Career Development Services

CAREER GUIDE

Personalized Guidance for Career Exploration, Access & Success
Dear Student or Alum,

As you are aware, the job market is remarkably competitive. The need to be fully prepared for the job search process or to strengthen your academic background is even more pronounced. This guide aims to make additional career and academic resources, tools and technologies available to you so that you can become more prepared and competitive.

In addition to having this guide, as a member of the Peirce College community, you also have the Career Development Services (CDS) team, experienced workforce development practitioners, ready to provide you personalized guidance for career exploration, access, and success! This is our team’s commitment to you.

I encourage you to keep a few key things in mind as you embark on or continue with your career path. First, be limitless in exploring career options! Remember, Peirce is in the business of transforming lives. Take inventory of your ambitions, goals, passions, and needs and consider all options available to you. Our team can help you assess and align your skills and goals to determine a viable career plan with no limit on growth potential.

Second, remember that excellence is in the detail. It is in the image you portray, the format of your resume, the content of your thank you letter, and even in the firmness of your handshake. Everything about you communicates. The CDS team welcomes the opportunity to help you tell your story with conviction, professionalism, purpose, and skill.

Third, stand out! To be most successful in your job search, you must find a way to be noticed. If you need to sharpen your business skills, we can help you hone them through career counseling sessions, mock interviews, and varied interactive workshops. We can even support you in identifying resume building roles like internships, Co-ops, work-study opportunities, and jobs.

Our team is prepared to help you clarify, explore, pursue, and achieve your career goals. We welcome the opportunity to get to know you and to support you in your career development.

Wishing You Much Success,

Uva C. Coles
Dean of Career Development Services
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Peirce College

Visit Us!
Career Development Services

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Office Hours:
8:30 AM – 5:00 PM
Mondays–Fridays

Evenings:
5:00 – 7:00 PM
Mondays – Thursdays
(by appointment only)
Our Services & Tools

Our Career Development Services team is committed to helping you take ownership of your professional development inclusive of clarifying career goals, enhancing job search skills and accessing employment and graduate school opportunities. We do this through our signature programs, tools and services including:

- **One-on-One Career Counseling Sessions:** Whatever your career needs might be (career exploration, resume writing, general professional development questions), our One-on-One Career Counseling Sessions will provide you value-added, individualized attention.

- **Career Planning:** If you need assistance planning or fine-tuning your career path, our team can help you build a career plan. Our FOCUS v2® technology enables us to build a customized career portfolio that aligns your skills, abilities and interests with suitable Peirce majors and jobs.

- **Mock Interviews:** Whether you meet with us in our center, on the phone, or even if you choose to use our online technology, InterviewStream®, by participating in mock interviews you will practice your job interviewing skills and you will receive timely feedback.

- **Online Job Board:** PeirceLink (www.peircelink.com) is our online job board. It enables you to post your resume for employer viewing, review job postings, and even build your resume from scratch! PeirceLink also features an annual virtual career fair, co-ops and internship opportunities.

- **Workshops & Events:** Throughout the year, Peirce hosts numerous interactive, career-based workshops and events that enhance your professional development and also provide networking opportunities with industry representatives.

- **Experiential Opportunities:** In addition to assisting you in your search for full-time opportunities, our team can guide you around the maze of experiential roles. We can help you fully understand the impact and relevance of internships, volunteer roles, Cooperative education (Co-op), Federal Work Study (FWS), and job shadowing, and we can also work with you to gain access to them.

- **CDS Job Club:** If you are looking for a job, you can participate in the Peirce CDS Job Club. Facilitated by a member of the CDS team, this group meets monthly to enhance members’ job search skills, share job leads and network with guest speakers. The CDS Job Club is a great way to keep your job search strategies current and to expand your professional network.

- **Graduate School Preparation:** If you would like to continue your studies, Peirce can help you learn about the application process, prepare you for required entrance tests and guide you toward relevant resources.

Our Partnerships

Job hunting is extremely challenging for most people. However, it is more demanding when a job applicant lacks confidence or is unable to present what is considered an acceptable business image for employment. Employers often make judgments about a candidate in seconds, and appearance plays a major role in securing employment.

It is for this reason that CDS partners with organizations like Career Wardrobe (http://careerwardrobe.org), the nation's largest independent, community-based nonprofit organization serving women transitioning into the workforce by providing professional attire. Career Wardrobe's Gateway to Success Seminars, Client Help Desk and Professional Women's Network provide resume review, educational and networking opportunities for women to help them retain employment and develop a successful career plan.

In addition, CDS partners with Menzfit (www.menzfit.org), an educational nonprofit organization whose mission is ensuring long-term gainful employment and financial fitness to low-income men who are largely minorities with little formal education. This is achieved by providing professional interview clothing, career development and financial literacy services. By providing these services, Menzfit makes a greater impact in the lives of the men as they will be able to support themselves and provide for their families.

Both partnerships enable you to have additional career guidance and resources that can help you build a professional image and better prepare for the interview process. To learn more about these organizations and to utilize their services, simply contact CDS.

Our Resources

Were you aware that CDS has a Career Library with titles ranging from crafting your resume to developing your leadership skills? We also have the latest in graduate school preparation from Kaplan which includes: GMAT in a Box, GMAT Premier, GMAT Math Foundations, GMAT Verbal Foundations, GRE Exam Vocabulary in a Box, GRE Premier, LSAT Logic Games in a Box, LSAT Premier and the LSAT Writing Workbook. Students and alumni are welcome to borrow up to three items at a time for a period of one month with the option to renew. Our collection is always growing, so stop by CDS often to see what’s new. While you’re here, stay for a while and utilize our touch screen computers to build your resume and cover letter, practice your interview skills and conduct your job search. Our staff will be happy to assist you with navigating our technology so that you can explore both your personal and professional goals.
RESEARCHING CAREER OPTIONS

DECIDING ON A career path is a process that often requires thought, support and guidance. The CDS team is well prepared to help you evaluate your options. In addition to working with CDS, Peirce faculty and business contacts, you should also take these tips into consideration:

Your off-campus job search should neither begin nor end with the help wanted ads. Studies have shown that only 15 percent of available jobs are ever advertised. It takes much more than merely perusing the classifieds. By employing a number of methods, you constantly increase your chances of landing a job. Some techniques you might use:

Networking. Probably the most effective way to meet potential employers and learn about possible jobs is to tap into your personal network of contacts. You might think it’s too early to have professional contacts, but think about everyone you know—family members and their friends/co-workers, professors, past employers, neighbors and even your dentist. Don’t be afraid to inform them of your career interests and let them know that you are looking for work. They will likely be happy to help you and refer you to any professionals they think can be of assistance.

Informational interviewing. This approach allows you to learn more about your field by setting up interviews with professionals. The purpose of these interviews is to meet professionals, gather career information and investigate career options, get advice on job search techniques and get referrals to other professionals. When setting up these interviews, either by phone or letter, make it clear to the employer that you have no job expectations and are seeking information only. Interviewing also familiarizes you to employers, and you may be remembered when a company has a vacant position.

Temporary work. As more companies employ the services of temporary or contract workers, new graduates are discovering that such work is a good opportunity to gain experience in their fields. Temporary workers can explore various jobs and get an inside look at different companies without the commitment of a permanent job. Also, if a company decides to make a position permanent, these “temps” already have made good impressions and often are given first consideration.

Electronic job search. One source of jobs may be as close as a personal computer. Various online resume services let you input your resume into a database, which then can be accessed by companies searching for applicants who meet their criteria. Companies also post job listings on websites to which students can directly respond by sending their resumes and cover letters.

Persistence is the key to cracking the hidden job market. Attend meetings of professional associations and become an active member. After you begin the above processes, and your network base expands, your search will be made easier. Employers will appreciate your resourcefulness—and view you as a viable candidate.
A great way to acquire practical experience is to do so by securing an experiential opportunity. In a nutshell, these are roles that enable you to learn as you work. The program is designed to also help you develop the work ethic and professionalism necessary to remain competitive.

In order to participate in co-op, you must plan early! Co-op usually occurs in the final term of the associates, bachelor’s degree, or certificate program. The CDS staff will assist you in navigating the co-op process. We will explain our guidelines, provide you resources, help you prepare your resume and cover letter and assist you with interview preparation. We may also help you identify existing co-ops. Still, it is ultimately your responsibility to secure a co-op position. PeirceLink (www.peircelink.com) is a great place to begin your co-op search.

In terms of requirements, as a co-op student, you will receive a 7-week intensive online job-search workshop through the pre-co-op seminar. Completion of CWE098 (associate) and/or CWE099 (bachelor’s or certificate), are pre-requisites for enrolling in the co-op program. These seminars are not credit bearing and are provided at no cost. You also have the option of completing the pre-requisite requirement through a portfolio review.

Let’s face it, if you’re a career changer or if you are just starting your career, it is often difficult to get the experience required to get the job. The key to unlocking this dilemma is understanding that while it is difficult to get the experience required to then get the job, it is not impossible. A great way to acquire practical experience is to do so by securing an experiential opportunity. In a nutshell, these are roles that enable you to learn as you work. At Peirce, you can do so through Internships, Volunteer Service, Co-ops, and the Federal Work Study program. Keep in mind that some experiential opportunities may be paid while others may not be. However, the common thread in all experiential opportunities is that they are experience and resume builders which allow you to explore career or job options and learn along the way.

Internships
Employers often post experiential roles in PeirceLink. Internships (paid and unpaid) can vary in duration, career exposure and program expectations. Although Peirce does not currently offer academic credit for internships, we will still work with you to help you seek out and succeed in suitable opportunities. We will also support you along the way.

Volunteer Service
Volunteer Service offers you a great way to give back to the community while learning and gaining career-based experience. Peirce partners with many nonprofit organizations that could benefit from your time, skills and commitment. Periodically, local nonprofit agencies post available roles in PeirceLink. Another great site for local and national roles is idealist.org. If you want to learn more about the value of volunteering or about how to find and apply to suitable roles, speak with a member of the CDS team.

