
- Don't pass up opportunities to network.

## Using LinkedIn

Looking to expand your network when searching for a job? Join LinkedIn, an online professional networking tool. Similar to social networking sites, LinkedIn allows you to connect with colleagues and classmates to share ideas and potential career opportunities. You can also enhance your professional identity by importing your resume and joining groups related to your field. The more you build your profile, the better those within your network can connect you with jobs that fit your background and skills. To get started, visit [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).

*Adapted from an article written by Thomas J. Denham, managing partner and career counselor for Careers In Transition LLC.*

# Social Networking Websites

Career professionals—and parents—are warning young job seekers that using social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, 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. However, more job seekers 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 constructive 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.

Research on professional sites like LinkedIn can also be used to prepare for site visits. By using the alumni connections available through LinkedIn, 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 LinkedIn 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. 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.

## 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 Twitter 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-seekers 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 online 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, 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-seekers 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.

You would never include religious and political affiliations as well as sexual orientation or transgender identity (GLBT) on your resume, so do 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-seeker, 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.

## Network With Us!



PUCCareerSvcs



PUC Career Services

## 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 Twitter accounts 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.

*Adapted from an article written by Harriet L. Schwartz.*

# 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 website 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 Center

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.*

# Turning Your Internship Into a Full-Time Position

One of the best benefits of an internship or cooperative education experience is that it can serve as your passport to future employment opportunities. Getting your foot in the door by landing the internship or co-op is only half of the challenge in turning your career dreams into a reality. The more vital half is to build a reputation during this career experience that will culminate in receiving a full-time job offer.

A growing number of employers are using internships as a way to gain a first in-depth look at prospective employees. In this respect, both you and your employer have a common goal—namely, to determine if there is a good fit between you.

Here are ten tips to becoming a savvy intern and making powerful career moves:

## 1. Exhibit a Can-Do Attitude

Pass the attitude test and you will be well on your way to success. Attitude speaks loud and clear and makes a lasting impression, so make sure that yours is one of your greatest assets. Take on any task assigned—no matter how small—with enthusiasm. Take the initiative to acquire new skills. Accept criticism graciously and maintain a sense of humor.

## 2. Learn the Unwritten Rules

Get to know your co-workers early in your internship. They will help you figure out quickly the culture in which you will be working. Being the “new kid” is like being a freshman all over again. You will need to adapt, observe, learn and process a large volume of information. Watch closely how things get done. Ask questions and pay attention to how people interact with each other.

## 3. Take Your Assignments Seriously

Build a reputation for being dependable. Be diligent and accurate in your work. You may encounter a great deal of ambiguity in the work environment, so seek direction when in doubt and do whatever it takes to get the job done. As an intern, you will generally start out by performing small tasks, asking a lot of questions and learning the systems. Your internship supervisor knows that there will be an initial learning curve and will make allowances for mistakes. Learn from your errors and move on to your next task. From there, your responsibilities and the expectations of others are likely to grow.

## 4. Meet Deadlines

Always assume the responsibility to ask when an assignment is due. This will help you to understand your supervisor's priorities and to manage your time accordingly. Alert your boss in advance if you will be unable to meet expectations. This will show respect and professional maturity.

## 5. Set Realistic Goals and Expectations

Invest actively in the most critical element of your internship—that is, the learning agenda which you set up with your supervisor at the beginning of the

assignment. Your learning agenda should target specific skills and competencies that you wish to acquire and demonstrate. After all, the learning agenda is what distinguishes a short-term job from an internship. It is up to you to establish a correlation between your learning goals and the daily work you are asked to perform. Maintain a journal of your activities and accomplishments in order to monitor your progress. Seek regular reviews from your supervisor to assess your performance and reinforce the fact that you mean business.

## 6. Communicate Respectfully

Assume that everyone else knows more than you do. However, don't be afraid to present useful ideas that may save time or money or solve problems. Make sure, however, that your style does not come across as cocky. Employers value assertiveness but not aggressiveness. Find out the proper way to address individuals, including customers. Maintain a pleasant and respectful demeanor with every person, regardless of his or her rank.

## 7. Be Flexible

Accept a wide variety of tasks, even those that may not relate directly to your assignments or those that may seem like grunt work. Your willingness to go the extra mile, especially during “crunch time,” will help you carve the way to assuming greater responsibilities.

## 8. Be a Team Player

Learn how your assignment fits into the grand scheme of things and keep a keen eye on getting the job done. In today's work environment, success is often defined along the lines of your ability to get along with and interact with others. You're a winner only if your team wins.

## 9. Get a Mentor

Identify at least one individual to serve as your mentor or professional guardian. It should be someone who is willing to take a personal interest in your career development and success. Once you know your way around, begin to network wisely and get “plugged in” by associating with seasoned employees who may share their knowledge, perspectives and insights. Get noticed, because many more people will have a role in determining your future than you might at first realize.

## 10. Have Fun!

Last but not least, enjoy learning, sharpening your skills and developing professionally and personally. Participate in work-related social functions and become an active member in your work community.

Make your internship or co-op experience work for you. It can be the first link in the chain of your career.

