

CAREER ADVANTAGE PROGRAM



“Your Link to Your Future...
Your Future Starts Now”





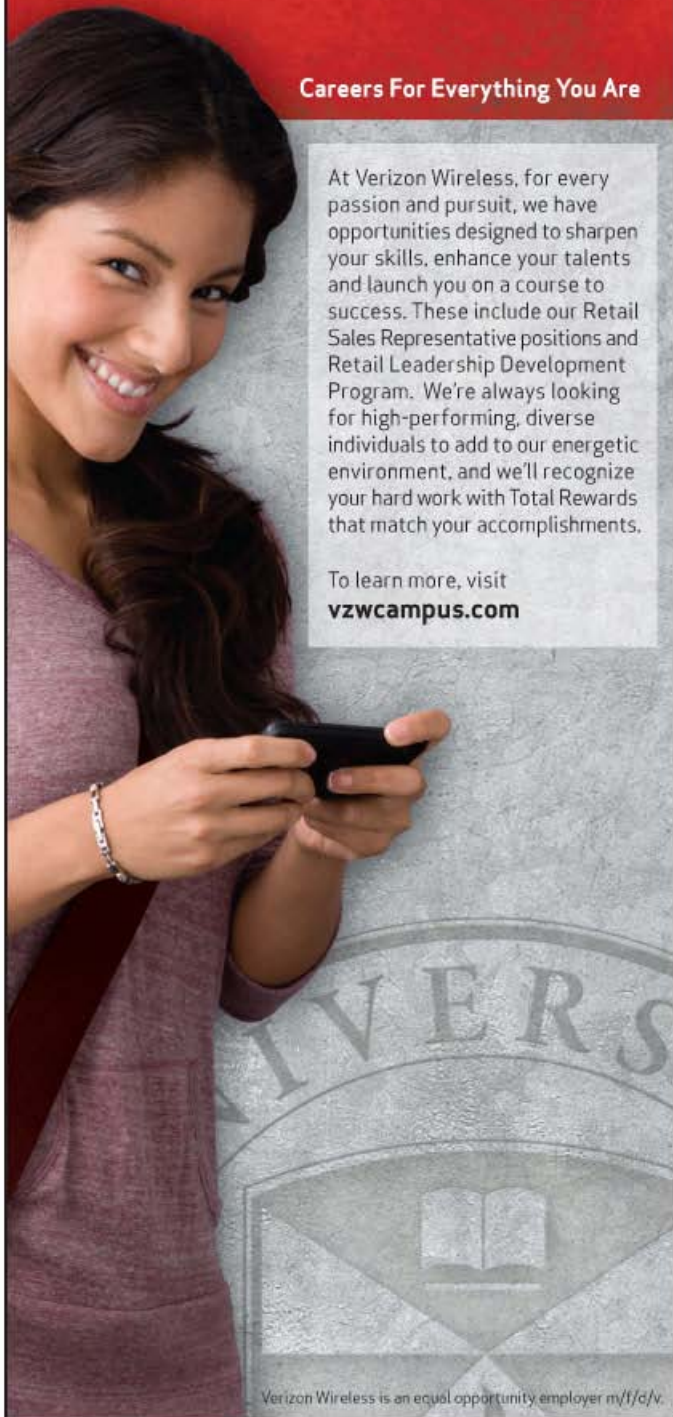
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Newport News Shipbuilding
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CAREER ADVANTAGE PROGRAM



Location

Second Floor of the North Wing
 of Webb University Center, Room
 2202

Satellite Offices

- College of Arts and Letters,
 Batten Arts and Letters
 Building (BAL), 1st Floor,
 Room 1006, full service office
- College of Business and
 Public Administration,
 Constant Hall, Room 1011, full
 service office
- College of Engineering and
 Technology, Kaufman
 Hall, Room 132, full service
 office
- College of Sciences,
 Mills Godwin Building (MGB),
 Room 236, full service office

Mission Statement

"We provide students and alumni with exceptional academically and professionally related employment services."

*Career Management Center
 Old Dominion University*

Career Management Center

Your Link to Your Future...



Staff

As a two-time recipient of the prestigious NACE/Chevron Award for our innovative integration of technology into the practice of providing service to our students, alumni and employers, all of our staff members are dedicated to serving your needs and to helping you use the office in the most meaningful way possible. We take your career decisions seriously. The Career Management Center is here to link you to your future by connecting you with resources that will aid you in identifying, researching and exploring possible careers, a process that can be difficult and confusing. We are trained to guide you through this process and help you build a strategy to identify opportunities.

Our Career Advantage Program is designed so you can make use of our services at any time during your academic career, and our virtual career center makes these services

available to you anytime from anywhere. We are here to help you prepare for the world of work. It is never too early to start making those important connections. We have the staff and the tools to help you do just that. Remember, **The Career Management Center is Your Link To Your Future...Your Future Starts Now.**

The Career Management Center promotes Equal Employment Opportunity guidelines and is a member of the Virginia Association of Colleges and Employers, both the Eastern and Southeastern Association of Colleges and Employers, the National Association of Colleges and Employers, the Mid-Atlantic Career Counseling Association, and the National Association of Student Employment Administration. We offer a comprehensive range of services and programs available to all matriculated Old Dominion University students and alumni.

How to Contact Us

By Phone: 757/683-4388 or 1-800-937-ODU1

By Fax: 757/683-4955

By Email: cmc@odu.edu

By Internet: www.odu.edu/cmc

By Mail: 2202 Webb Center,
Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA 23529-0524

Hours of Operation

8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday-Friday
or 24/7/365 www.odu.edu/cmc

CYBER CAREER CENTER

2202 Webb, University Center
Walk-in hours available. Consult our web site.

Who Can Help

Have questions?
Go to our web site to link to Instant Career Messaging, to contact a Cyber Coach.

E-mail cybercoach@odu.edu or your appropriate CMC staff member. You can also call 1-800-973-ODU1 and our Virtual Career Assistants are available to assist you 24/7/365.

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Cyber Career Center

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...Your Future Starts Now

Guide to the Career Advantage Program (CAP)

The Career Management Center offers you a full array of career assistance, resources, and experience through the Career Advantage Program (CAP).

CAP is a series of career-related events and services designed to include a major-related, credit-bearing practical experience. Professional staff members are available at all stages, both in person and electronically.

The Career Management Center is your link to career assistance resources and experience.