Federal Work Study
If you are a full-time or part-time student, Peirce’s Federal Work Study (FWS) program is a form of federal aid awarded by the College that allows you to satisfy a portion of your documented financial need through part-time employment at the College while attending school. These funds will not be credited to your student account. If you obtain a FWS job, you will receive a paycheck for the hours you work. We also participate in the Federal Work Study Community Service Program, which involves off-campus, part-time employment. This program will allow you to work off-campus for approved nonprofit or government agencies. Whether you secure an on or off campus FWS role, you will gain valuable work experience that will build your professional skills and enhance your resume. To participate in the FWS program, you must first qualify through Financial Aid and have a GPA of 2.0. Once your eligibility is confirmed, you can view work study opportunities posted on PeirceLink. If you would like to learn more about this program, call us or email us at workstudy@peirce.edu.

Cooperative Education
If you are interested in a different kind of “paycheck,” the Peirce Cooperative Education (co-op) program provides you with the opportunity to gain work experience associated with your academic major and receive academic credit while you learn. In this program, employers and educators work together to provide you valuable career experience to expand upon your classroom learning. Co-op encourages you to explore career choices, understand workplace environments, and apply classroom experience in a practical “hands-on” setting. By providing a realistic job experience, co-op helps you more clearly correlate classroom experience with real life work. The program is designed to also help you develop the work ethic and professionalism necessary to remain competitive.

The co-op is a 3-credit, 14-week course which requires you to work a total of 135 hours over the 14-week period. Throughout the co-op experience, coursework for CWE must be completed and turned into your assigned co-op faculty advisor. You will be able to do so via the online course companion.

If you have an interest in co-op, keep these timelines in mind:
• Fall Co-op—Generally begins in early September and runs through mid December.
• Spring Co-op—Generally begins in January and is completed by early May.
• Summer Co-op—Generally begins in mid May and runs through mid August.

Your grades and academic progress also matter! You must have attained a minimum cumulative grade point average of 2.5 and completed a minimum 30(AS), 90(BS), or 21(CT) credits toward your degree or certificate in order to be eligible.

If you are interested in the Cooperative Education program, contact your program advisor to review how and when it will fit into your academic program. If you have general questions about the co-op program please contact CDS.

Whatever experiential opportunity you choose to pursue, remember that your chances of securing a role are heightened when you use adequate job search strategies!
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

...and many more...

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.
USING ONLINE SEARCH ENGINES TO REFINE YOUR JOB SEARCH

TO FURTHER ENHANCE your job search, consider using specialized job search sites. These allow you to better connect with professional organizations, industry-specific employers, and opportunities and roles that are more narrowly defined. These are some search engines recommended by the CDS staff:

**Online Job Board:** PeirceLink (www.peircelink.com) is our online job board. It enables you to post your resume for employer viewing, review job postings, and even build your resume from scratch! PeirceLink also features an annual virtual career fair, co-ops and internship opportunities.

**BilingualCareer.com:** Where bilingual job-seekers (English and at least one other language) can search job listings (by language, location, industry, keywords), post resumes, and find job interviewing and resume preparation advice.

**Careers.CampusPhilly.org:** Campus Philly is a nonprofit organization that fuels economic growth by encouraging college students to study, explore, live, and work in the Greater Philadelphia tri-state region.

**CivilianJobs.com:** An online recruiting solution for candidates that are currently transitioning out of the military as well as military veterans with varying amounts of business experience.

**CollegeRecruiter.com:** Jobs for college students and recent graduates. Entry-level work plus part-time and full-time career opportunities. A great resource for job-seekers.

**Dice.com:** A great job site for technology professionals. Job-seekers can search through thousands of job openings (by job type, location, as well as by metro area or employer), post your resume and confidential profile, create an email job alert, and find great career resources.

**DisaboomJobs.com:** In addition to job opportunities for individuals with disabilities, this site claims to be the first comprehensive, evolving source of information, insight, and personal engagement for the disability community.

**DiversityWorking.com:** A great diversity job site for all ethnic and sexual orientation groups, where job-seekers can search for jobs (by location, industry, job listing type, recent postings, and keywords), as well as post resumes, and sign up for a free newsletter. The company is also a national career expo producer for the diversity marketplace.

**DiverseJobs.net:** The job site of “Diverse: Issues In Higher Education,” the flagship publication of a leading publisher of higher education news. A resource site for careers in academia.

**GettingHired.com:** This site’s mission is to create sustainable employment growth and opportunity for people with disabilities. It accomplishes this by serving and connecting job-seekers with disabilities, committed employers, advocacy organizations, and service providers.

**FindARecruiter.com:** Where job-seekers who are looking for a recruiting professional (headhunters, executive search, staffing firms) can search a database of more than 10,000 recruiters. Search by company name, specialty, or location.

**HigherEdJobs.com:** A central place on the web for higher education employers and professionals to connect. One of the leading sources for jobs and career information in academia.

**Idealist.org:** This site is independent of any government, political ideology, or religious creed. Its work is guided by the common desire of its members and supporters to find practical solutions to social and environmental problems, in a spirit of generosity and mutual respect.

**Indeed.com:** A meta-search job site that pulls job postings from more than 500 places, including the major job boards, the top 200 newspapers, hundreds of professional associations, and company career centers. Job-seekers can search for job listings by what (title, keywords and company) and where (location).

**JobCentral.com:** A national employment network formed by an alliance between two nonprofit associations to provide job-seekers in all industries and occupations entry-level to Chief Executive Officer and employment and career opportunities nationwide. Search postings or browse by company.

**JobCircle.com:** Mid-Atlantic’s largest non-newspaper affiliated job board that provides careers, content and community to job-seekers—operating in CT, DC, DE, OH, MD, NY, NJ, PA, VA and WV. Job-seekers can search or browse job listings, as well as post resumes.

**JobsInPods.com:** A job site where job-seekers can listen to employer “jobcasts”—audio interviews from employer HR managers/employees that discuss corporate culture, benefits, etc. At the end of each podcast you’re instructed on how and where to apply to the jobs you just heard about. Each podcast also comes with a blog post which lists all the relevant links and information about the employer and job listings.

**Jobirn.com:** A unique job site that is a combination of job board, online interview system, and employee referral system that connects job-seekers with employees inside the company where you would like to work—to help get a referral to your ideal job.

**Jobs.SHRM.org:** A site operated by the Society for Human Resource Management that provides resources and job postings for HR professionals.

**Juju.com:** Where job-seekers can search 15 different job sites (including CareerCity, CareerMosaic, HeadHunter.net, JobOptions, NationJob, and others) using keywords that describe their preferred job, as well as a preferred location.

**LatPro.com:** The worldwide leader in online employment for Hispanic and bilingual professionals, where job-seekers can search thousands of job listings from pre-screened employers, post multiple resume versions, create an email job agent, and access other career resources.

**LawJobs.com:** A comprehensive site for legal jobs that allows you to browse by category, location and employer.

**LGBTCareerLink.com:** A site for the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender (LGBT) workforce. Find jobs, learn about employment
at diversity-friendly companies and research careers by networking with your LGBT and allied colleagues.

**LinkUp.com:** The fastest-growing job search engine on the web. Completely unique among job sites, it only aggregates jobs from company websites. It indexes over 22,000 company websites and updates those job listings every night. As a result, jobs are always current and never duplicated.

**MetroPhiladelphiaJobs.com:** Compiled from multiple employment websites focusing exclusively on local communities in the State of Pennsylvania, they are the premier online network for Pennsylvania jobs and careers—connecting the most progressive companies with the most qualified career-minded individuals.

**Net-Temps.com:** A top site where job-seekers can search thousands of job listings or post your resume. Includes contract, temporary and permanent employment postings. Also includes career development articles, tools and resources.

**RealMatch.com:** This unique site takes the job-seeker’s qualifications and preferences and matches them with the employer’s requirements. You can also search job listings by keyword and location.

**SimplyHired.com:** A job search engine where job-seekers can search job listings by keyword and get results from a multitude of sources. Also offers you the opportunity to get updates when new jobs are posted—by email, social networks, blogs, your homepage, and even your mobile phone.

**SnagAJob.com:** The largest job site for part-time and full-time hourly jobs. Job-seekers can search for a job by type of job or by location, as well as register for email alerts. Also includes career resources and advice.

**TwitterJobSearch.com:** A job search engine for Twitter, where job-seekers enter search keywords and receive immediate results of tweets for job openings.

**USAJobs.gov:** A one-stop source for job-seekers seeking information about jobs and employment with the United States Federal Government. Job-seekers can search for jobs (by keyword, location, and occupation), post resumes, and register for a job-matching email service. Also includes lots of other resources and tips for finding employment with the government.

**VetJobs.com:** A great site for veterans and transitioning military personnel and their family members. Job openings for all levels and types of jobs. You can search for jobs (by type, keyword, and location), as well as post your resume. Includes other key resources for veterans.

*Some material provided by: http://www.quintcareers.com/top_50_sites.html*
WRITING WINNING RESUMES

A WINNING RESUME is a marketing tool that clearly and concisely illustrates your skills, experiences, achievements and education. Our Career Development Services team can help you build a winning resume by following three steps:

- Identify a Suitable Resume Format
- Understand the Key Elements of a Resume
- Follow Resume Guidelines

STEP ONE: Identify a Suitable Resume Format: Chronological, Functional, Combination or Hybrid

- A chronological resume, the most common type, lists work experiences in reverse chronological order with dates, job titles, the company name, and an explanation of job responsibilities. This type of resume is great if your work history relates closely to your career objectives. It is the perfect choice for you if you have experienced a steady career progression.

- A functional resume focuses on your skills. Instead of drawing attention to the duration of each job you have held, it groups your accomplishments based on your skills. This is a great format if you have little or no experience or if there are gaps in your work history.

- A hybrid or combination resume blends elements of the chronological resume with those of the functional resume. This is a more creative resume that allows greater flexibility in format. You typically list your skills and then the jobs you have held.