*Written by Lina Melkonian, Director of Development at San Jose State University, College of Engineering.*

# Shining a Light on Job Shadowing

**S**cope out your dream job or workplace in advance... take a day and follow ("shadow") a professional who's already at work doing what you want to do. During the shadow day you can have in-depth conversations, get feedback on your resume, and obtain advice about getting your foot in the door. Students often feel more motivated—and less intimidated—starting a job search after job shadowing. The outcome? You'll be a savvy job applicant with a better chance of taking it to the next level.

## Get a Close-Up Look

Before choosing someone to shadow, ask yourself: Who's employed at my top-pick organization? Who's doing work that I want to "road test"? Who's new in the field and still charged up? Who's seasoned, with experience that's wide or deep? Who has contacts they'd be willing to share?

Plan on doing three to five shadows to experience different situations, and to increase your network of contacts. Casting a wide net is an especially good idea if you're graduating with a degree in liberal arts and are unsure about a job objective. Arrange shadows that hover around your strongest interest, along with a wild card. For example, an English major who likes to write could shadow at an advertising agency, a corporate PR department, a publishing house—and at a recycling non-profit. You never know what you'll learn or who you'll meet.

Don't automatically assume that a certain field will be off-limits for shadowing, either. Most of the time some arrangement can be made. "We've set up job shadows for students in ethnomusicology, to medicine, to accounting, to Wall Street, to physical therapy, to nursing, and to museum studies," says Shannon Forbes, former Director of Career Services at New York's Hartwick College. "One year we had a student interested in archeology, and we were able to connect her to a Boston city archeologist. She shadowed at the Smithsonian and also at the Museum of Natural History."

## Fire Up Your Rolodex

It's possible to arrange a shadow visit with almost anyone—if you're creative and persistent. "Talk to people at community organizations, or alumni, or church members, or even professors," says Forbes. "In some fields, nursing for instance, there's a lot of red tape, so start with your department or college career office so that they can handle it. They may have an agreement in place already."

Another college resource that can help you make a connection is the alumni relations office. They often compile a list of alums who've offered to act as career information sources, or even mentors. Don't discount alumni who are not in your field. They might work for a company you've targeted, or may have an "in" to someone there.

## Speed Bumps, Detours and U-Turns

It feels great when shadowing seems to confirm that you're on the right track. But that isn't always the case. Even a shadow experience that goes smoothly doesn't guarantee that there won't be potholes down the road. After all, it's only a short visit. "A job shadow doesn't go deep enough to confirm an interest—it's best used to eliminate things" says Kelly Perdew, winner of "The Apprentice 2" TV show and an executive vice president with the Trump Organization. "I thought I wanted to be an attorney with a strong business

background, so I doubled up on a JD and MBA degree. I went around and spent an entire day (each) with a number of law firms. I spent a lot of time on informational interviewing, shadowing, a clerkship—and then decided on a different path. Still, it was an incredibly valuable experience. Even if you've gone down the wrong path, make the most of the experience and contacts made."

## Ready. Set. Go!

Once you've done your homework, it's time to contact the individual that you'd like to shadow, or have a go-between make the approach on your behalf. (It's much harder to say no to a friend than a faceless stranger who calls, emails, or writes with a request.) Another key is to make sure the shadow-ee knows that you're not asking for a job—only an opportunity to spend some time together at work.

A phone call or exchange of emails beforehand is a good way to set some ground rules for the shadow visit. For example, some shadow-ees are so harried that you'll have to ask questions on the fly, while others may prefer that you save them up for a de-briefing period. Of course, some of how the day shapes up will depend on the personality of the person you shadow. Extroverts usually enjoy spontaneous give and take exchanges, while introverts may not want to talk much at all.

## Make the Most of the Visit

According to Dorothy Kerr, Executive Manager of Employer Services at Rutgers University Career Services in New Brunswick, N.J., some students feel ill at ease during shadowing visits. Rutgers students may attend etiquette classes through Career Services to help them make a good impression. Some of the skills students practice in the sessions include shaking hands, making good eye contact, asking questions, and dining at business functions. "Often we'll hear, 'We never sat down to dinner at the table in my family,' so dining etiquette is new to them," says Kerr.

Appropriate attire is another stumbling block. The rules about workplace dress and behavior have relaxed as the whole culture has become more casual. "To make the best impression, dress as if you're going to a job interview," suggests Kerr. "Your personal appearance should be neat, your hair combed, and your clothes orderly." Not sure if you should wear a suit or khakis? Ask your shadowee for a recommendation.

Your shadow visit will be more interesting if you participate rather than just observe. If you can, pitch in somehow. And don't give yourself a pass on unpleasant tasks or working conditions, either. If it's typical in the department to work extended hours, don't leave at precisely 5:00 p.m. Emphasize the personal aspect, too. Have coffee, lunch, or after-work drinks with your shadowee and co-workers. People often let their guard down in a social situation, so you'll get a truer picture of the organizational dynamics.

Afterward, follow-up with a handwritten thank-you note. Then keep in touch periodically with updates on your progress. Who knows, your job shadow experience could very well lead to a mentorship relationship, a job referral, or even an outright employment offer.

*Written by Jebra Turner, a freelance writer living in Portland, Ore.*

# Federal Jobs: Working for Uncle Sam

**S**o 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 2009 they earned an average salary of \$72,572. As the largest employer in the U.S., the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. 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 worldwide.