Career Assistance

Professional **Orientations and Seminars** help you learn about our services and develop the skills you need. Our Career Series is designed to assist you at any stage of your career process while Employer and College Events cover career related topics from a unique perspective.

The **Cyber Career Center** is an innovative multimedia training and learning facility dedicated to providing students and alumni with the most current information available on employers and careers via the Internet.

Cyber Career Coaches provide resume and cover letter reviews, job search strategies, and training on electronic resources. Walk-in assistance is available five days a week including extended electronic hours Monday through Thursday evenings. Contact a Cyber Career Coach at cyber-coach@odu.edu to receive assistance anytime, anywhere.

Our **Liaison to Distance Sites and Branch Campuses** is dedicated to providing career assistance from a distance, reaching out to commuter students, distance learners, and alumni.

College Liaisons, Intern/Co-op Coordinators, and Career Consultants specialize in career consultation based on your chosen major. Individualized appointments assist you with important career decisions and opportunities.

Career assistance is available through face-to-face and electronic communication via email, instant messaging, podcasts, and videoconferencing, including online, on demand, and live.

Career Resources

The Career Management Center has assembled a toolbox to help you at every stage of your career:

- **Career Exploration**—discover more about yourself and key tools to make career decisions
- **Resume Writing**—market your skills and experience
- **Cover Letter Writing**—learn the foundation of selling yourself to an employer
- **Job Search**—develop strategies be successful in today's job market
- **Networking**—tap the hidden job market
- **Interviewing**—communicate your accomplishments and set yourself apart
- **Evaluating a Job Offer**—find out the key factors you need to consider
- **Graduate School Option**—learn how to get that competitive edge when applying to graduate school

Specialized career tools give you hands-on resources:

ODU CareerLink is your network for success, link to your future 24/7 with resumes, jobs, interviews, contacts, and events from this CMC web-based communication system.

Focus, a career and education planning solution, guides you through work-related interests and value exercises, an analysis of your education, and assessment of your personality, preferences, skills, and developmental needs.

What can I do with this major? helps you identify areas of employment, employers, and strategies based on a selected major.

CareerSearch gives you access to over one million organizations and contacts based your chosen industry, geographic, position, and keyword search criteria.

Career Experience

The cornerstone of the Career Advantage Program is the opportunity to get real-world work experience related to your major through an internship, cooperative education or other practical experience.

Internships and Cooperative Education experiences are three-way partnerships between a student, an employer and Old Dominion University. You can gain experience and career focus, improve personal and professional development, enhance classroom performance, increase hiring potential after graduation, and negotiate higher starting salaries upon graduation.

Normally taking place in your junior or senior year, internships are single semester experiences that can be paid or unpaid. Co-ops are paid, multiple semester experiences, either alternating periods of full-time work and full-time study or in a parallel mode of continuous part-time employment and study.

For international experience, participate in the International Career Advantage Program (ICAP) and complete an internship abroad, often in conjunction with a Study Abroad program.

Student Employment provides part-time and seasonal positions on and off campus. If you are eligible for Federal Work Study funds as part of your financial aid package, you can use these funds in on-campus part-time jobs through the Student Temporary Assist Team, or off-campus through the Community Service Internship program.

Take advantage of the **On-Campus Recruiting Program** in the spring and fall of each year. Organizations send representatives to campus to conduct interviews for entry-level positions that begin after graduation, allowing you the convenience of interviewing with a variety of prospective employers without having to travel.

Apply for professional entry-level and experienced **Full-time Jobs**, posted by our employers in eRecruiting every year for new ODU graduates and alumni.

Job Fairs, both general and major specific, are held throughout the year at either the Webb University Center or Ted Constant Convocation Center.

Resume Writing Steps

Do It Right the First Time

The only job of a resume is to get you an interview. That's it. Your effectiveness in generating interviews will depend on your ability to communicate your skills and competencies to employers. Remember, your skills are transferable from one environment to another. Successful Old Dominion University job seekers understand the importance of the following steps.

Step One: Gather Information and Conduct a Self-Inventory

Review your personal information and experience. Start with a blank piece of paper and list each item that has relevance. This is not your resume—that will come in the next step. Instead, now is the time to get the relevant information out of your head and commit it to paper. Go for volume here, focus on details and specifics. You will condense this information later.

Contact Information

State your full name, current and temporary addresses, telephone numbers, and email address.

Career Objective

State what position you are seeking and describe the skills, abilities, experience, and interests that back up your candidacy. If you can't match yourself to the position, then perhaps you need to redefine your career goals. Need help with your objective? Come to the Career Management Center.

Education

Begin with current school (ODU) and list your degree/s, major/s, and minor/s. State the date you will graduate. For each school you've attended, list the city and state in which they are located. Include academic honors, awards, scholarships, projects, or publications. Juniors and up, please, no high school information. Generally, list your GPA if 3.0 or better. You can also list your GPA in your major if it's better than your cumulative. Military training can be listed here. Create a list of the relevant courses that complement your career objective.

Work Experience

Describe any paid and non-paid experiences that have helped you develop skills. Detail your title, employer name, location, and dates of employment. Focus on the work you performed, your contributions/achievements, and what skills you used/gained while there. Be specific—use numbers, figures and descriptions of the environment. You need to give the reader a mental picture of the experience.

College, Community and Professional Involvement

State name of organization and the role you played. Be sure to describe the organization for readers who may not be familiar with Old Dominion University or the Hampton Roads area. Don't just list organizations; instead, state contributions, offices held and demonstrated skills. Include dates of membership.

Organizations

List memberships, offices held, dates, projects, certifications and licensure.

Special Skills

Detail skills in foreign languages, computer hardware and software, laboratory skills, and any other skills you may have.

Interests and Activities

Again, no lists. Instead, detail any hobbies and endeavors that support your objective.

Step Two: Choose a Resume Format

The format you choose should reflect your own personal situation. Consider your qualifications, career objective, experience, and the kind of employer you are seeking before you select a style. The most common formats are:

Chronological—Jobs and education are listed in reverse chronological order—the most recent experience first. This format is best for those who have some experience directly related to their objective.

Functional Skills—Highlights qualifications, skills and related accomplishments with little emphasis on dates. This format is not recommended.

Combination—Similar to the functional resume, but with employment history listed in a separate section. This style is best for people who have little related experience but lots of transferable skills, new graduates, career changers who have gaps in their work history, and those who have had many similar jobs. It allows the writer list their experience in order of relevance to the position rather than by date or functional title.