Once you have identified a suitable resume you are ready for step two.

STEP TWO: Understand the Key Elements of a Resume

There are countless ways of building a resume. Your format should be unique so that your resume stands out, but there is essential information you need to include. The six components of a resume are heading, objective or summary of qualifications, education, work experience, skills/qualifications, and activities/organizations/honors.

- **Heading**—Your heading provides the most important information to the employer—who you are and how you can be contacted! Your heading should include:
  - Your name (in larger and bolder font)
  - Your full address with the exception of your zip code (only the state should be abbreviated)
  - Your phone number
  - Your professional email (emails should be concise and should not be distracting in any way)

CDS TIP: Do not use Mr., Mrs., Ms. or Miss. to precede your name. Providing such information on your resume can lead to discrimination.

- **Objective vs. Summary of Skills or Summary of Qualifications**—An objective is a statement written in one or two sentences that speaks to the specific job you want and what you can contribute to the employer in return for the job.

A good objective should be specific and should give your resume direction. Use an objective when:
- You are pursuing a specific job
- You know the exact title of the position for which you are applying
- You have a diverse career background that needs direction
- You are a new graduate, with little experience, and need to formalize your goals

CDS TIP: Your objective should be customized for the job you are trying to secure!

- Bad objective: To obtain a job utilizing my skills and abilities
- Good objective: Sales management position using expertise in motivating sales personnel in order to increase profit sharing

Summary of Skills or Qualifications

Since you typically submit a cover letter along with your resume, your cover letter should already outline your desired job objective. If this is the case, adding an objective in your resume may not be necessary and using a “summary of skills” or a “summary of qualifications” may be a better fit. This summary is usually written as a brief paragraph, a few bullets or a combination of both formats. A well written summary is a snapshot that underscores who you are and the skills you possess.

Strong summaries are clear, do not use personal pronouns and draw attention to relevant skills.

- **Example #1: Summary**
  
  Senior Human Resources Professional with demonstrated strengths that include assessing organizational needs, setting strategic direction, and implementing initiatives that enhance corporate performance at an expanding company. Expertise includes: Staffing, Employee Relations, Succession Planning, Consulting, Union Avoidance, Negotiating, Problem Solving, Strategic Thinking, Management/Employee Development, Performance Coaching, Conflict Resolution, Team Building, Instructing and Workshop Facilitation. Trained in EEO/ADA Law, AAP Writing and Investigating Sexual Harassment complaints.

- **Example #2: Bulleted**
  - Diverse sales and management experience and a willingness to improve
  - Track record of superior performance through above-quota results
  - Ability to create new and maximize existing accounts by analyzing company needs
  - Produce results in fast paced environments by adapting and implementing new strategies
  - Team oriented leader who motivates members to exceed expectations

- **Example #3 : Combination**

  Experienced Leader with increasing domestic and international General Management accountability including Corporate Operations, Manufacturing, Marketing / Sales, and Engineering
  - A strong team builder and leader that enjoys the challenge of acquisitions and integrations, organizational restructuring and turnaround, product development or expansion, and taking projects from concept through to completion

Career Development Services  www.peirce.edu/cds
- Hands-on, customer oriented manager with strong capabilities in forming and implementing innovative and creative strategies, and dedicated to the principle of continuous improvement

**Education**
Your education section should include the following:
• Name of college or university
• Location (city and state)
• Date of graduation, or potential graduation
• Degree or Certificate awarded
• Field of study
• GPA (only if 3.0 or better)

When writing your education, be sure to list the degree you are most currently pursuing or have most recently completed first. For example:

B.S. Business Administration May 2004 (Anticipated Graduation) Peirce College Philadelphia PA

B.S. Business Administration May 2004 Peirce College Philadelphia, PA

or

A.S. Business Administration May 2002 Peirce College Philadelphia, PA

**CDS Tip:** If you have both an associate and bachelor’s degree in the same field, it is not critical to list the associates degree in your resume.

**Work Experience**
Your work experience should include:
• Name of company
• Location of company (city and state)
• Position held
• Dates of employment (month and year)
• Description of duties, responsibilities, etc.

Work experience should be more than your duties. You should also include accomplishments and special projects to inform the employer of how and what you have contributed to your past positions. Good descriptions of duties:
• Use action verbs to demonstrate initiative and drive. Verbs should be in the correct tense. See page 13 for examples.
• Positions you currently hold should be in the present tense, while previous positions should be in the past tense.
• Are specific
• Describe what you did and your successes
• Are positive and market your skills
• Relate your past skills and experiences to the job you seek

NEVER use complete sentences on your resume! Since the average employer takes 10 seconds to review your resume initially, it is important that it is concise and to the point.

**Skills/Qualifications**
Before writing your resume, it is important to recognize and identify valuable skills. Always be specific about what you know and be sure to relate it to the job you want. Avoid over generalized phrases, such as “communication skills” or “computer skills”. You need to be specific in the skills that you possess and include detail like “Computer Skills: Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, Excel and Access.”

Skills categories include:
• Specialized skills (i.e., certifications, computer software)
• Computer skills
• Office skills
• Communications skills

**Activities/Organizations/Honors**
Include hobbies and personal interests only if they are employment related, noncontroversial, and/or they demonstrate your skills and experiences. If you have held a relevant position in an organization, include it as well. Examples of appropriate organizations to include are:
• Professional organizations
• Honor/academic societies
• Appropriate honors and awards

**STEP THREE: Follow Resume Guidelines**
Once you have identified the ideal resume format for your needs and you have identified the content you will use to populate it, it is important that you consider these basic resume guidelines:

**DO**
Keep it brief: 1-2 pages
Include your name and contact information at the top of the first page
Put your name and the page number at the top of the second page
Open with a strong objective and/or summary of qualifications
Include a cover letter when mailing or emailing your resume
Use the right format for your skills and objective
Be neat, organized and professional
Use the same font and appropriate verb tense
Be creative

**DON’T**
Use a template
Be dishonest
Misspell
Use colored paper or elaborate fonts
Supply personal information (family, marital status)
Include salary information. If the employer asks, this should be addressed in the cover letter
List discriminatory affiliations (political campaigns, religious organizations)
Include the phrase “references available upon request”
Include hobbies or personal interests unless they relate to your objective
TOP TEN PITFALLS IN RESUME WRITING

1. **Too long.** Most new graduates should restrict their resumes to one page. If you have trouble condensing, get help from a technical or business writer or a career center professional.

2. **Typographical, grammatical or spelling errors.** These errors suggest carelessness, poor education or/and lack of intelligence. Have at least two people proofread your resume. Don’t rely on your computer’s spell-checkers or grammar-checkers.

3. **Hard to read.** A poorly typed or copied resume looks unprofessional. Use a plain typeface, no smaller than a 12-point font. Asterisks, bullets, underlining, boldface type and italics should be used only to make the document easier to read, not fancier. Again, ask a professional’s opinion.

4. **Too verbose.** Do not use complete sentences or paragraphs. Say as much as possible with as few words as possible. A, an and the can almost always be left out. Be careful in your use of jargon and avoid slang.

5. **Too sparse.** Give more than the bare essentials, especially when describing related work experience, skills, accomplishments, activities, interests and club memberships that will give employers important information. Including membership in the Society of Women Engineers, for example, would be helpful to employers who wish to hire more women, yet cannot ask for that information.

6. **Irrelevant information.** Customize each resume to each position you seek (when possible). Of course, include all education and work experience, but emphasize only relevant experience, skills, accomplishments, activities and hobbies. Do not include marital status, age, sex, children, height, weight, health, church membership, etc.

7. **Obviously generic.** Too many resumes scream, “I need a job—any job!” The employer needs to feel that you are interested in that particular position with his or her particular company.

8. **Too snazzy.** Of course, use good quality bond paper, but avoid exotic types, colored paper, photographs, binders and graphics. Electronic resumes should include appropriate industry keywords and use a font size between 10 and 14 points. Avoid underlining, italics or graphics.

9. **Boring.** Make your resume as dynamic as possible. Begin every statement with an action verb. Use action verbs to describe what you have accomplished in past jobs. Take advantage of your rich vocabulary and avoid repeating words, especially the first word in a section.

10. **Too modest.** The resume showcases your qualifications in competition with the other applicants. Put your best foot forward without misrepresentation, falsification or arrogance.

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The Three Rs

The three Rs of resume writing are **Research, Research, Research.** You must know what the prospective company does, what the position involves and whether you will be a fit, before submitting your resume. And that means doing research—about the company, about the position and about the type of employee the company typically hires.

**Research the company.** Read whatever literature the company has placed in the career library. For additional information, call the company. Ask for any literature it may have, find out how the company is structured and ask what qualities the company generally looks for in its employees. Ask if there are openings in your area, and find out the name of the department head and give him or her a call. Explain that you are considering applying to their company, and ask for their recommendation for next steps. Thank that person for the information, and ask to whom your resume should be directed.

The Internet is another key tool to utilize in your research. Most companies have websites that include information regarding company background, community involvement, special events, executive bios or even past annual reports. Be sure to take advantage of the Internet during your job search.

**Research the position.** The more you know about the position, the better able you will be to sell yourself and to target your resume to that position. If possible, interview someone who does that same job. In addition to finding out the duties, ask if there is on-the-job training, whether they value education over experience (or vice versa) and what kind of turnover the department experiences. Ask what they like about the position and the company; more important, ask what they don’t like about it.

**Finally, research yourself.** Your goal is not just to get a job. Your goal is to get a job that you will enjoy. After you find out all you can about the company and the position, ask yourself honestly whether this is what you really want to do and where you really want to be. The odds are overwhelming that you will not hold this position for more than two or three years, so it’s not a lifetime commitment; however, this first job will be the base of your lifetime career. You must start successfully so that future recommendations will always be positive. Furthermore, three years is a long time to spend doing something you don’t like, working in a position that isn’t challenging or living somewhere you don’t want to live.