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 [usajobs.gov/ei6.asp](http://usajobs.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 website ([opm.gov](http://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 USAJOBS site ([usajobs.gov](http://usajobs.gov)), which has its own set of tools and resources that will be familiar to any standard job site user. 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 website 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 you are interested in the environment, you should definitely visit the EPA's website. But you should also make sure to visit the websites of other agencies that you don't associate with your major. It's not unusual for a 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."

Federal agencies require specific information on your resume before it can be processed. The OPM created the USAJOBS Resume Builder in an effort to help applicants create a resume which can be used for most government agencies—go to [my.usajobs.gov](http://my.usajobs.gov) to get started. Agencies may also request that you submit additional forms for application (many of which are available on USAJOBS). Strictly following the "How to Apply" instructions will ensure that your application has all the information necessary.

*Written by Chris Enstrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.*

# Is Graduate School Right for You?

**A**t 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?

- a. Identify your true strengths, interests and values to help you discover what is right for YOU—not your friends or parents.
- b. Keep your grades up and sign up (and prepare) to take the required standardized tests.
- c. 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.
- d. 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.
- e. Investigate creative ways to finance your education—by planning ahead you may reduce your debt.
- f. Research graduate schools to help you find a good match.
- g. Investigate the admissions process and the current student body profile of your targeted schools to evaluate your probability for admission.
- h. Have faith and APPLY! Remember, you can't get in unless you apply.

*Written by Roslyn J. Bradford.*

# Prepping for Graduate School

## Personal Statements

When applying to graduate school, you will most likely be asked to write a personal statement, or application essay. The purpose of this essay is twofold: one, to demonstrate your writing competency; and two, to make yourself stand out as a program candidate. Admissions committees review hundreds of qualified applicants with impressive accomplishments, but **a well-written personal statement can mark you as a distinct individual who will contribute uniquely to your program of interest.** Consider the following:

- If the application provides specific questions, answer each one fully. Ignoring even one question demonstrates an inability to follow directions.
- If the essay is more general, develop a theme as to why you should be accepted into the school or program. You can start by brainstorming your background, experiences, and interests and finding common ground that displays why you're a unique and qualified candidate.
- Don't use the same answers for every school to which you're applying, even if they have similar essay guidelines. Make it clear in your writing that you've considered the way each school or program differs from the others.
- Consider your audience. Some of the people reading your essay might not be familiar with your field, so avoid overusing technical jargon. Also avoid humor that someone might misunderstand or consider inappropriate.
- Start with an introduction that draws the reader in, but steer clear of gimmicks, clichés, and generalizations.
- Make use of first-person pronouns like "I," "me," and "my." Balance your writing by being personal but not overly casual, serious but not negative, and confident but not arrogant.
- Provide examples from your background and experience that demonstrate why the claims of your essay are true; however, don't go as far back as high school or discuss sensitive topics, like religion or politics.
- When indicating your research interests, express yourself in broad terms related to the field to which you are applying. There is no need to state an exact topic that you will eventually pursue for your thesis or dissertation.
- Mention specific faculty with whom you'd like to work, if known, so the admissions committee can determine if you'll be a good fit. It's best to list more than one faculty member, in case your first choice is unavailable.
- If you have a reasonable explanation for a low GPA or GRE score, this is your opportunity to present it. Be honest and avoid self-pity; having an active social life is not a reasonable excuse, but a sudden death in the family is.
- If no limit is listed, keep your essay between 500-1000 words long.
- Review your writing for typos, grammatical errors, and any other mistakes. Have someone else review it, as well, such as a Career Services professional.

Remember, everything in your essay should relate back to why you are a uniquely-qualified candidate for your program of interest. Use your experiences, both in and out of school, to present yourself as someone who will be an asset to the program in ways no one else can!

## Curriculum Vitae

Another possible application requirement for graduate school is the curriculum vitae, or CV. The CV is used by academic and industry professionals. It differs from a resume in that it focuses on education and research, rather than work history, and often includes more personal information. While a resume is usually one or two pages, a CV might be four or more. Similarities include the use of brief, descriptive statements and consistency in phrase and sentence structure (as with job descriptions in a resume). Though there is no standard format across all fields, here are some general guidelines for writing your CV:

- First, as with a resume, list your contact information, including your name, the words "Curriculum Vitae," and your address, telephone number, and e-mail.
- Use appropriate headings to separate each section, just as you would for your resume. Start by stating your professional or research objective; the remainder of your sections should be listed in order of importance. If you do not have much professional experience yet, list your education next in reverse chronological order.
- With your education, be sure to include any dissertation or thesis titles along with previous degrees. Separately list awards and honors, such as scholarships, fellowships, and notable academic standings.
- Other section headings, if applicable and related to your field, may include:
  - Thesis or Dissertation Abstract
  - Research Experience or Interests
  - Teaching or Work Experience (includes tutoring)
  - Consulting or Pro Bono Work
  - Assistantships
  - Licenses or Certifications
  - Technical or Computer Skills
  - Language Proficiencies
  - Publications or Presentations
  - Exhibitions
  - Design or Artistic Work (include link to online portfolio)
  - Professional Memberships
  - Clinics, Workshops, or Seminars (attended)
  - Academic or Extracurricular Activities
  - Community Outreach (volunteering)
  - Travel (related to your field; not leisure trips)
  - Personal Background
- If you have references or letters of recommendation, mention this at the end of your CV by stating, "References Available Upon Request."