Step Three: Write Your Resume

Describe your experience in terms of the functions you performed and what you accomplished. Use action verbs to strengthen descriptions. Employers are interested in how successful you were in the past because it predicts future performance.

Make It Clear

Do not use personal pronouns like "I" and "my." Do not use full sentences. Instead, use short bulleted phrases in past tense for past experience, present tense for present activity. Avoid "responsible for" and "duties included." Place the most relevant information first and avoid abbreviations. Your experience can be divided into "related" and "other" in order to highlight related experience first.

Objective Statement

Your objective statement can be general or specific. It should be work-centered, not self-centered, and should emphasize what you can bring to the position, not what the position can do for you. All other information on your resume should focus on the objective.

References

Names and addresses of references should not be included on your resume. List this information on another sheet of paper and bring it with you to interviews. Include the name, title, business address, phone number, fax and email address of each person.

Step Four: Critique Your First Draft

After you are satisfied with your first draft, ask several individuals who are familiar with the type of employment you are seeking to look it over. Always have someone at the Career Management Center check it before distribution.

Action Words

Use some of these action words in your descriptions:

Communication/ People Skills

Addressed
Advertised
Arbitrated
Arranged
Articulated
Authored
Clarified
Collaborated
Communicated
Composed
Condensed
Conferred
Consulted
Contacted
Conveyed
Convinced
Corresponded
Debated
Defined
Developed
Directed
Discussed
Drafted
Edited
Elicited
Enlisted
Explained
Expressed
Formulated
Furnished
Incorporated
Influenced
Interacted
Interpreted
Interviewed
Involved
Joined
Judged
Lectured
Listened
Marketed
Mediated
Moderated
Negotiated
Observed
Outlined
Participated
Persuaded
Presented
Promoted
Proposed
Publicized
Reconciled
Recruited
Referred
Reinforced
Reported
Resolved
Responded
Solicited
Specified
Spoke
Suggested

Summarized
Synthesized
Translated
Wrote

Creative Skills

Acted
Adapted
Began
Combined
Composed
Conceptualized
Condensed
Created
Customized
Designed
Developed
Directed
Displayed
Drew
Entertained
Established
Fashioned
Formulated
Founded
Illustrated
Initiated
Instituted
Integrated
Introduced
Invented
Modeled
Modified
Originated
Performed
Photographed
Planned
Revised
Revitalized
Shaped
Solved

Data/Financial Skills

Administered
Adjusted
Allocated
Analyzed
Appraised
Assessed
Audited
Balanced
Budgeted
Calculated
Computed
Conserved
Corrected
Determined
Developed
Estimated
Forecasted
Managed
Marketed
Measured

Netted
Planned
Prepared
Programmed
Projected
Qualified
Reconciled
Reduced
Researched
Retrieved

Helping Skills

Adapted
Advocated
Aided
Answered
Arranged
Assessed
Assisted
Clarified
Coached
Collaborated
Contributed
Cooperated
Counseled
Demonstrated
Diagnosed
Educated
Encouraged
Ensured
Expedited
Facilitated
Familiarized
Furthered
Guided
Helped
Insured
Intervened
Motivated
Prevented
Provided
Referred
Rehabilitated
Represented
Resolved
Simplified
Supplied
Supported
Volunteered

Management/ Leadership Skills

Administered
Analyzed
Appointed
Approved
Assigned
Attained
Authorized
Chaired
Considered
Consolidated
Contracted
Controlled

Converted
Coordinated
Decided
Delegated
Developed
Directed
Eliminated
Emphasized
Enforced
Enhanced
Established
Executed
Generated
Handled
Headed
Hired
Hosted
Improved
Incorporated
Increased
Initiated
Inspected
Instituted
Led
Managed
Merged
Motivated
Navigated
Organized
Originated
Overhauled
Oversaw
Planned
Presided
Prioritized
Produced
Recommended
Reorganized
Replaced
Restored
Reviewed
Scheduled
Secured
Selected
Streamlined
Strengthened
Supervised
Terminated

Organizational Skills

Approved
Arranged
Catalogued
Categorized
Charted
Classified
Coded
Collected
Compiled
Corrected
Corresponded
Distributed
Executed
Filed

Generated
Incorporated
Inspected
Logged
Maintained
Monitored
Obtained
Operated
Ordered
Organized
Prepared
Processed
Provided
Purchased
Recorded
Registered
Reserved
Responded
Reviewed
Routed
Scheduled
Screened
Submitted
Supplied
Standardized
Systematized
Updated
Validated
Verified

Research Skills

Analyzed
Clarified
Collected
Compared
Conducted
Critiqued
Detected
Determined
Diagnosed
Evaluated
Examined
Experimented
Explored
Extracted
Formulated
Gathered
Inspected
Interviewed
Invented
Investigated
Located
Measured
Organized
Researched
Reviewed
Searched
Solved
Summarized
Surveyed
Systematized
Tested

Teaching Skills

Adapted

Advised
Clarified
Coached
Communicated
Conducted
Coordinated
Critiqued
Developed
Enabled
Encouraged
Evaluated
Explained
Facilitated
Focused
Guided
Individualized
Informed
Instilled
Instructed
Motivated
Persuaded
Simulated
Stimulated
Taught
Tested
Trained
Transmitted
Tutored

Technical Skills

Adapted
Applied
Assembled
Built
Calculated
Computed
Conserved
Constructed
Converted
Debugged
Designed
Determined
Developed
Engineered
Fabricated
Fortified
Installed
Maintained
Operated
Overhauled
Printed
Programmed
Rectified
Regulated
Remodeled
Repaired
Replaced
Restored
Solved
Specialized
Standardized
Studied
Upgraded
Utilized

Step Five: Write a Final Draft and Make It Look Professional

Print your resume on 24 lb. cotton bond paper. Use pure white, cream, ecru or beige paper. Avoid pastels, grays or showy designs. These colors will not reproduce well if the

employer decides to make copies or forward your resume via fax. Never have a copy center photocopy your resume onto quality paper; it is not good enough for your resume. Always print your resume using a laser or high-quality inkjet printer.

Sample Chronological Resume

If you have only one address you can center it, or put it on either side.

Current Address:
123 Main Street
Portsmouth, VA 23703
757-456-5126

Your Name
myname@odu.edu

Permanent Address:
526 Big Willow Lane
Richmond, VA 24879
804-258-4587

OBJECTIVE

Objective should be as specific as possible.