One last word of advice: Before you go to the interview, review the version of your resume that you submitted to this employer. The resume can only get you the interview; the interview gets you the job.
# Chronological Resume

**Jamie Miller**  
555 City Street  
Anywhere, USA 12345  
233-555-9876  
jamie@mydomain.com

**SUMMARY OF QUALIFICATIONS**
- Excellent research, documentation, and reporting abilities
- Outstanding communication and presentation skills. Bilingual
- Familiar with filings, petitions, case management, and interviewing
- Previous court experience as Immigration Social Worker

**EDUCATION**
Peirce College, Philadelphia, PA  
Bachelor of Science, Paralegal Studies (June 2009) GPA 3.8

**PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE**

**Jenkens & Gilchrist, PC**, Philadelphia, PA  
April 2008 – Present  
Immigration Paralegal
- Managed more than 300 cases while maintaining a 100% success rate, with no clients denied initial or renewed status
- Worked directly with attorneys and partners on cases involving granting permission for foreign nationals to work in U.S.
- Performed functions of junior attorney carrying out multiple aspects of case preparation and management
- Communicated regularly with consulates and representatives of European, Latin American, and Middle Eastern countries to ensure all paperwork acquired and properly completed, all fees accounted for, and all regulations adhered to
- Prepared and filed Adjustments of Status, H-1B and G-1B nonimmigrant petitions, Immigrant Visa petitions, TN petitions, and Naturalization applications

**Catholic Charities, Inc.**, Philadelphia, PA  
Immigration Social Worker
- Assisted and represented clients attempting to gain residential and/or legal work status in United States. Clients consisted primarily of undocumented individuals
- Prepared and filed Adjustments of Status, Naturalization, and Work and Travel documentation
- One of only two employees in region granted status of Accredited Representative, with permission to represent clients in court and sign all pertinent legal documents

**COMPUTER SKILLS**
Windows, Word, Immigrant Pro, Elite, Westlaw, and Lexis Nexis

**PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**
Philadelphia Association of Paralegals  
South Jersey Paralegal Association

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# Functional Resume

**Will U. Interviewme**  
123 Pine Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
215-555-1234  
willuinterviewme@student.peirce.edu

**Summary of Qualifications**
Twelve years of successful experience in direct sales of a range of products and services. Extensive practical hands-on experience as co-owner and manager of a small business. Motivated and enthusiastic about developing good relations with clients.

**Relevant Skills**

**Sales and New Account Development**
- Increased a small publication’s advertising revenue through market research and promotion
- Developed new distribution outlets for a special-interest magazine in Northern California
  - Made cold calls and follow-up visits to retail outlets throughout the region
  - Organized detailed route books and financial recordkeeping
  - Successfully increased readership by more than 40 percent over a two-year period

**Customer Relations**
- Served as vendor representative for Jana Imports
  - Coordinated product information and distribution for 75 field representatives and major accounts
  - Promoted giftware products at trade shows throughout the region
  - Handled face-to-face contacts with new and established customers
- Oversaw the production of advertising and its placement in major trade publications

**Advertising, Marketing, Distributing**
- Organized and styled merchandise for effective presentation in a 20-page giftware catalog
- Kept accurate, current computer records of inventory, international suppliers, brokers, shippers, etc.
- Handled all aspects of order taking and processing, both at Bill’s Dairy and Jana Imports

**Employment History**

**Jana Imports**, Oakland, CA
- 2001-present  
  Sales Coordinator
- 1996-2000  
  Distribution Coordinator
- 1990-1995  
  Co-Owner/Manager

**Déjà vu Publishing Co.**, Baltimore, MD
- 1990-1995  
  Co-Owner/Manager

**Bill’s Dairy Products**, Charleston, WV
- 1985-1990  
  Production Coordinator

**Bill’s Dairy Products**, Charleston, WV
- 1980-1985  
  Production Coordinator

**Education**
Peirce College, Philadelphia, PA  
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration; concentration in Management
Hybrid or Combination Resume

Will U. Interviewme  
123 Pine Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19102  
215-555-1234  
willuinterviewme@student.peirce.edu

Summary of Qualifications
• Excellent oral and written communication skills  
• Verifiable track record of consistently meeting sales quotas  
• Skilled negotiator with a strong understanding of the industry

Education
Peirce College, Philadelphia, PA  
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration; concentration in Marketing, June 2006

Relevant Courses
- Internet Marketing  
- Selling Strategies  
- Customer Relationship Management

Marketing Management  
International Marketing  
Marketing Research

Academic Projects
• Developed a promotional plan (objectives, brand positioning, strategies and tactics) for three different types of businesses (tourism, food/beverage and entertainment)  
• Developed, implemented, and analyzed through SPSS a questionnaire to answer why a department had decreasing sales

Related Experience
Account Executive  
Comcast  
Philadelphia, PA  
June 2007-Present

• Solicit orders from local businesses and advertising agencies  
• Increase sales volume from established accounts

Sales Associate  
Express  
Philadelphia, PA  

• Maintained customer service, product knowledge and product placement to help sell clothing  
• Increased sales by creating new visual displays through product placement and innovative style

Computer Skills
- Microsoft Office 2007  
- Filemaker Pro  
- Adobe PageMaker

Professional Organizations
- The Young Entrepreneur’s Network
POWER VERBS FOR YOUR RESUME

accelerated  accomplished  achieved  acquired  acted  activated  adapted  added  addressed  adjusted  administered  admitted  advanced  advised  alleviated  allocated  allowed  altered  ameliorated  amended  analyzed  appointed  apportioned  appraised  apprised  approved  approximated  arbitrated  arranged  ascertained  assembled  assessed  assigned  assisted  attained  attested  audited  augmented  authored  authorized  balanced  bolstered  boosted  brainstormed  budgeted  built  calculated  catalogued  centralized  certified  chaired  charted  clarified  classified  coached  collaborated  collected  commissioned  committed  communicated  compared  compiled  composed  computed  conceptualized  concluded  confirmed  consented  consolidated  constructed  contracted  contributed  converted  convinced  cooperated  coordinated  correlated  corresponded  counseled  created  critiqued  customized  debugged  deciphered  dedicated  delegated  deliberated  demonstrated  designated  designed  determined  devaluated  developed  devised  diagnosed  directed  disbursed  dispatched  displayed  drafted  eased  eclipsed  edited  educated  elevated  elicited  employed  empowered  enabled  encouraged  endorsed  engineered  enhanced  enlarged  enlisted  enriched  enumerated  envisioned  estimated  evaluated  examined  excelled  executed  exercised  expanded  expedited  explained  extended  extracted  fabricated  facilitated  familiarized  fashioned  figured  finalized  forecasted  formulated  fostered  founded  fulfilled  generated  grew  guaranteed  guided  hired  identified  illustrated  implemented  improved  improvised  increased  indexed  indicated  inferred  influenced  informed  initiated  innovated  inspected  inspired  instituted  instructed  integrated  interceded  interpreted  interviewed  introduced  invented  investigated  involved  issued  judged  justified  launched  lectured  led  licensed  lightened  linked  maintained  marketed  measured  mediated  minimized  mobilized  modeled  moderated  modernized  modified  monitored  motivated  multiplied  negotiated  officiated  operated  orchestrated  organized  originated  overhauled  performed  persuaded  pioneered  planned  polished  prepared  prescribed  prioritized  processed  procured  produced  programmed  projected  promoted  publicized  purchased  queried  questioned  raised  rated  realized  recommended  reconciled  recorded  recruited  rectified  refined  referred  reformulated  regulated  rehabilitated  reinforced  rejuvenated  refined  relieved  remedied  remodeled  repaired  reported  represented  researched  reserved  resolved (problems)  restored  retrieved  revamped  reviewed  revised  revitalized  revised  sanctioned  satisfied  scheduled  screened  scrutinized  secured  served  set goals  settled  shaped  smoothed  solicited  solved  sought  spearheaded  specified  spoke  stimulated  streamlined  strengthened  studied  submitted  substantiated  suggested  summarized  supervised  supplemented  surveyed  sustained  synthesized  systematized  tabulated  tailored  traced  trained  transacted  transformed  translated  transmitted  updated  upgraded  validated  valued  verified  visualized  wrote

Adapted with permission from the Career Resource Manual of the University of California, Davis.
COVER LETTER: YOUR CAREER SNAPSHOT

A COVER LETTER is an introduction to who you are, the experiences you bring to the table and the contributions you wish to make in a role or company. Its purpose is to concisely tell your story and encourage the recruiter or hiring manager to review your resume and subsequently engage you in the interview process. When writing your cover letter, keep these guidelines in mind:

Your cover letter should not exceed four short paragraphs on one page. A longer letter is unlikely to be read. Use standard 8½-x-11 paper. If you use a smaller size, the correspondence will appear more personal than professional; a larger size would look awkward.

Like your resume, white and ivory are the acceptable choices for a cover letter. You should use the same paper that you use for your resume. Standard office paper is generally acceptable for most positions. Executive and top-level positions may require more formal, heavier weight paper.

Do not use pre-printed stationery unless you are a top-level executive with years of experience. Never use the stationery of your current employer. Do not send handwritten letters.

Once you have written your letter, mail it in a standard, business-sized envelope with the same quality paper as your letter and resume. Type your envelope and include the complete name and title of the specific contact person you identified in your letter. Also include your return address in the upper left corner. Your return address should appear in the top left-hand corner, or center of the page. Do not use abbreviations except for the two-letter state abbreviation.

The date should appear two lines beneath your return address on the left-hand side of the page. Write out the full date; do not use abbreviations. For example: November 1, 2011

Always try to find out the name and proper title of the addressee before sending out a cover letter. Two lines beneath the date, list the full name of the addressee. On the next line, list the individual’s formal business title; on the subsequent line, list the name of the company. This is followed by the company’s address, which generally takes two lines.

The salutation should be typed two lines beneath the company’s address. Begin with “Dear Mr.” or “Dear Ms.” followed by the individual’s last name and a colon, even if you have spoken with an addressee who asked to be called by his or her first name. If you are unable to find the specific name of the person who will be receiving your letter, you may use “Dear Sir” or “Dear Madam” or “Greetings.”