One of the best ways to get an idea of what your curriculum vitae should look like is to review examples from within your field, such as those of professors, classmates, and colleagues. Many resume websites also include CV examples. **Just remember:** Your CV is a personal document that should be adapted to fit the situation for which you are creating it and should not be copied directly from the structure of another CV. It should clearly and concisely present your own experiences and accomplishments in a way that is both readable and thorough in order to make the best impression possible when applying for graduate school or an academic job.

*Written by Megan Varney, Office of Career Services, Purdue University Calumet.*

# Ten Rules of Interviewing

**B**efore stepping into an interview, be sure to practice, practice, practice. A job-seeker going to a job interview without preparing is like an actor performing on opening night without rehearsing.

To help with the interview process, keep the following ten rules in mind:

- 1 Keep your answers brief and concise.**  
Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.
- 2 Include concrete, quantifiable data.**  
Interviewees tend to talk in generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.
- 3 Repeat your key strengths three times.**  
It's essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the company's or department's goals and how they might benefit the potential employer. If you repeat your strengths then they will be remembered and—if supported with quantifiable accomplishments—they will more likely be believed.

**4 Prepare five or more success stories.**  
In preparing for interviews, make a list of your skills and key assets. Then reflect on past jobs and pick out one or two instances when you used those skills successfully.

**5 Put yourself on their team.**  
Ally yourself with the prospective employer by using the employer's name and products or services. For example, "As a member of \_\_\_\_\_, I would carefully analyze the \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_." Show that you are thinking like a member of the team and will fit in with the existing environment. Be careful though not to say anything that would offend or be taken negatively. Your research will help you in this area.

**6 Image is often as important as content.**  
What you look like and how you say something are just as important as what you say. Studies have shown that 65 percent of the conveyed message is nonverbal; gestures, physical appearance and attire are highly influential during job interviews.

**7 Ask questions.**  
The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation. Just as you plan how you would answer an interviewer's questions, write out specific questions you want to ask. Then look for opportunities to ask them during the interview. Don't ask about benefits or salary. The interview process is a two-way street whereby you and the interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match.

**8 Maintain a conversational flow.**  
By consciously maintaining a conversational flow—a dialogue instead of a monologue—you will be perceived more positively. Use feedback questions at the end of your answers and use body language and voice intonation to create a conversational interchange between you and the interviewer.

**9 Research the company, product lines and competitors.**  
Research will provide information to help you decide whether you're interested in the company and important data to refer to during the interview.

**10 Keep an interview journal.**  
As soon as possible, write a brief summary of what happened. Note any follow-up action you should take and put it in your calendar. Review your presentation. Keep a journal of your attitude and the way you answered the questions. Did you ask questions to get the information you needed? What might you do differently next time? Prepare and send a brief thank-you letter. Restate your skills and stress what you can do for the company.

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

**Don't wait until it's gone.**



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# Professional Attire

## Women—Business Professional

### Suit

- Avoid trendy styles
- Jacket sleeve length should fall ½ inch below waist
- Neutral colors: black, grey, brown, navy

### Pants

- Pants are good for site visits
- Capris and cropped pants are not appropriate

### Skirt

- Skirts should be knee length and not too tight
- Avoid high slits

### Shirt

- Blouse or camisole
- Preferred colors are white or light colors
- Cleavage should not be showing

### Shoes

- Avoid open-toed shoes or sandals
- Wear basic pumps with a low heel, 1-2 inches high
- Wear neutral hosiery or trouser socks



## Women—Business Casual

### Jacket

- You may wear a blazer or suit jacket with pants or skirt
- Trendier or casual suits are also appropriate

### Pants

- Dress pants or khakis are acceptable
- Avoid capris

### Skirt

- Should be knee length and not too tight
- Avoid high slits

### Shirt

- Blouse
- Sweaters including knit sweater sets and cardigans

### Shoes

- Avoid open-toed shoes or sandals
- Heels or flats are acceptable

## Men—Business Professional

### Suit

- Suit should be solid or have subtle pinstripes
- Jacket should be buttoned while standing and unbuttoned while seated
- Avoid double-breasted jackets
- Neutral colors: black, grey, navy, brown

### Pants

- Jacket and pants must match
- The pant leg should touch the front of the shoe and fall above the heel in the back

### Tie

- Conservative colors are most appropriate
- Length: tie should reach your belt

### Shirt

- White or muted shirt with collar
- long sleeves
- The sleeve of shirt should extend ½ inch beyond the suit jacket sleeve

### Shoes

- Polished, leather shoes
- Wear dark socks that match shoes and are calf length

## Men—Business Casual

### Jacket

- A sports coat without a tie

### Pants

- Khakis
- Solid color slacks

### Tie

- Tie may be worn with long sleeve collared shirt
- Conservative colors are most appropriate



### Shirt

- Shirt with collar
- Sweater
- Polo shirt (this is more casual, appropriate for outdoor or hot temperatures)

### Shoes

- Oxfords or loafers
- Wear dark socks that match shoes and are calf length

## Accessories—Women

### Jewelry

- Should be simple—avoid big, dangly earrings
- Wear only one pair of earrings
- Maximum of one ring per hand

### Handbags

- You may use a small and simple purse or professional bag
- No backpacks or large purses

## Accessories—Men

- Be conservative with watches and other jewelry
- Earrings might not be viewed positively
- Match belt to shoes

### Other Tips

- All clothes should be neatly ironed
- Suits usually have tacking stitches to hold vents in place before purchase; make sure these are removed
- You should also carefully inspect for dangling threads, lint, and missing buttons
- Tattoos and piercings (other than ears) should be covered
- Bring a portfolio with copies of your resume, transcript, a notepad, pen, and your list of questions for the employer

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# Behavioral Interviews: Using the STAR Method

*You've researched jobs in your field and perfected your resume.*

*Now what?*

**I**t's time to start preparing for the interview! There are plenty of ways to practice for a basic interview, including reviewing the sample interview questions in this guide or conducting a virtual mock interview using InterviewStream (available in the Office of Career Services, SUL 349).