An entry-level position in _____

Experiment with fonts and graphic lines to make your resume stand out, but don't go wild!

EDUCATION

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

Bachelor of Science in

Minor: Information Systems

Tidewater Community College, Virginia Beach, VA

Associate of Science in Business

GPA: 3.5

Spell out your degree name and be sure to get it exactly correct.

May 2009

GPA: 3.2

Advertise your GPA only if it is over 3.0.

June 2004

Relevant Courses: Managerial Accounting, Taxation, Principles of Insurance, Business Law, Finance, Accounting Information Systems

RELATED EXPERIENCE

Jones, Smith and Chang, Chesapeake, VA

Intern (Summer 2004)

- Use "ed" action verbs to describe the functions of your job, such as maintained, supervised, trained, prepared, conducted, assisted, created, edited, provided
- Qualify and quantify when possible
- Do not use "responsible for" or "duties included"
- Never use "I", "me", or "my"

Using 2 categories of experience, "related" and "other" experience allows you to put the most relevant experience first. Otherwise it should be in reverse chronological order.

First Baptist Church, Chesapeake, VA

Youth Group Treasurer (September 2002-August 2004)

- Treat this as you would a job since it is related to accounting

OTHER EXPERIENCE

Outback Restaurant, Virginia Beach, VA

Waiter (September 2002-August 2005)

- Served food and beverages; provided excellent customer service in fast-paced environment
- Assisted manager with evening deposit

ACTIVITIES

Member of Alpha Beta Delta fraternity, 2003-present

- Director of communications, 2004-2005
 - Prepare brochures, flyers, emails and other communications to members to publicize events

Old Dominion University Tennis Team, 2004-present

You can use a second page if you have more experience.

References available on request.

This says "the end." Your references should be on a separate sheet with the same header as your resume.

Sample Experienced Resume

Name

Street Address
City, VA 23622
(757) 555-1212
professional@whatever.com

Use the same header on cover letters, it becomes your personal stationary.

Header can be centered or on either the left or right; or your address, phone, email, etc. can be on one line after your name, which saves space and looks more like business letterhead

OBJECTIVE

Be clear, specific and employer focused.

PROFESSIONAL SUMMARY

- 3-5 short statements that summarize your education and experience
- Can also use some "soft" skills, such as leadership abilities
- Think of this as your 15 second commercial for yourself
- If the reader read no further he/she would have a good idea of what you can do

EDUCATION

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

Bachelor of Arts

Major: English

GPA: 3.9/4.0

You can list classes you have taken that are related to your objective in a subsection "Related Courses."

December 2009

RELATED PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Name of Employer, City and State

Your Title

- Describe the functions of your position, using action verbs ("ed")
- Quantify when possible
- Mention major accomplishments
- Keep bullet points short, but they can go over onto a second line if you need the space to fully describe the task
- Use a new bullet for each separate area; use a semi colon to further describe something mentioned already in the bullet

Dates of employment

Name of Employer, City and State

Your Title

- Use as many jobs as you can in this category, trying not to be repetitive in the duties
- Make sure that you are not using jargon that general managers might not understand

Dates of employment

ADDITIONAL EXPERIENCE

Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

Graduate Research Assistant

- Keep these descriptions short as "other" experience is not related to your goal, but used to show you worked and have transferable skills

2008 - 2009

Optional sections to be used as appropriate. They can be combined and/or re-named as required. Use bullets, as in employment section, to describe specifics.

COMPUTER SKILLS; TECHNICAL SKILLS; PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS, COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Tips for Creating a Successful Reference Page

1. Use a separate page for references and include your contact information. Use the same format for your header on cover letter that you chose for your resume. You should generally include three references on your reference page, and two out of the three should be people you know on a professional or academic level. Your professional references can include former or current employers, supervisors, co-workers, professors, advisors, or deans. Include someone who can comment on your performance at the workplace, in the classroom, or as part of a volunteer organization. Do not include any parents, siblings, family members, or classmates!
2. Always make sure to ask permission to share your reference's contact information **before** including them on your reference page.
3. Organize your references so that your strongest contact is first. You should include the person's name, company name, phone number, address, email and the relationship that they have to you. Be consistent in your formatting and make sure the contact information is accurate and up to date.
4. Whenever feasible, let your references know the job you are applying for or at least the type of position you are seeking. Consider giving them a copy of your resume so they will be familiar with your recent accomplishments, experience, and education. Reviewing your resume will jog their memories if it has been a few years since you worked with them, and it will help them be prepared for questions when contacted by your potential employers.
5. This should go without saying, but before including someone as a reference, make sure that he or she will give you a positive recommendation.

Your Name
Address
City, State Zip
phone
email

Use same header as on your resume

References

Employer Name
Employer Title
Work Address
City, State Zip
Work Phone Number
Work Email
The person's relation to you

Be consistent with the formatting throughout the page

Dr. John Doey ————— Include correct titles: Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms.

Assistant Professor, College of Education
Old Dominion University
2202 Webb Center
Norfolk, VA 23529
757-683-4388
jdoey@odu.edu
Dr. Doey was one of my professors and academic advisor while I attended ODU

Ms. Jane Doe
Manager, Monarch Sports Grill
4500 Hampton Blvd
Norfolk, VA 23508
757.423.4100
jdoe@springhillatODU.com
Jane Doe is my current supervisor at my part-time job

Cover Letter Writing

Make a Statement About Yourself

Employers consistently view good writing skills as a top priority when judging applicants. That's one of the reasons Old Dominion University places such a high value on its writing examination. You'll need to craft a cleverly written cover letter to compete in today's job market. A cover letter should accompany any resume you send to an employer. It introduces you and states how you found out about the position. It also explains how you are qualified and highlights the skills you possess. Lastly, it encourages the employer to refer to your resume. Use the same type of paper and header as your resume. Keep your cover letters clear and simple. Read it out loud to be sure that your writing flows properly.