In your first paragraph, state immediately and concisely which position you wish to be considered for and what makes you the best candidate for that position. If you are responding to a classified ad, reference the publication you found it in and the date the ad appeared. Keep the first paragraph short and hard-hitting.

Example: Having majored in Paralegal Studies at Peirce College, where I also worked as a Research Assistant, I am confident that I would make a successful Research Trainee in your Law Research Department.

In your second paragraph, detail what you can contribute to the company and show how your qualifications will benefit the company. If you are responding to a classified ad, specifically discuss how your skills relate to the job requirements stated. Keep it brief and to the point.

Example: As a product manager for Allied Software, I managed three product launches within 12 months. This included organizing and implementing a direct mail campaign, a product tour, and trade show presentations before industry analysts. As a result of these marketing efforts, revenues exceeded goals by 35%.

In your third paragraph, describe your interest in the company. Subtly emphasize your knowledge about the company (discovered through your research efforts) and your familiarity with the industry. Present yourself as eager (but not desperate) to work for the company to which you are applying.

Example: Your company recently announced plans to move into networking software linking desktop personal computers to mainframe computers. With my success in bringing this type of software to market, I am confident that I can help Norville become a market leader in this fast-growing (about 65% annually) market.

In the closing paragraph, specifically request an interview. Include your phone number and the hours you can be reached (but not in too much detail). You can also mention that you will follow up with a phone call within a certain amount of time to arrange an interview at a mutually convenient time. Should you choose to do the latter, pay close attention to the company’s policy on follow-up calls. Some ads will tell you very clearly that while resumes can be emailed or faxed, follow-up calls will not be accepted. If this is the case, follow their rule and wait for their call instead.

The closing should be two lines beneath the body of the letter and should be aligned to the right hand side of the page. Simply close the letter with “Sincerely.” Four lines beneath this, type your full name as it appears on your resume. Don’t forget to sign above your name in black ink.

If you are enclosing a resume or other materials with your letter, include an enclosure line, flush left at the very bottom of the page.
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.
FOR MOST OF US, sending and receiving email is simple and fun. We use it to communicate with friends and family and to converse with our contemporaries in an informal manner. But while we may be unguarded in our tone when we email friends, a professional tone should be maintained when communicating with prospective employers.

Email is a powerful tool in the hands of a knowledgeable job-seeker. Use it wisely and you will shine. Use it improperly, however, and you’ll brand yourself as immature and unprofessional. It’s irritating when a professional email doesn’t stay on topic, or the writer just rambles. Try to succinctly get your point across—then end the email.

Be aware that electronic mail is often the preferred method of communication between job-seeker and employer. There are general guidelines that should be followed when emailing cover letters, thank-you notes and replies to various requests for information. Apply the following advice to every email you write:

• Use a meaningful subject header for your email—one that is appropriate to the topic.

• Always be professional and businesslike in your correspondence. Address the recipient as Mr., Ms. or Mrs., and always verify the correct spelling of the recipient’s name.

• Be brief in your communications. Don’t overload the employer with lots of questions in your email.

• Ditch the emoticons. While a 😊 or an LOL (laughing out loud) may go over well with friends and family, do not use such symbols in your email communications with business people.

• Do not use strange fonts, wallpapers or multicolored backgrounds.

• Sign your email with your full name.

• Avoid using slang.

• Be sure to proofread and spell-check your email before sending it.

Neal Murray, former director of the career services center at the University of California, San Diego, sees a lot of email from job-seekers. “You’d be amazed at the number of emails I receive that have spelling errors, grammatical errors, formatting errors—emails that are too informal in tone or just poorly written,” says Murray. Such emails can send the message that you are unprofessional or unqualified.

When you’re dealing with employers, there is no such thing as an inconsequential communication. Your emails say far more about you than you might realize, and it is important to always present a polished, professional image—even if you are just emailing your phone number and a time when you can be contacted. If you are sloppy and careless, a seemingly trivial communication will stick out like a sore thumb.

Thank-You Notes
If you’ve had an interview with a prospective employer, a thank-you note is a good way to express your appreciation. The note can be emailed a day or two after your interview and only needs to be a few sentences long, as in the following:

Dear Ms. Jones:
I just wanted to send a quick note to thank you for yesterday’s interview. The position we discussed is exactly what I’ve been looking for, and I feel that I will be able to make a positive contribution to your organization. I appreciate the opportunity to be considered for employment at XYZ Corporation. Please don’t hesitate to contact me if you need further information.

Sincerely,
John Doe

Remember, a thank-you note is just that—a simple way to say thank you. In the business world, even these brief notes need to be handled with care.

Cover Letters
A well-crafted cover letter can help “sell” you to an employer. It should accomplish three main things:

1. Introduce yourself to the employer. If you are a recent college graduate, mention your major and how it would apply to the job you are seeking. Discuss the organizations/extracurricular activities you were involved in and the part-time jobs you held while a student, even if they might seem trivial to you. Chances are, you probably picked up some transferable skills that you will be able to use in the work world.

2. Sell yourself. Briefly state your education and the skills that will benefit the employer. Don’t go into a lot of detail here—that’s what your resume is for—but give the employer a sense of your strengths and talents.

3. Request further action. This is where you request the next step, such as an appointment or a phone conversation. Be polite but sincere in your desire for further action.

Tips
In addition to the guidelines stated above, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

• Make sure you spell the recipient’s name correctly. If the person uses initials such as J.A. Smith and you are not certain of the individual’s gender, then begin the email: “Dear J.A. Smith.”

• Stick to a standard font like Times New Roman, 12-point.

• Keep your email brief and businesslike.

• Proofread everything you write before sending it.

While a well-crafted email may not be solely responsible for getting you your dream job, rest assured that an email full of errors will result in your being overlooked. Use these email guidelines and you will give yourself an advantage over other job-seekers who are unaware of how to professionally converse through email.

Written by John Martalo, a freelance writer based in San Diego.
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 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.

**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?

**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.

Written by Thomas J. Denham, managing partner and career counselor of Careers in Transition LLC.
Headhunting and the Economy

Companies are evolving new strategies each quarter in order to stay competitive. Most don’t have time to put ads in the paper to fill positions. And job listings were never a really good way to get a job, anyway.

These days, executive recruiters are increasingly responsible for finding and placing employees, particularly for high-level positions. Companies hire recruitment firms to find talented employees and bring them in to take high-salaried, high-profile jobs that are not often publicly advertised. Some industry surveys suggest that recruiters play a role in 30 percent to 40 percent of all new hires.

If you’re dissatisfied with a job, seeking a mid-career challenge, or just like to have options at your disposal, an executive recruiter may be the perfect agent of fate. And you don’t have to wait for one to call.

How Recruiters Work

Recruiting firms are employment agencies. Companies hire executive recruiters to find and bring in candidates for management positions—anyone with two years of professional work experience on up. The corporation is the recruiter’s client, and the job candidate is the product. Thus, recruiters normally find a person for the job, not a job for the person.

Put the recruiter to the test. How established is the firm? How professional (such as accounting, legal, advertising, marketing), or industry—such as high tech or pharmaceutical. Some firms have exclusive contracts to do all of a company’s outsource hiring.

Finding the Right Recruiter

Step one is finding a recruiting firm that works in your field. Begin by asking people you know. If your dream job is at a specific company, find out who does their recruiting.

Once you’ve found a firm, choose an individual recruiter with whom you can develop a good relationship. “Above all, find a person you trust,” says Howard Hegwer, a managing partner of Management Recruiters International, in Seattle. “If there is not a bond of trust, then the relationship will be unproductive and disappointing.”

Put the recruiter to the test. How established is the firm? How long has the person been recruiting? What did he or she do before? Does he or she have a solid working knowledge of your field? Years of experience are great, but not absolutely essential. Someone who spent 20 years in consulting can probably step right in and act as an excellent recruiter for consulting jobs.

Be certain you understand how the recruiting process will work. If you are currently employed—and hope to stay that way until you decide otherwise—discretion is a must. Insist on pre-approving your resume’s travel itinerary, so it doesn’t show up in the hands of your boss’s golf partner. The more initial information you give to the recruiter, the easier it’ll be for him or her to find the right fit for you.

If you can find two or three recruiters whom you trust and with whom you want to work, so much the better. Recruiters rely heavily on their personal contacts and arrangements with certain companies, so each recruiter widens your circle. But be careful not to make the circles so wide that they overlap. Recruiters may lose zeal to promote you if they send your resume to a company, only to find that another recruiter already did so. Tell your recruiters about one another so they have that information to work with.

Putting Your Best Head Forward

How can you best help the recruiter help you? The more you put into the process, the more you’ll get out of it. Be honest and clear about your career goals. Describe the type of position you want, your salary requirements, where you want to work, and anything that is prima facie unacceptable. “The more I know about a candidate and what they are looking for,” says Hegwer, “the more likely it is that I can make a great presentation about that person to a company.”

Remember that you’re the product the recruiter is selling. “Listen to the recruiter when it comes to interview technique and negotiation,” says David Gomez, CEO of David Gomez and Associates, a Chicago-based recruiting agency specializing in marketing, advertising, accounting, finance, and diversity recruiting.

Recruiters send people out to interview all the time, and they get feedback afterward from both sides on what worked and what didn’t. A good recruiter may be able to tell you the interviewing style of the person you’ll be meeting, and perhaps even some of his or her trick questions. Even if you’ve spent a number of years in your field and know who you are and what you’re worth, a recruiter can point out key details that will make your presentation of yourself more enticing to a potential employer.

WHAT TO EXPECT DURING THE INTERVIEW

THE INTERVIEW IS one of the most important steps in your job search. As an interviewee, you are primarily a salesperson and you are marketing yourself. It is during the interview that you will have a chance to talk positively about your skills and what you have to offer someone if you are hired. Since adequate preparation is the key to interview success, we recommend that you meet with a career counselor or use our online mock interview technology InterviewStream® (Note: You can use InterviewStream® once you have created an account on PeirceLink). A mock interview is in essence a practice interview that allows you to answer questions and receive immediate feedback on your strengths and opportunities for growth.