However, many employers are using a specific type of interview: the **behavioral interview**.

A behavioral interview is designed to draw out your past experience through personal examples. For instance, if the position for which you're applying requires good problem-solving skills, the interviewer might say, "Tell me about a time when you had to develop a plan to accomplish a goal." Instead of spending too long telling a long, drawn-out explanation or being too vague, use the STAR method.

The STAR method is a great way to organize your thoughts and effectively respond to a question posed by an interviewer while being specific and concise. STAR stands for **Situation/Task, Action, and Result**.

**Situation/Task:** First, briefly describe the situation you were in or the task you needed to accomplish. If the situation was a negative one, be sure to keep your tone and language positive. In response to the question above, you might say, "During my internship with Big Company ABC, I was assigned to train several co-workers on a computer program with which I had prior experience."

**Action:** What action did you take to respond to the situation or complete the task? If you worked with a group, focus on your own contributions. Continuing with the above example, you might explain, "First, I went through the program and created an outline of key points that new users should know. Then, I developed a training session that included a PowerPoint demonstration, a user-guide handout with common troubleshooting tips, and role-play scenarios that my co-workers could work through to get hands-on practice with the program. I worked with the group throughout the training to ensure they understood the program and to answer their questions."

**Result:** Finally, indicate what you learned or what the results were of your actions, such as, "Because I took the time to make sure each individual knew how to use the program, they all provided positive feedback about the training session and continue to use the program effectively today, which has increased efficiency at Big Company ABC." Be sure to use situations for which the outcome was positive.

To practice, review the questions below and consider how you might answer each using the STAR method. If you think through different examples you can use and practice framing them in clear, succinct statements, you will be well-prepared for a behavior-based interview.

"Describe..."

... a time when you had to work with a group to finish a task."

... an experience you had dealing with an unhappy customer or coworker."

... an incident when you had to overcome an obstacle to achieve a goal."

... a way in which you have had to do work beyond what was expected of you to successfully accomplish a job.

... how you have convinced someone else to agree with your opinion."

... a time when you made a mistake and how you responded to it."

... an experience you had working with and adapting to an unusual situation or people very different from yourself."

... an event when you had to communicate effectively to complete an assignment."

*\*Note: only use real-life situations that you have personally experienced; never fabricate an example or use someone else's story. If the interviewer asks for more details, you'll be stuck!*

*Written by Megan Varney, Office of Career Services, Purdue University Calumet.*

Situation or Task	Action You Took	Result You Achieved
Describe a specific event; give detail; use a situation from a previous job, volunteer experience or any relevant event	Describe the action you took; keep the focus on you; describe what you did rather than the team; tell them what you actually did, not what you might have done	Describe what happened; explain how the event ended and what you accomplished, learned; where you can, quantify your results

# Sample Interview Questions

## Personal

1. How would you describe yourself?
2. Of which three accomplishments are you most proud? Why?
3. Who are your role models? Why?
4. What makes you angry on the job and how do you handle it?
5. How do you define or evaluate success?
6. What characteristics do you value in people?
7. What three words describe you best?
8. Where do you see your career in five years and what are your goals to reach them?

## Education

1. Why did you select your major?
2. Did you participate in campus activities? If so, what did you learn from the experience?
3. Do you think your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?

## Experience

1. What job related or transferable skills have you developed?
2. Did you work while attending school?
3. Give an example of a situation in which you proposed a solution to an employer. How did you propose it and what was the result?
4. Describe a time when you were part of a team and faced resistance from a co-worker that impacted your productivity. How did you handle the situation and what was the result?
5. Describe an unpopular decision you had to make but made it anyway. What was the result?
6. What was the most difficult decision you have had to make on the job? What was the situation? What made it difficult? What factors or variables did you consider? What was the end result?

7. Describe what you enjoyed the most and the least at your last job? Why?
8. Give an example of a time when you worked under deadline pressure? How did you handle the stress and did the assignment get completed in time?
9. Describe an unhappy customer and the situation. What skills did you use to turn the situation around so that they left happy and wanting to come back?

## Communication

1. Have you had the opportunity to present in front of a group? How large was the group? Do you feel comfortable presenting? What constitutes a favorable and successful presentation?
2. Give an example of a time when you had difficulty communicating your thoughts clearly to another person or group. What were the situation and the message you were trying to convey? What did you do to get your point across more clearly and what was the outcome?

## Details

1. Describe a project at work or in school in which you had to keep track of details while still managing the big picture. What tools did you use to stay on track?

## Drive

1. Describe a situation that motivated you to work hard to meet an objective. What method and skills did you use to meet the goal? Were you successful?