A typical cover letter reads as follows:

Your name, address and date

Employer's name, title and address

Dear _____:

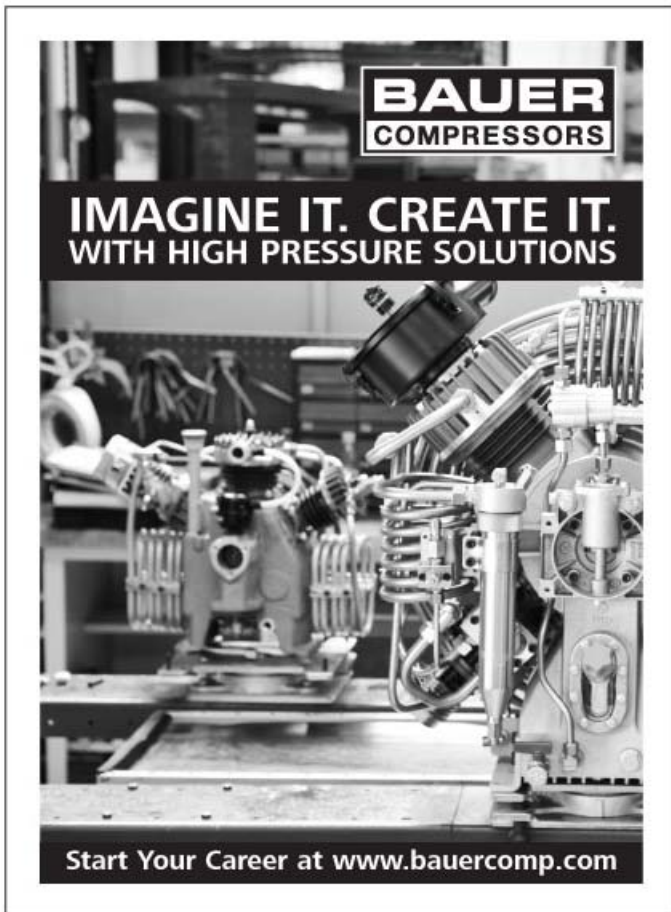
Paragraph 1: State your reason for writing; refer to the position you are seeking; state how you heard of the opening; prove that you have done some research on the company and position.

Paragraphs 2 & 3: Explain your interest in the job and how it matches with your career plans, skills, education and experience. **USE EXAMPLES FROM YOUR RESUME.** Prove that you are an ideal candidate.

Paragraph 4: Refer the reader to your resume. Close with a statement of what actions you will take next to set up an interview.

Sincerely,

Your Name
Enclosure



Sample Cover Letters

Alexander T. Smith

Current Address:
34 Argall Ave. Apt. 2
Norfolk, VA 23508
(757) 555-9653
ats100x@odu.edu

After June 1, 2011
56 Bluffton Place
Richmond, VA 24593
(757) 555-3942
atsmith@aol.com

October 3, 2010

Mr. Mathew Phillips
Associate Director
The Martin Group
P.O. Box 906
Richmond, VA 24591

Dear Mr. Phillips:

I am writing to apply for a Legislative Internship with The Martin Group. I learned of the position while researching internship opportunities at the Career Management Center at Old Dominion University.

I have an in-depth knowledge of the history of Virginia and have been planning on a career in politics for over a decade. I first developed an interest in state-level politics while at Jefferson High School where I was involved in a lobbying effort to ensure freedom of the press for high school journalists. This interest has grown as my awareness of political and social issues increased through my college course work in History. In my history courses I have mastered research and writing skills, as well as the evaluation of complex situations.

Courses in public speaking and English have further developed my communication skills. As a member of the Old Dominion University Greek Judicial Board, I review student cases, issue decisions, and keep all cases confidential to protect students' rights. I also have seven years experience in desktop publishing and received a number of prestigious national honors in high school for my writing, editing, and design skills. Eventually, my career goal is to work for a lobbying group on Capitol Hill or for the staff of a United States Senator. I have the skills and the drive to help The Martin Group in its lobbying efforts.

My resume is enclosed for your further consideration. The opportunity to serve as a legislative intern with The Martin Group would be an exciting challenge. I will contact you during the week of November 1 to arrange a mutually convenient time to discuss this. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Alexander T. Smith
Alexander T. Smith
enclosure

Valerie T. Marcado

232 Guilford Place • Norfolk, VA 23508 • (757) 555-6543 • vmar006@odu.edu
May 25, 2010

Patty Woollen
Laboratory Coordinator
Illinois Technical College
Marshall Hall 234
Logansburg, IL 23498

Dear Ms. Woollen:

I would like to apply for the position of Laboratory Technician, as posted in the eRecruiting system at Old Dominion University. I recently read an article in *Science* magazine about the research done on DNA at Illinois Tech. The advancements that scientists, such as Dr. Miller and Dr. Hipman, have made in the field of oncology are tremendous. I am extremely interested in doing research on DNA, especially in the field of oncology, and would like to begin my career in one of the laboratories at Illinois Tech.

My qualifications are based on lab work conducted while a Biochemistry student at Old Dominion University as well as internship experience at the Nauticus Maritime Center in Norfolk. I have studied topics such as genetics, molecular biology, cell biology, and analysis of DNA and proteins. Knowledge of these topics is complemented by the hands-on experience of lab work. My laboratory experiences include *Drosophila*, yeast, and *C. elegans* genetics; sequencing DNA, RFLP analysis, and cloning DNA using the polymerase chain reaction. In addition, my education has provided me with analytical thinking, critical analysis, writing, and interpersonal skills. I believe I have the necessary abilities to work with DNA at Illinois Tech.

My resume is enclosed for your inspection. I would be pleased to discuss this position and my qualifications in greater detail and will contact you within the next ten days. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Valerie T. Marcado

Valerie T. Marcado
enclosure

Email Correspondence

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.

Transferable Skills

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

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

What Are Transferable Skills?

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

Your transferable skills are often:

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

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

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

Identifying Transferable Skills

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

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

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

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

Working With People

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

Working With Things

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

Working With Data/Information

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

Easy Steps to Identify Your Transferable Skills

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Using Transferable Skills in the Job Search

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

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

Additional Tips to Help Identify Your Transferable Skills

1. Review your list of transferable skills with someone in your field(s) of interest to help you identify any additional skills that you may want to include.
2. Using a major job posting Web site, 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.

Job Search Strategies: Pros and Cons

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

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

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

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.

Getting the Most Out of a Career Fair

Many employers use career fairs—both on and off campus—to promote their opportunities and to pre-screen applicants. Career fairs come in all shapes and sizes, from small community-sponsored events to giant regional career expositions held at major convention centers.

Most career fairs consist of booths and/or tables manned by recruiters and other representatives from each organization. For on-campus events, some employers also send alumni representatives. Large corporations and some government agencies have staffs who work the career fair “circuit” nationwide.