Topics Of Discussion During an Interview

- Your work experience, skills, abilities and education
- Your career goals and needs
- Your potential fit with a company and/or department

In general, most interviews are divided into these important components:
- 20% of the interview time is spent on ice breaking (making you comfortable)
- 40% of the interview time is spent on asking you questions
- 35% of the interview time is usually spent addressing your questions
- 5% of the interview time is spent closing the interview and discussing next steps (if any)

Asking Questions

You are EXPECTED to ask questions during an interview. Failure to do so may show lack of preparation and interest. You should research the company prior to the interview and show up prepared with three to five relevant questions. You should also listen attentively during the interview so you can formulate questions that are aligned with the content of the interview.

How to Prepare for an Interview

Preparing for your job interview begins before you even show up. Yet, interviewees are continually amazed at the number of applicants who drift into job interviews without any apparent preparation. Feeling nervous prior to a job interview is normal, but applicants who drift into job interviews without any apparent preparation. Feeling nervous prior to a job interview is normal, but interviewers are continually amazed at the number of applicants who drift into job interviews without any apparent preparation. Since adequate preparation is the key to interview success, we recommend that you meet with a career counselor or use our online mock interview technology InterviewStream® (Note: You can use InterviewStream® once you have created an account on PeirceLink). A mock interview is in essence a practice interview that allows you to answer questions and receive immediate feedback on your strengths and opportunities for growth.

INTERVIEW PHASE 1: The Introduction

During this phase, the interviewer gains a first impression immediately. The interviewer will observe your appearance, professionalism, personality, and energy level. You have five minutes to make an impression! Make it a good one by remembering to:
- Dress professionally. Wear a conservative suit and conservative colors and stay away from distracting ties, attention-grabbing jewelry, strong scents, or gum
- Groom your hair. Whatever style you select, it should be neat and conservative
- Be punctual. Arrive 10-15 minutes early
- Turn off your cell phone. Do not check it or use it until you have left the interview.
- Greet the interviewer with a firm handshake
- Bring extra copies of your resume and a separate, typed list of your professional references (at least 3)
- Bring your portfolio: include writing samples, published articles, spreadsheets, evaluations, etc., printed on good-quality paper

INTERVIEW PHASE 2: The Interview Content

The interviewer is going to ask questions about your educational background and work experience. You will be evaluated on your ability to communicate not only specific information, but your ideas, your level of confidence, competence, and potential. Many interviewers will also assess your ability to use critical thinking skills.

Keep in mind that just as the interviewer is considering your potential fit with the company, you must consider the company’s potential fit for you. Be sure to consider if the company’s culture is aligned with your needs and if the role will provide you the fulfillment you are seeking in a job. If you are interested in career growth, you should consider the potential for your development as well. When interviewing, keep these things in mind:
- Maintain eye contact with the interviewer
- Use brief statements, but steer away from straight “yes” and “no” answers
- Be confident, honest, positive, relaxed, and specific
• Think carefully before you speak; ask the interviewer questions if necessary
• Always show interest
• Speak clearly
• Don’t speak unkindly of others
• Don’t criticize yourself
• Volunteer any relevant information to the interview that hasn’t been covered
• Ask questions that indicate your interest in the job (type of work you will be doing, how your performance will be evaluated, details on the training program or other aspects of the company operation)
• Avoid questions concerning salary or benefits. Allow the interviewer to initiate those topics

Closing the Interview
Assuming the interviewer is interested in you, he/she may do a selling job on the company and talk about training, advancement, salary, and benefits. You may be asked if you have any final questions prior to the interview coming to a close. The interviewer will usually let you know what the next steps in the process are. If not, it is OK to ask what they are.

CDS tips on interviewing:
• Express continued interest in the job or inform the interviewer if you are no longer interested in the job
• Ask the following questions:
  - What’s the next step in the interviewing process?
  - When is a good time for me to follow up?
  - Is there any reason why I would not be considered for this opportunity?
• Thank the interviewer and give another firm handshake
• Ask for a business card
• Send the interviewer(s) a thank you card within 24 hours after the interview. In some instances, you can follow-up via email.
DRESSING FOR THE INTERVIEW

DEPENDING UPON YOUR fashion style, whether it is the latest trends for the club scene or merely college senior casual, a job interview may be cause for some drastic wardrobe augmentation.

For your interviews, some of your individualism might have to be shelved or kept in the closet. In most business and technical job interviews, when it comes to your appearance, conservatism and conformity are in order.

While many companies have adopted the “office casual” dress code, don’t try to set new standards in the interview. When in doubt, it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy. For men and women, a suit is the best bet.

Here are some guidelines:

MEN
- A two-piece suit will suffice in most instances.
- Solid colors and tighter-woven fabrics are safer than bold prints or patterns.
- Bright ties bring focus to the face, but a simple pattern is best for an interview. (A tip for larger men: Use a double Windsor knot to minimize a bulky appearance.)
- Wear polished shoes with socks high enough so no skin is visible when you sit down and cross your legs.

WOMEN
- A suit with a knee-length skirt and a tailored blouse is most appropriate.
- Although even the most conservative organizations allow more feminine looks these days, accessories should be kept simple. Basic pumps and modest jewelry and makeup help to present a professional look.
- Pants are more acceptable now but are not recommended for interviews.

Staying Within a Budget
For recent graduates just entering professional life, additions to wardrobes, or complete overhauls, are likely needed. Limited funds, however, can be an obstacle. Image consultant Christine Lazzarini suggests “capsule wardrobeing.” For example, by mixing and matching, she says, an eight-piece capsule wardrobe can generate up to 28 ensembles.

Before shopping, Lazzarini advises establishing a budget, 50% of which should be targeted for accessories. For women, “even a brightly colored jacket could be considered an accessory when it makes an outfit you already have look entirely different.”

The most important piece in any wardrobe is a jacket that is versatile and can work with a number of other pieces, according to one fashion expert. This applies to men and women. “If you focus on a suit, buy one with a jacket which may be used with other skirts or trousers,” says a women’s fashion director for a major national retailer. “Then add a black turtleneck or a white shirt. These are the fashion basics that you can build on.”

A navy or black blazer for men can work well with a few different gabardine pants. Although this kind of ensemble would be just as expensive as a single suit, it offers more versatility.

One accessory recommended by company representatives is a briefcase. “When I see one,” says one recruiter, “it definitely adds to the candidate’s stature. It is a symbol to me that the individual has done some research and that he or she is prepared.”

A Final Check
And, of course, your appearance is only as good as your grooming. Create a final checklist to review before you go on an interview:

- Neatly trimmed hair
- Conservative makeup
- No runs in stockings (bring an extra pair)
- Shoes polished (some suggest wearing your sneakers on the way to an interview and changing before you enter the interview site)
- No excessive jewelry; men should refrain from wearing earrings
- No missing buttons, crooked ties or lint

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

While many companies have adopted the “office casual” dress code, don’t try to set new standards in the interview. When in doubt, it is better to be too conservative than to be too flashy.

Taking a Casual Approach
“Office casual” is becoming the accepted mode of dress at more and more companies. The rules, however, for casual attire are subject to tremendous company-to-company variance. At some, “casual day” is a Friday-only observance, where the dress code is slightly relaxed—a sports coat and slacks for men and slacks and a sweater for women. At others, especially entrepreneurial computer companies, it’s shorts and sandals every day.

The safest fashion rule for new employees to follow is dress about the same as your most conservatively attired co-worker. As a new hire, don’t try to “push the boundaries” of casual attire.

Fashion Arrests: 1) Never wear denim jeans or shorts unless the vast majority of others do; 2) Don’t dress too provocatively—you’re at work, not at a dance club; 3) “Casual” doesn’t mean “sloppy”—your clothes should always be free of stains or holes; 4) Workout wear belongs at the gym.

Play It Safe: 1) Chinos or corduroy slacks are usually a safe bet for both sexes; 2) As for formal business attire, buy the best that your budget will allow; 3) If you will be seeing clients, dress appropriately for their workplace, not yours; 4) Go to the mall—most department and specialty stores have sections devoted to this style of office attire.
STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: Acing the Interview

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

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

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.
QUESTIONS ASKED BY EMPLOYERS

Personal
1. Tell me about yourself.
2. What are your hobbies?
3. Why did you choose to interview with our organization?
4. Describe your ideal job.
5. What can you offer us?
6. What do you consider to be your greatest strengths?
7. Can you name some weaknesses?
9. Have you ever had any failures? What did you learn from them?
10. Of which three accomplishments are you most proud?
11. Who are your role models? Why?
12. How does your college education or work experience relate to this job?
13. What motivates you most in a job?
14. Have you had difficulty getting along with a former professor/co-worker and how did you handle it?
15. Have you ever spoken before a group of people? How large?
16. Why should we hire you rather than another candidate?
17. What do you know about our organization (products or services)?
18. Where do you want to be in five years? Ten years?
19. Do you plan to return to school for further education?

Education
20. Why did you choose your major?
21. Why did you choose to attend your college or university?
22. Do you think you received a good education? In what ways?
23. In which campus activities did you participate?
24. Which classes in your major did you like best? Least? Why?
25. Which elective classes did you like best? Least? Why?
26. If you were to start over, what would you change about your education?
27. Do your grades accurately reflect your ability? Why or why not?
28. Were you financially responsible for any portion of your college education?

Experience
29. What job-related skills have you developed?
30. Did you work while going to school? In what positions?
31. What did you learn from these work experiences?
32. What did you enjoy most about your last employment? Least?
33. Have you ever quit a job? Why?
34. Give an example of a situation in which you provided a solution to an employer.
35. Give an example of a time in which you worked under deadline pressure.
36. Have you ever done any volunteer work? What kind?
37. How do you think a former supervisor would describe your work?