To be sure you are prepared to adequately answer these and other questions, arrange a meeting and a mock interview with a career counselor to be prepared to clearly give relevant answers. Remember "The Best Interviewee Gets the Job, not necessarily the Best Candidate."

# Questions to Ask Employers

1. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
2. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. Are salary adjustments geared to the cost of living or job performance?
4. Does your company encourage further education?
5. How often are performance reviews given?
6. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
7. Do you have plans for expansion?
8. What are your growth projections for next year?
9. Have you cut your staff in the last three years?
10. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
11. Do you offer flextime?
12. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
13. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
14. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
15. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
16. May I talk with the last person who held this position?

17. What is the usual promotional time frame?
18. Does your company offer either single or dual career-track programs?
19. What do you like best about your job/company?
20. Once the probation period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
21. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
22. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
23. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
24. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
25. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
26. Is there a lot of team/project work?
27. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
28. Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
29. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
30. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

# Students With Disabilities: Acing the Interview

**T**he 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.

## 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.

## 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.

*Written by Rosita Smith.*

# Your Bragging Rights: Selling Yourself

**F**or 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.

## 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. But also be prepared to talk about things not listed specifically in the job posting. If you have certain experience or knowledge that you think would make you do the job better, don't hesitate to talk about it.

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.

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. 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

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. Also, stories allow job candidates to show interviewers their skills and knowledge instead of just telling them.

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 of 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. 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.

*Excerpts from an article written by Chris Enstrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind.*

# Planning Your Elevator Pitch

**T**he phone rings. Before you even have time to say hello, a telemarketer is rattling off all the great qualities of the Super Vacuum 2500. Later, you're at the car dealership. You're interested in a standard family sedan, but the salesperson is describing the benefits of a red sports car further down the lot.

Both the telemarketer and car salesperson have a job to do: sell you a product. They know they only have a brief window of time to grab your attention, so they have a pitch planned that details all the highlights of their products. As a job seeker, you also have a job to do: sell yourself. One way to do this is to practice your own pitch, or **elevator pitch** (because you should be able to deliver it in the duration of an elevator ride).

Your personal pitch should be brief—1-2 minutes—and address 5 key points:

1. **A hook.** The very start of your pitch should grab the attention of the person to whom you're delivering it. You might mention a special qualification or a noteworthy experience you've had.
2. **The 4 W's.** Who are you? What do you do? Where can you fit in with the company? Why are you more qualified than someone else?
3. **Your audience.** Would a good car salesperson describe the inner workings of an engine to someone who knows nothing about car mechanics? No! Tailor your pitch to

your audience so that everyone—whether in your field or not—understands what you have to offer.

4. **Some enthusiasm.** Inject energy and appeal into your pitch to show a potential employer or networking connection how valuable you can be in the workplace. Smile and be confident.
5. **A follow-up.** Don't just stand there looking awkward after you deliver your pitch. Ask the individual for an interview, appointment, or business card. If you wouldn't be a good fit with the individual's company, ask if he or she can pass your information along to someone else.

The elevator pitch is the summarized version of a longer answer to the "Tell me about yourself?" question. You should be prepared for both answers and know when each version is most appropriate.

Selling yourself starts with knowledge and preparation. **Practice doesn't hurt, either!** Rehearse your pitch. Practice it on friends, family, neighbors, and the mailman. Know what you want to say before the big moment so that you'll make a positive, lasting first impression.

*Written by Megan Varney, Office of Career Services, Purdue University Calumet.*

# Professional Etiquette

**Y**our 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, 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 a career. Employees have to exhibit a certain level of professionalism and etiquette in their regular work day, and particularly where they come in contact with 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.*

# Dining Out

## I. ARRANGEMENTS

- When making dining arrangements find out:
  - 1) Time—be prompt
  - 2) Location to be picked up
  - 3) Type of restaurant; casual or dressy

## II. ENTERING

- Allow host to make arrangements with the restaurant.
- Follow host's cue on where to sit.
- Allow women to be seated first.

## III. AFTER YOU ARE SEATED

- Unfold large napkin in half, place in lap.
- During meal, place napkin on chair if you leave the table, and on either side of your plate when meal is finished.
- Do not use napkin as a handkerchief.

## IV. ORDERING

- Follow the host's cue for ordering drinks and food. Remember, drinking alcohol hinders decision making. Don't order the most expensive item on the menu. Avoid messy food, ordering instead food that is eaten with a fork.

### Dining Terminology

<i>a la carte</i> -	off the menu and items priced separately
<i>au jus</i> -	in its own juice
<i>aux fines herbes</i> -	with parsley, herbs and butter
<i>bearnaise</i> -	sauce made from butter, egg yolk, and herbs
<i>bordelaise</i> -	sauce made with wine, bone marrow, herbs, and beef stock
<i>brochette</i> -	a skewer, or anything cooked on one
<i>consomme</i> -	enriched, concentrated meat stock

*en croute* -  
*hollandaise* -  
*maison* -  
*maitre d'hotel* -  
*mousse* -

baked in pastry crust  
 sauce made with egg, butter and lemon  
 in style of the restaurant  
 head waiter who greets you at the table  
 whipped dessert made with cream, gelatin and/or egg whites  
 pie  
 prepared in batter and fried  
 soup of the day

*tarte* -  
*tempura* -  
*soup du jour* -

## V. SERVING

- Expect the waiter to serve from the left and remove empty dishes from the right. Do not move empty dishes to the side or hand them to the waiter.
- The utensils are arranged in the order that they will be used—use them from the outside in. The spoon and fork above the dinner plate are for dessert.
- Take your cue from the host to begin eating; otherwise, it is polite to wait until everyone has been served before proceeding. However, in large groups (six or more), the host may suggest that the first served begin eating.