An employer’s display area is also subject to wide variance. It could be a simple table with a stack of brochures and business cards and a lone representative or an elaborate multimedia extravaganza with interactive displays, videos, posters and a team of recruiters.

Fashions and Accessories

Generally, the appropriate attire for career fair attendees is more relaxed than what you’d wear to an actual job interview. In most cases, “business casual” is the norm. If you’re unsure of the dress code (particularly for off-campus events), it would be wise to err on the overdressed side—you’ll make a better impression if you appear professional. Think of it as a dress rehearsal for your real interviews!

Remember to bring copies of your resume (or resumes, if you have several versions tailored to different career choices), a few pens and pencils (have backups—they have a way of disappearing), a folder or portfolio and some sort of note-taking device (paper or electronic pad). Keep track of the recruiters with whom you speak and send follow-up notes to the ones who interest you. Don’t bring your backpack; it’s cumbersome for you, it gets in the way of others and it screams “student!” instead of “candidate!”

Stop, Look and Listen

Keep your eyes and ears open—there’s nothing wrong with subtly eavesdropping on the questions asked and answers received by your fellow career fair attendees. You might pick up some valuable information, in addition to witnessing some real-life career search “dos and don’ts.”

In order to maximize your career fair experience, you must be an active participant and not just a browser. If all you do is stroll around, take company literature and load up on the ubiquitous freebies, you really haven’t accomplished anything worthwhile (unless you’re a collector of key chains, mousepads and pocket flashlights). It is essential to chat with the company representatives and ask meaningful questions.

Here’s a great bit of career fair advice from Stanford University’s *Career Fair* guide:

“Create a one-minute ‘commercial’ as a way to sell yourself to an employer. This is a great way to introduce yourself. The goal is to connect your background to the organization’s need. In one minute or less, you need to introduce yourself, demonstrate your knowledge of the company, express enthusiasm and interest and relate your background to the company’s need.”

You’re a Prospector—Start Digging

The questions you ask at a career fair depend upon your goals. Are you interested in finding out about a particular career field? Then ask generalized questions about working within the industry. If you’re seeking career opportunities with a specific employer, focus your questions on the application and interview process, and ask for specific information about that employer.

Fair Thee Well

By all means, try to attend at least one career fair before beginning your formal job interviewing process. For new entrants into the professional career marketplace, this is a good way to make the transition into “self-marketing mode” without the formality and possible intimidation of a one-on-one job interview. It’s an opportunity that’s too valuable to miss.

A Few Words About Career Fair Etiquette

1. Don’t interrupt the employer reps or your fellow job-seekers. If someone else is monopolizing the employer’s time, try to make eye contact with the rep to let him or her know that you’re interested in speaking. You may be doing a favor by giving the recruiter an out. If all else fails, move to the next exhibit and plan to come back later.
2. If you have a real interest in an employer, find out the procedures required to secure an interview. At some career fairs, initial screening interviews may be done on the spot. Other times, the career fair is used to pre-screen applicants for interviews to be conducted later (either on campus or at the employer’s site).
3. Sincerity always wins. Don’t lay it on too thick, but don’t be too blasé either. Virtually all employers are looking for candidates with good communication skills.
4. Don’t just drop your resume on employers’ display tables. Try to get it into a person’s hands and at least say a few words. If the scene is too busy and you can’t get a word in edgewise, jot a note on your resume to the effect of, “You were so busy that we didn’t get a chance to meet. I’m very interested in talking to you.” Look around the display for the recruiter’s business card (or at the very least, write down his or her name and get some literature with the company’s address) and send a follow-up note and another copy of your resume.
5. If you know ahead of time that one of your “dream companies” is a career fair participant, do some prior research (at minimum, visit their Web site and, if available, view their company DVD). A little advance preparation goes a long way and can make you stand out among the masses of other attendees.

Federal Jobs: Working for Uncle Sam

So you want to work for the federal government? You are not alone. Uncle Sam employs approximately 1.8 million civilian workers worldwide. Federal employees receive a generous benefits package, and as of 2009 they earned an average salary of \$72,572. As the largest employer in the U.S., the federal government offers a variety of career opportunities unparalleled in the private sector. Federal employees work with (and create) cutting-edge technology. They create policy, programs and services that impact the health, safety and welfare of millions of people worldwide.

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

Types of Federal Jobs

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

Hiring managers for excepted service agencies are not required to follow civil service hiring procedures or pick from a pool of candidates who have been rated on a points system. Instead, these agencies set their own qualifications requirements, as occurs in private industry. However, both competitive service and excepted service positions must give preference to veterans who were either disabled or who served in combat areas during certain periods of time. The Federal Reserve, the Central Intelligence Agency and the National Security Agency are examples of some excepted service agencies. (For a complete list, visit usajobs.gov/ei6.asp.) It's important to note that even agencies that are not strictly excepted service agencies can have excepted service positions available within them.

OPM and USAJOBS

The U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) acts as the federal government's human resources agency. OPM's Web site (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 Web site 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 Web site. But you should also make sure to visit the Web sites 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.

International Students and the Job Search

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

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

Bureau of U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) Regulations

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

Importance of Skills and Career Field

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

Role of Employers

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

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

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

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

Strong Communication Skills

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

- Provide a well-prepared resume that includes desirable skills and relevant employment experiences.
- Clearly convey your interests and ability to do the job in an interview.
- Understand English when spoken to you and can effectively express your thoughts in English.

It's important to be able to positively promote yourself and talk with confidence about your education, relevant skills and related experiences. Self-promotion is rarely easy for anyone. But, it can be especially difficult for individuals from cultures where talking about yourself is considered inappropriate. When interviewing in the United States, however, you are expected to be able to explain your credentials and why you are suitable for the position.

Be sensitive to the interviewer's verbal and nonverbal cues. Some international students may not realize when their accent is causing them to be misunderstood. Interviewers are sometimes too embarrassed or impatient to ask for clarification, so be on the lookout for nonverbal clues, such as follow-up questions that don't match your responses or sudden disinterest on the part of the interviewer. Also, make sure you express proper nonverbal communication; always look directly at the employer in order to portray confidence and honesty.

If your English language skills need some work, get involved with campus and community activities. These events will allow you to practice speaking English. The more you use the language, the more proficient you will become. These activities are also a great way to make networking contacts.