Career Goals
38. Do you prefer to work under supervision or on your own?
39. What kind of boss do you prefer?
40. Would you be successful working with a team?
41. Do you prefer large or small organizations? Why?
42. What other types of positions are you considering?
43. How do you feel about working in a structured environment?
44. Are you able to work on several assignments at once?
45. How do you feel about working overtime?
46. How do you feel about travel?
47. How do you feel about the possibility of relocating?
48. Are you willing to work flextime?

Before you begin interviewing, think about these questions and possible responses and discuss them with a career advisor. Conduct mock interviews and be sure you are able to communicate clear, unrehearsed answers to interviewers.
THE ART OF NEGOTIATING

AN 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.

Negotiation is a planned series of events that requires strategy, presentation and patience. Preparation is probably the single most important part of successful negotiations.

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.
SO YOU WANT to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 1.8 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 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 opm.gov.) It’s important to note that even agencies that are not strictly excepted 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.

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) 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), 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 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.
The second does not, that the second student will get the job offer.

...and experience, and with two drinks in your hand?

Employers ask younger employees to conduct online searches of Facebook, young recruiters may be active, and in many cases, employers already know that college students drink.

More and more companies are using such websites as a screening tool.

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.

Strategies for Safe and Strategic Social Networking

1. Be aware of what other people can see on your page. Recruiters use these sites or 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.

Written by Harriet L. Schwartz.
IS GRADUATE SCHOOL RIGHT FOR YOU?

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

1. Should I consider going to graduate school?

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

   Going to graduate school might not be a good idea if you…
   • are trying to delay your entry into the “real world” with real responsibilities and real bills.
   • are clueless about your career goals.
   • aren’t prepared to devote the time and hard work needed to succeed.
   • want to stay in school longer to avoid a poor job market.

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

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

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

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

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

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

   • Fellowships/Scholarships: A free education is always the best option. The catch is you need a high GPA, good GRE/GMAT/LSAT/MCAT scores and the commitment to search out every possible source of funding.

   • Teaching/Research Assistantships: Many assistantships include tuition waivers plus a monthly stipend. It’s a great way to get paid for earning an education.

   • Employer Sponsorship: Did you know that some companies actually pay for you to continue your education? The catch is they usually expect you to continue working for them after you complete your degree so they can recoup their investment.

   Benefits of attending graduate school full-time vs. part-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.
**DON’T FORGET THE SMALL COMPANIES**

**MOST STUDENTS CONCENTRATE** their job search on Fortune 500 corporations or other large, well-known companies with defined and approachable personnel departments. And in an economic climate that has proved challenging for small business, it would be wise to follow the path of “most students.”

But don’t count out the small companies just yet. Small businesses have been at the forefront of innovation, economic growth and job creation, and there’s no reason to doubt they’ll continue to find themselves in this position in the future.

Generally, any business with 200 or fewer employees is considered a small company. Whether the business has 20 employees or 20,000, the research you do in preparation for an interview opportunity will be the best gauge of the company’s outlook. As we’ve seen, large companies can be just as shaky as small ones, so the questions really come down to; “Is a small company right for you?” and “Are you right for a small company?”

There are several things to consider when deciding between a large company and a small one.

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**Is a Small Company Right for You?**

Small companies tend to offer an informal atmosphere, an all-for-one camaraderie and require more versatility and dedication on the part of the company and workers. Small companies are usually growing so they are constantly redefining themselves and the positions within them. Look at the following list of small company traits and consider which are advantages and which are disadvantages for you.

- You are given more responsibility and are not limited by job titles or descriptions.
- Your ideas and suggestions will be heard and given more attention.
- Career advancement and salary increases may be rapid in a growing company.
- You have less job security due to the high rate of failure for a small business.
- You have the opportunity to be involved in the creation or growth of something great.
- You may be involved in the entire organization rather than in a narrow department.
- You may be eligible for stock options and profit sharing.
- The environment is less bureaucratic; there are fewer rules and regulations and thus fewer guidelines to help you determine what to do and whether you’re succeeding or failing.
- Successes and faults are more visible.
- Starting salaries and benefits may be more variable.
- A dominant leader can control the entire organization. This can lead either to more “political games” or a healthy, happy atmosphere.
- You must be able to work with everyone in the organization.

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**Are You Right for a Small Company?**

Because most small companies do not have extensive training programs, they look for certain traits in potential employees. You will do well in a small company if you are:

- Self-motivated
- A generalist with many complementary skills
- A good communicator, both oral and written
- Enthusiastic • A risk-taker • A quick learner
- Responsible enough to get things done on your own

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There are fewer limitations, and it’s up to you to make the best or worst of that freedom. A small business often has a strong company culture. Learn that company’s culture; it will help you on your way up the corporate ladder.

**Finding a Job in a Small Company**

One of the biggest hurdles to finding a job in a small business is contacting a hiring manager. Good timing is critical. The sporadic growth of many small companies can mean sporadic job openings, so you need to network. A small business tends to fill its labor needs informally through personal contacts and recommendations from employees. Job hunters must find their way into the organization and approach someone with hiring authority. This means you must take the initiative. Once you have someone’s attention, you must convince him or her that you can do something for the company.

How do you find information on small companies? Try these techniques:

- Contact the chamber of commerce in the area you would like to work. Get the names of growing companies in the industry of your choice. Peruse the membership directory.
- Participate in the local chapter of professional trade associations related to your career. Send prospective employers a cover letter and resume, then follow up with a phone call.
- Read trade publications, business journals, and area newspapers for leads. Again, follow up.
- Speak with small business lenders such as bankers, venture capitalists, and small business investment companies listed in directories at local libraries.

Keep the following differences between large and small companies in mind as you conduct your job search:

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<th>Small Company</th>
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<tr>
<td>Centralized Human Resources</td>
<td>No HR</td>
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<tr>
<td>Formal recruiting program</td>
<td>No full-time recruiters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standardized hiring procedures</td>
<td>No standard hiring procedures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep resumes on file</td>
<td>Usually won’t keep resumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview held with recruiters and managers</td>
<td>Interview often held with the founder or direct boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career section on website</td>
<td>Little/no career section on website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hiring done months in advance of starting date</td>
<td>Hired to begin immediately</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal training programs</td>
<td>On-the-job training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Predetermined job categories</td>
<td>Jobs emerge to fit needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Always do your homework on the company, and persuade them to hire you through your initiative and original thinking. If you haven’t graduated yet, offer to work for them as an intern. This will give you experience, and if you do well, there’s a good chance that a job will be waiting for you on graduation day.

*Adapted with permission from the Career Resource Manual of the University of California, Davis.*
WORKING FOR A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

ARE YOU LOOKING for more from your future career than just a steady income? Do you find the traditional employment track unappealing? Do you want the chance to make a real impact in your community or even the world? Then a career in the nonprofit sector may be the answer.

What Is a Nonprofit?
Nonprofits (also known as not-for-profits) are organizations that promote a cause or provide a public service and are granted tax-exempt status by the Internal Revenue Service under section 501 of the Federal Tax Code. Nonprofits are often at the forefront of advocacy, social issues and scientific research. Some manage and promote the arts, culture or even history in communities across the nation. Political and labor groups are nonprofit organizations, as are professional and trade organizations. The broad category of nonprofits also includes non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide critical services to areas affected by war or natural disasters. Some promote environmental issues on an international scale.

With all these categories, it’s no wonder that over 1.5 million nonprofit organizations in the United States employ 8.7 million people or 5.9% of the total workforce. Amy Butler from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that, “Health professionals, educators, other professionals, health technicians, administrative support workers, and service occupations account for the majority of paid workers in the nonprofit sector,” in her 2009 “Wages in the Nonprofit Sector” article.

Is a Nonprofit Right for You?
Most nonprofit employees are not motivated by money or a prestigious title. Instead, they find fulfillment in a career that contributes to the welfare of others or advances a particular cause. Depending on your interests and beliefs, working for a particular nonprofit can be both challenging and fulfilling. You often work with people who share your altruism and passion about an issue or cause. And unlike the private sector or government, there are usually endless opportunities in entry-level positions where related experience is not required.

But working for a nonprofit is not all bliss and passion, nor is it an escape from work-related stress. Nonprofit employees may not have to meet sales goals or make money for their owners or shareholders, but they are still held accountable for their decisions by their funding sources and constituents. Some organizations are highly politicized. Resources tend to be limited for staff development, bonuses or the latest equipment. Nonprofit workers must learn to work effectively with a broad range of people, including their clients, elected officials, volunteers, donors and local civic leaders.

Top management is usually held accountable to a board of advisors or board of directors. The latter group has governing power, including the power to terminate top management. Instability in funding is often a frustrating factor among nonprofits (especially among the smaller ones), as it must be sought each year from a variety of sources. Today, receiving grants is becoming more difficult. Grantors are demanding increased accountability and results in exchange for their financial support.

Opportunities
Take a look at the current job openings in the nonprofit sector and you will see a broad range of jobs. Positions with arts organizations can include curators, writers, performing artists and event planners. Health agencies often hire counselors, researchers and lobbyists. All nonprofit companies require the services of grant writers, fundraisers (also known as development officers), accountants, information technology workers and office managers. While idealism and passion may be the fuel to energize an organization, solid administrative skills including writing, strong interpersonal skills, multiple business and political contacts, and good business acumen are highly valued and required to ensure the stability and longevity of an organization.

While idealism and passion may be the fuel to energize an organization, solid administrative skills are highly valued and required to ensure the stability and longevity of an organization.

But Will I Earn Enough?
Because of the wide variety of agencies in staff size, organization budget and scope of activities, it is nearly impossible to provide a salary range based on position. For example, the salary of the executive director of the Red Cross would be six figures, while the executive director of a two-person organization whose services are narrow and local may be in the low 30s. The Chronicle of Philanthropy periodically publishes the salaries of top executives in nonprofits. In general, the larger an organization and the wider its scope, the greater the salary—though it may still be below the national average. Career advancement is also more likely within a larger organization.