## DO'S AND DON'TS FOR DINING OUT

### DO:

- remember that your actions are being observed.
- use your best manners and choice vocabulary.
- cut only one bite of food at a time.
- break a whole slice of bread at least in half after putting it on the plate.
- pass salt and pepper together.

### DON'T:

- reach—ask for items to be passed.
- talk or drink with your mouth full of food.
- sprinkle salt and pepper all over your food without tasting it first.
- use the salad plate for bread and butter. Use the bread plate on your left.
- request catsup for anything other than a hamburger.

## PLACE SETTING

### DINNERWARE

1. Dinner plate
2. Salad plate—placed on dinner plate if salad is the first course. Placed to the left of the forks if the salad accompanies or follows the main course.
3. Bread and butter plate—above the fork.

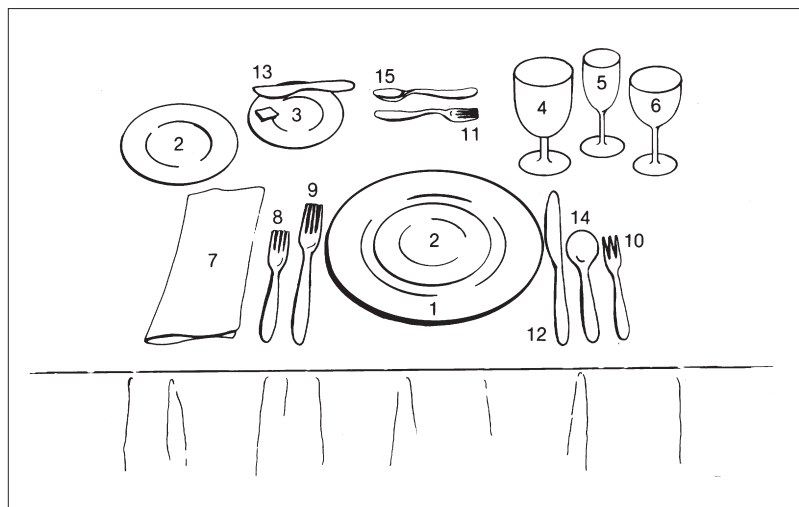
### GLASSWARE

4. Water goblet
5. White wine glass
6. Red wine glass

### NAPKIN

7. Napkin—left or beneath the fork(s).

Source: *Corporate Protocol*, by Valarie Grant-Sokolosky.



### SILVERWARE

8. Salad fork—to the left of the dinner fork when the salad is served first or with the rest of the main course.
9. Dinner fork—left of the dinner plate.
10. Seafood fork—right of the spoon (or served with the seafood cocktail).
11. Dessert fork—above the dinner plate with the prongs to the right.
12. Knife—right of the dinner plate.
13. Butter spread—rests on the bread and butter plate horizontally, vertically or diagonally.
14. Soup spoon—right of the dinner knife.
15. Dessert spoon—above the dessert fork.

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# Evaluating an Offer of Employment

**C**ongratulations! You've successfully managed the interview process and have been offered a job.

Perhaps you've even received offers from more than one employer. Whether it's one offer or more, your euphoria is sometimes quickly replaced by anxiety about the decisions which lie ahead. You may be wondering, "Is this the 'right' job for me?" or "Am I going to be happy in this job, or should I just take it because I need a job, period?" Careful evaluation of your job offer and some serious thought as to how well the position and organization meet your needs can enable you to make the best choice for yourself. One of our staff members can help you sort out your options.

In evaluating your job offer, there are three critical questions you should address:

- 1. How closely does the offer match your career goal?**  
Think back to when you started your job search. What was important to you? What factors regarding a job, organization and work environment were on your "wish list"? Have they changed? How well does this position fit these factors? Below are some factors you may want to consider in evaluating your offer. Some of these may not be important to you, and there may be other factors not listed which are extremely important to your decision.
- 2. Do you need additional information about the offer (or anything) in order to make a decision?** It is not unusual to discover, as you're weighing different factors

about the offer, that you have additional questions, lack some factual data, or simply need a better sense of what the job and organization are like. If this is the case, STOP! Don't go any further in your deliberations until you address these issues. You may need to call one of your interviewers and ask additional questions, or contact an alum who works for the organization. If you need a better understanding of what it would be like during a day on the job, call the employer (if they are local) and ask to spend an afternoon observing an entry-level employee in the job you're considering. Most employers will be willing to accommodate you. If you have other questions or concerns which impact your decision, you should discuss them with a representative from our office.

- 3. Are there issues you may want to negotiate, which would bring the offer closer to your goal?** Perhaps the issues which concern you about the offer can be changed. If the job seems ideal except for location, then you might want to raise the issue with the employer. Some start dates are non-negotiable because training classes must begin together. In some instances, however, the start date can be adjusted.