Career Center

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

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

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

Written by Rosita Smith.

On-Campus Interviews

Every year the Career Management Center hosts recruiters from private industry, government agencies, the armed forces, and public education who interview Old Dominion's graduating students. Various support services are available to help you prepare for campus interviews.

All employers interviewing on campus use **preselection**, which allows them to review your resume in advance of the recruiting date and to select whom they wish to interview.

How to Register and Participate in the On-Campus Interviewing Program Through ODU CareerLink

1. Complete ODU CareerLink Student Registration Agreement Form. Log into ODU CareerLink and complete student profile and upload resume.
2. After completing the above information, click on Jobs and Internships (job search) and enter search criteria, scroll to bottom and select Opportunities with Interview Schedules Only. Click on the Job Title to view the details of the job.
3. Locate the How To Apply section on the side of the page and follow the directions.
4. If necessary, select your Resume/Cover Letter and click Submit.

How to Sign-up for An Interview

1. Log into your ODU CareerLink account. Click on the Application tab on the navigation bar; the Applications page displays with a list of your active applications. The status of your active applications is displayed in the Employer Decision column.
2. Once an employer has accepted your job application, you may sign up for an interview slot. Note—Remember to check your email regularly as ODU CareerLink will automatically send an email to you when the employer accepts you for an interview.
3. Click on Details/Sign Up...On the Application Details page, under Employer Decision, click on Sign up for Interview.
4. On the interview Sign Up Page, find the schedule date you would like to sign up for and select the Time radio button associated with the time slot you desire. Click Save and your slot is reserved.

All degree-seeking Old Dominion University students graduating in December and May or August can participate in on-campus interviews. Plan to interview during both the fall and spring semesters, since many employers recruit only once a year.

Other Campus Recruiting Information

- Check preselection, updates and changes frequently.
- Notify Career Management Center staff 48 hours in advance to cancel or reschedule an interview.
- Maintain an accurate list of your interview dates, times and recruiter names for your records and for follow-up correspondence such as thank-you notes.
- Inform Career Management Center staff of any problems you encounter with a recruiter who conducts your interview in an unethical or illegal manner.
- Report all job offers to Career Management Center staff.

The Day of the Interview

- All campus interviews are held in the Career Management Center.
- Arrive 15 minutes before your interview to relax and make a good first impression with your interviewer.
- Report directly to the Career Management Center to sign in for your interview.
- A campus interview is a business appointment and should be treated as such. If you anticipate being late for your interview, please phone the receptionist at 683-4388 as early as possible. You may also use this number to confirm the time of your interview.

No-Show Policy

You will be considered a NO-SHOW if you fail to report for a scheduled interview or if you cancel an appointment less than 48 hours before the interview. Your first no-show requires a letter of apology to the interviewer within five days of the no-show, with a copy sent to the Career Management Center. If you miss a second interview, you automatically forfeit your interview privileges with the Career Management Center. If you have been preselected, we will inform the employer that you cannot interview on campus.

Informational Interviews

One of the easiest and most effective ways to meet people in a professional field in which you are interested is to conduct informational interviews. Informational interviewing is a networking approach which allows you to meet key professionals, gather career information, investigate career options, get advice on job search techniques and get referrals to other professionals.

The art of informational interviewing is in knowing how to balance your hidden agenda (to locate a job) with the unique opportunity to learn firsthand about the demands of your field. Thus, never abuse your privilege by asking for a job, but execute your informational interviews skillfully, and a job may follow.

What motivates professionals to grant informational interviews?

The reasons are varied. Generally, most people enjoy sharing information about themselves and their jobs and, particularly, love giving advice. Some may simply believe in encouraging newcomers to their profession and others may be scoping out prospects for anticipated vacancies. It is common for professionals to exchange favors and information, so don't hesitate to call upon people.

How do you set up informational interviews?

One possible approach is to send a letter requesting a brief informational interview (clearly indicating the purpose of the meeting, and communicating the fact that there is no job

expectation). Follow this up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. Or, initiate a contact by making cold calls and set up an appointment. The best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred from one professional to another, a process which becomes easier as your network expands.

How do you prepare for informational interviews?

Prepare for your informational interviews just as you would for an actual job interview: polish your presentation and listening skills, and conduct preliminary research on the organization. You should outline an agenda that includes well-thought-out questions.

Begin your interview with questions that demonstrate your genuine interest in the other person such as, "Describe a typical day in your department." Then proceed with more general questions such as, "What are the employment prospects in this field?" or "Are you active in any professional organizations in our field and which would you recommend?" If appropriate, venture into a series of questions which place the employer in the advice-giving role, such as, "What should the most important consideration be in my first job?" The whole idea is for you to shine, to make an impression and to get referrals to other professionals.

Always remember to send a thank-you letter to every person who grants you time and to every individual who refers you to someone.

Ten Rules of Interviewing

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

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

1 Keep your answers brief and concise.
Unless asked to give more detail, limit your answers to two to three minutes per question. Tape yourself and see how long it takes you to fully answer a question.

2 Include concrete, quantifiable data.
Interviewees tend to talk in generalities. Unfortunately, generalities often fail to convince interviewers that the applicant has assets. Include measurable information and provide details about specific accomplishments when discussing your strengths.

3 Repeat your key strengths three times.
It's essential that you comfortably and confidently articulate your strengths. Explain how the strengths relate to the company's or department's goals and how they might benefit the potential employer. If you repeat your strengths then they will be remembered and—if supported with quantifiable accomplishments—they will more likely be believed.

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

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

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

7 Ask questions.
The types of questions you ask and the way you ask them can make a tremendous impression on the interviewer. Good questions require advance preparation. Just as you plan how you would answer an interviewer's questions, write out specific questions you want to ask. Then look for opportunities to ask them during the interview. Don't ask about benefits or salary. The

interview process is a two-way street whereby you and the interviewer assess each other to determine if there is an appropriate match.

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

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

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

In Summary

Because of its importance, interviewing requires advance preparation. Only you will be able to positively affect the outcome. You must be able to compete successfully with the competition for the job you want. In order to do that, be certain you have considered the kind of job you want, why you want it and how you qualify for it. You also must face reality: *Is the job attainable?*

In addition, recognize what it is employers want in their candidates. They want "can do" and "will do" employees. Recognize and use the following factors to your benefit as you develop your sales presentation. In evaluating candidates, employers consider the following factors:

- Ability
- Loyalty
- Personality
- Acceptance
- Recommendations
- Outside activities while in school
- Impressions made during the interview
- Character
- Initiative
- Communication skills
- Work record

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

Are You Ready for a Behavioral Interview?