How and Where to Find Nonprofit Positions
If you are interested in working for a nonprofit organization, talk to others in the field to help you decide if the nonprofit sector is right for you. Schedule an appointment with three or four directors and program administrators to find out the differences (and similarities) between various agencies. Ask about the types of people typically hired and the types of jobs available. Find out what makes the field satisfying—and frustrating. Ask about pay, advancement and the skills most highly sought. Read public literature about different agencies, and serve as a volunteer with an agency of interest to you to become acquainted with the staff and the agency’s services. Volunteer positions sometimes become paid positions or provide you with solid leads and the “inside track” to paid positions.

When you are ready to apply for specific positions, use local resources such as the United Way, your local newspaper and the Internet, using the key word nonprofit. Opportunity Knocks (www.opportunityknocks.org) provides a comprehensive print and online version of nonprofit job opportunities throughout the United States. Many organizations (especially larger ones like the Red Cross) have their own websites that list job openings.

Wherever you choose to look, a job with a nonprofit organization can be a great way to start your career—and do something good for your community.

Written by Rosita Smith.
DEALING WITH STRESS IN THE JOB SEARCH

SEARCHING FOR A JOB after college can be an extremely stressful endeavor. All of the elements of the job search—researching employers, perfecting and targeting your resume, writing cover letters, preparing for interviews—take time. And as a soon-to-be college graduate finishing up your last year of school, time is not something you have a lot of. Every student and every job search is different. However, no matter your major, degree, or employment aspirations, there are steps that you can take to make the necessary task of finding a job less stressful.

Put Your Job Search in Perspective
College seniors about to enter the job market can be broadly placed into two camps: 1) Those who know exactly what they want to do after college, 2) and those who have no clue. Both types of students often bring added pressure to the job search process that is, for the most part, self-inflicted.

Students from the first camp set their sights high during the job search. They know what their dream job is, and anything less will be a disappointment. However, very rarely will a student fresh out of college be able to step into a position that fits their definition of an ideal job.

Occasionally, students are able to move into their idea of a perfect job right out of college, but students must be careful not to feel frustrated if that’s not the case. Often, they will have to work up the career ladder a few rungs until they arrive at the job they truly want. Just accepting this fact will take away some of the pressure.

For students who are vague on what career to pursue after college, the idea of looking for a job can be even more stressful.

Not knowing what type of job or career to pursue is a common anxiety among recent college graduates. Keep in mind that the process of looking for a job will probably alleviate this concern.

Make Sure You Are Ready
Many students approaching college graduation simply are not ready to enter the job market. Instead, these students may decide to travel, do volunteer work, or simply take time off to decompress before pursuing a full-time career. Other students may decide to seek a graduate degree or even a second bachelor’s degree before entering the job market. There is nothing wrong with delaying your job search as long as you do it for the right reasons.

But escaping the job search by entering into the process of applying to graduate schools when this is not really what you want to do is one of the biggest mistakes students can make. Once you’ve made a decision to pursue employment, don’t hesitate to do so. However, students who legitimately decide to delay their job search should keep in mind that they might lose advantages, such as college job fairs, college career services, on-campus interviews, and other services that colleges and universities provide. If you’re ready to start your career, this is the time to do it.

Get Moving and Keep Moving
Most college students are well acquainted with procrastination. Pulling an “all nighter” to cram for a test or write a term paper has almost become a college rite of passage. When it comes time to look for work students tend to procrastinate for various reasons: fear of failure (“what if nobody hires me?”), perfectionism (“I need to find the perfect job.”), lack of information (“where do I start?”), distractions (“I need time to go out with my friends.”), and the sheer size of the task before them (“I’ll never find the time to get this all done.”)

Looking for a job is a big task, and while you may have been able to learn a semester’s worth of chemistry the night before a final, you’re not going to be able to cram the job search into the week before graduation. The single best thing you can do to relieve job-search stress is to simply get started. Procrastination is the worst thing you can do in terms of creating stress during the job search.

Additionally, students need to think of looking for a job as a process; something they need to work on every week if not every day. Don’t apply for one job at a time and wait the result. This is a recipe for disaster. Keep actively pursuing a job until you actually accept an offer.

Have Reachable Goals
Since finding and securing a job is such a large process, students need to break it up into attainable goals. Make sure you write the goals down and know when they’ve been accomplished.

Having goals can reduce job search stress in two ways: First, it breaks a large process down into smaller, manageable chunks; and second, reaching goals provides the job seeker with a sense of accomplishment. As you move forward in the job search, you’ll find the stress replaced by a feeling of accomplishment.

Deal with Interview Anxiety
For many students, going on a job interview is the most stressful part of the entire job search process. The best way to alleviate some of this stress is simply to prepare. Make sure you know everything you can about the employer and the position, and make sure that you know exactly what skills, experience, and ideas you can bring to that employer.

Prepare answers to all the common questions that employers ask (such lists can be found online or in your career office), as well as other questions that are related specifically to your field of study and the position for which you are applying.

Also, make sure that you prepare a list of questions to ask the employer during the interview. Intelligent questions show that you have done your homework and that you have seriously thought about the position you are interviewing for. Lastly, make sure you go through a “mock interview.” By practicing your interview answers in front of a friend or a career counselor, you will be able to hone your interview skills and get rid of the pre-interview jitters.

Last Words of Advice
Think positively. Also, remember that a little stress can be a good thing if it doesn’t paralyze you. It can keep you motivated, and keep you reaching toward your goals. But when you feel your stress level getting out of hand, take a break. Walking the dog, working out at the gym, going for a swim—any type of physical activity—is a great way to relieve stress. And if your stress level continues to rise, just take a break from the search. A few days not thinking or worrying about it can do wonders for your stress level.

You can then re-enter the job search process refreshed and ready to land the job you want.

Written by Chris Enstrom, a freelance writer from Nashville, Ind., from interviews with career center directors Dr. Jeff Garis (Florida State University) and Deidre Sepp (Marist College).
THE COST OF LIVING INDEX

THE FOLLOWING IS a selection of cities where many graduating students accept offers. The cost of living index is based on the composite price of groceries, housing, utilities, transportation, health care, clothing and entertainment in each city listed. Use the calculation to compare salaries in different cities. For further information about the data below, please refer to www.bestplaces.net/html/col1.asp.

To compare information from other sources, refer to these websites: www.salary.com and www.homefair.com/homefair/calc/salcalc.html?type=to.

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Salary Comparison Equation

City #1 x Salary = $___
City #2

What is the New York City equivalent of a $40,000 salary in Orlando?

New York City 167 x $40,000 = $70,316
Orlando 95
Welcome to the Peirce College Alumni Association!

The Peirce College Alumni Association represents all graduates of Peirce. It is our job to keep you connected to the College through benefits, services, events and learning opportunities, creating a lifelong sense of community among all graduates. Association programs include work in Admissions, Career Development Services and Outreach, as well as sponsorship of special events, affinity groups and networking opportunities. We take advantage of print, electronic and social media to give you the information you need to be better connected to your fellow alumni and to the College.

I encourage you to get involved with Career Development Services and with the Alumni Association! As a graduate of Peirce, you can assist us with the recruitment, career preparation, mentoring, networking and placement of our current students. You can also help us host and plan alumni events and activities, provide financial support and volunteer. Visit our website at www.peirce.edu/alumni for more information or contact the Office of Institutional Advancement at alumni@peirce.edu or 215-670-9003.

Regards,

Rosemary Connors

Chief Alumni Engagement & Annual Giving Officer
“I truly believe that I would have never found my present position if I had not sought the help of the Career Development Services department at Peirce. The counselors walked me through every phase of successfully obtaining employment.”

MaryAnn Parrish, Graduated June 2005
Post-Bachelor’s Certificate, Paralegal Studies

“I came to Peirce College from a blue-collar background. I knew I could handle the academics, but I did not know how to find employment in a profession. The seminars, workshops and one-on-one help from the CDS department gave me the tools I needed to succeed. I am now a working paralegal at an excellent firm in the city, and I couldn’t have done it without them.”

Mark D’Annunzio, Graduated June 2011
Associate in Science, Paralegal Studies

“As a student who received my Associate Degree from Peirce in ’93, I did not think twice about returning to Peirce to earn my Bachelor’s Degree when I was considering a career change. Career Development Services has certainly given me the tools and assistance to take my career goals to a new level. Friendly, knowledgeable, professional, and contemporary are the first words that come to mind when describing the staff of Career Development Services.”

Joseph S. Cawley, Anticipated Graduation: April 2012
Bachelor of Science, Information Technology
Graduated 1993, Associate in Science, Paralegal Studies

“When I first sought assistance from Career Development Services, I was looking for just anything to help make me more marketable. Immediately, an entire plan of how this could be accomplished, from my resume to my speech for interviewing, was mapped-out with me. CDS provided me with internships that have helped me get the experience I need to enhance my skills and strengthen my resume. Now that I am almost finished pursuing my degree, I will continue to use CDS services and will find out what my next steps are.”

Dallas Daniels, Jr., Anticipated Graduation: August 2012
Bachelor of Science, Business Administration

“Career Development Services has gone further than providing resume writing advice. They have shown me the importance of networking, and have provided me with connections to several wonderful opportunities, including internship positions. As a result of an internship, I am now employed part time while attending classes, and I am gaining valuable practical experience to coincide with the material I am presently learning at Peirce. I am now much better prepared for reaching my career goals.”

Alexander Sullivan, Anticipated Graduation: December 2011
Pursuing Post-Bachelor’s Certificate, Paralegal Studies

“As a Peirce College alumna, it was a great opportunity to attend the Job Prep Series at Peirce College through Career Development Services. The workshops gave me practical and valuable tools to assist me in my present job search, after being in the job market for many years.”

Yvonne “Bonnie” Gardner, Graduated: June 2007
Associate in Science, Business Administration

Take advantage of all that Career Development Services offers you. We are here to support you, in every way we can to help you succeed.
The college that really works for working adults.