*Written by Virginia Lacy. Adapted with permission from Northwestern University's Career Services Guide; © 1998 Virginia Lacy.*

## Factors for Consideration

- Nature of the work
- Travel
- Organizational culture
- Salary
- Level of autonomy
- Mentoring
- Lifestyles of employees
- Location
- Stability of organization
- Work hours
- Level of responsibility
- Benefits
- Stability of industry
- Variety of work
- Quality of higher management
- Support for continuing education/advanced degree
- Advancement opportunities
- Training and development opportunities
- Opportunities to learn and grow in job/company
- Transferability of skills/experience from job
- Prestige of job or organization

# The Art of Negotiating

**A**n area of the job search that often receives little attention is the art of negotiating. Once you have been offered a job, you have the opportunity to discuss the terms of your employment. Negotiations may be uncomfortable or unsatisfying because we tend to approach them with a winner-take-all attitude that is counterproductive to the concept of negotiations.

Negotiating with your potential employer can make your job one that best meets your own needs as well as those of your employer. To ensure successful negotiations, it is important to understand the basic components. The definition of negotiation as it relates to employment is: a series of communications (either oral or in writing) that reach a satisfying conclusion for all concerned parties, most often between the new employee and the hiring organization.

Negotiation is a planned series of events that requires strategy, presentation and patience. Preparation is probably the single most important part of successful negotiations. Any good trial attorney will tell you the key to presenting a good case in the courtroom is the hours of preparation that happen beforehand. The same is true for negotiating. A good case will literally present itself. What follows are some suggestions that will help you prepare for successful negotiating.

## Research

Gather as much factual information as you can to back up the case you want to make. For example, if most entering employees cannot negotiate salary, you may be jeopardizing the offer by focusing on that aspect of the package. Turn your attention to other parts of the offer such as their health plan, dental plan, retirement package, the type of schedule you prefer, etc.

## Psychological Preparation

Chances are that you will not know the person with whom you will be negotiating. If you are lucky enough to be acquainted, spend some time reviewing what you know about this person's communication style and decision-making behavior.

In most cases, however, this person will be a stranger. Since most people find the unknown a bit scary, you'll want to ask yourself what approach to negotiating you find most comfortable. How will you psyche yourself up to feel confident enough to ask for what you want? How will you respond to counteroffers? What are your alternatives? What's your bottom line? In short, plan your strategy.

Be sure you know *exactly* what you want. This does not mean you will get exactly that, but having the information clear in your head will help you determine what you are willing to concede. Unless you know what you want, you won't be able to tell somebody else. Clarity improves communication, which is the conduit for effective negotiations.

## Practice

Rehearse the presentation in advance using another person as the employer. If you make mistakes in rehearsal, chances are that you will not repeat them during the actual negotiations. A friend can critique your reasoning and help you prepare for questions. If this all seems like a lot of work, remember that if something is worth negotiating for, it is worth preparing for.

## Dollars and Sense

Always begin by expressing genuine interest in the position and the organization, emphasizing the areas of agreement but allowing "wiggle room" to compromise on other areas. Be prepared to support your points of disagreement, outlining the parts you would like to alter, your suggestions on how this can be done and why it would serve the company's best interests to accommodate your request.

Be prepared to defend your proposal. Back up your reasons for wanting to change the offer with meaningful, work-related skills and positive benefits to the employer. Requesting a salary increase because you are a fast learner or have a high GPA are usually not justifiable reasons in the eyes of the employer. Meaningful work experience or internships that have demonstrated or tested your professional skills are things that will make an employer stop and take notice.

It is sometimes more comfortable for job-seekers to make this initial request in writing and plan to meet later to hash out the differences. You will need to be fairly direct and assertive at this point even though you may feel extremely vulnerable. Keep in mind that the employer has chosen you from a pool of qualified applicants, so you are not as powerless as you think.

Sometimes the employer will bristle at the suggestion that there is room to negotiate. Stand firm, but encourage the employer to think about it for a day or two at which time you will discuss the details of your proposal with him/her. Do not rush the process because you are uncomfortable. The employer may be counting on this discomfort and use it to derail the negotiations. Remember, this is a series of volleys and lobs, trade-offs and compromises that occur over a period of time. It is a process—not a singular event!

Once you have reached a conclusion with which you are both relatively comfortable, present in writing your interpretation of the agreement so that if there is any question, it will be addressed immediately. Negotiation, by definition, implies that each side will give. Do not perceive it as an ultimatum.

If the employer chooses not to grant any of your requests—and realistically, he or she can do that—you will still have the option of accepting the original offer provided you have maintained a positive, productive and friendly atmosphere during your exchanges. You can always re-enter negotiations after you have demonstrated your worth to the organization.

## Money Isn't Everything

There are many things you can negotiate besides salary. For example, benefits can add thousands of dollars to the compensation package. Benefits can range from paid personal leave to discounts on the company's products and services. They constitute more than just icing on the cake; they may be better than the cake itself. Traditional benefits packages include health insurance, paid vacation and personal/sick days. Companies may offer such benefits as child care, elder care or use of the company jet for family emergencies. Other lucrative benefits could include disability and life insurance and a variety of retirement plans. Some organizations offer investment and stock options as well as relocation reimbursement and tuition credits for continued education.

*Written by Lily Maestas, Counseling and Career Services, University of California, Santa Barbara.*

# The Benefits of Company Benefits

**T**hough 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.

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 freelance writer based in San Diego.*