Tell me about a time when you were on a team, and one of the members wasn't carrying his or her weight." If this is one of the leading questions in your job interview, you could be in for a behavioral interview. Based on the premise that the best way to predict future behavior is to determine past behavior, this style of interviewing is popular among recruiters.

Today, more than ever, each hiring decision is critical. Behavioral interviewing is designed to minimize personal impressions that might cloud the hiring decision. By focusing on the applicant's actions and behaviors, rather than subjective impressions that can sometimes be misleading, interviewers can make more accurate hiring decisions.

A manager of staff planning and college relations for a major chemical company believes, "Although we have not conducted any formal studies to determine whether retention or success on the job has been affected, I feel our move to behavioral interviewing has been successful. It helps concentrate recruiters' questions on areas important to our candidates' success within [our company]." The company introduced behavioral interviewing in the mid-1980s at several sites and has since implemented it companywide.

Behavioral vs. Traditional Interviews

If you have training or experience with traditional interviewing techniques, you may find the behavioral interview quite different in several ways:

- ✓ Instead of asking how you *would* behave in a particular situation, the interviewer will ask you to describe how you *did* behave.
- ✓ Expect the interviewer to question and probe (think of "peeling the layers from an onion").
- ✓ The interviewer will ask you to provide details and will not allow you to theorize or generalize about events.
- ✓ The interview will be a more structured process that will concentrate on areas that are important to the interviewer, rather than allowing you to concentrate on areas that you may feel are important.
- ✓ You may not get a chance to deliver any prepared stories.
- ✓ Most interviewers will be taking notes throughout the interview.

The behavioral interviewer has been trained to objectively collect and evaluate information and works from a profile of desired behaviors that are needed for success on the job. Because the behaviors a candidate has demonstrated in previous positions are likely to be repeated, you will be asked to share situations in which you may or may not have exhibited these behaviors. Your answers will be tested for accuracy and consistency.

If you are an entry-level candidate with no previous related experience, the interviewer will look for behaviors in situations similar to those of the target position:

"Describe a major problem you have faced and how you dealt with it."

"Give an example of when you had to work with your hands to accomplish a task or project."

"What class did you like the most? What did you like about it?"

Follow-up questions will test for consistency and determine if you exhibited the desired behavior in that situation:

"Can you give me an example?"

"What did you do?"

"What did you say?"

"What were you thinking?"

"How did you feel?"

"What was your role?"

"What was the result?"

You will notice an absence of such questions as, "Tell me about your strengths and weaknesses."

How to Prepare for a Behavioral Interview

- ✓ Recall recent situations that show favorable behaviors or actions, especially those involving coursework, work experience, leadership, teamwork, initiative, planning and customer service.
- ✓ Prepare short descriptions of each situation; be ready to give details if asked.
- ✓ Be sure each story has a beginning, a middle and an end; i.e., be ready to describe the situation, your action and the outcome or result.
- ✓ Be sure the outcome or result reflects positively on you (even if the result itself was not favorable).
- ✓ Be honest. Don't embellish or omit any part of the story. The interviewer will find out if your story is built on a weak foundation.
- ✓ Be specific. Don't generalize about several events; give a detailed accounting of one event.

A possible response to the question, "Tell me about a time when you were on a team and a member wasn't pulling his or her weight" might go as follows: "I had been assigned to a team to build a canoe out of concrete. One of our team members wasn't showing up for our lab sessions or doing his assignments. I finally met with him in private, explained the frustration of the rest of the team and asked if there was anything I could do to help. He told me he was preoccupied with another class that he wasn't passing, so I found someone to help him with the other course. He not only was able to spend more time on our project, but he was also grateful to me for helping him out. We finished our project on time and got a 'B' on it."

The interviewer might then probe: "How did you feel when you confronted this person?" "Exactly what was the nature of the project?" "What was his responsibility as a team member?" "What was your role?" "At what point did you take it upon yourself to confront him?" You can see it is important that you not make up or "shade" information and why you should have a clear memory of the entire incident.

Don't Forget the Basics

Instead of feeling anxious or threatened by the prospect of a behavioral interview, remember the essential difference between the traditional interview and the behavioral interview: The traditional interviewer may allow you to project what you might or should do in a given situation, whereas the behavioral interviewer is looking for past actions only. It will always be important to put your best foot forward and make a good impression on the interviewer with appropriate attire, good grooming, a firm handshake and direct eye contact. There is no substitute for promptness, courtesy, preparation, enthusiasm and a positive attitude.

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?
8. Define success. Failure.
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/supervisor/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.

Questions to Ask Employers

1. Please describe the duties of the job for me.
2. What kinds of assignments might I expect the first six months on the job?
3. Are salary adjustments geared to the cost of living or job performance?
4. Does your company encourage further education?
5. How often are performance reviews given?
6. What products (or services) are in the development stage now?
7. Do you have plans for expansion?
8. What are your growth projections for next year?
9. Have you cut your staff in the last three years?
10. How do you feel about creativity and individuality?
11. Do you offer flextime?
12. Is your company environmentally conscious? In what ways?
13. In what ways is a career with your company better than one with your competitors?
14. Is this a new position or am I replacing someone?
15. What is the largest single problem facing your staff (department) now?
16. May I talk with the last person who held this position?
17. What is the usual promotional time frame?
18. Does your company offer either single or dual career-track programs?
19. What do you like best about your job/company?
20. Once the probation period is completed, how much authority will I have over decisions?
21. Has there been much turnover in this job area?
22. Do you fill positions from the outside or promote from within first?
23. What qualities are you looking for in the candidate who fills this position?
24. What skills are especially important for someone in this position?
25. What characteristics do the achievers in this company seem to share?
26. Is there a lot of team/project work?
27. Will I have the opportunity to work on special projects?
28. Where does this position fit into the organizational structure?
29. How much travel, if any, is involved in this position?
30. What is the next course of action? When should I expect to hear from you or should I contact you?

Qualities Desired in New College Graduates

By Businesses, Industries and Government Agencies

Energy, Drive, Enthusiasm and Initiative

Hard-working, disciplined and dependable
 Eager, professional and positive attitude
 Strong self-motivation and high self-esteem
 Confident and assertive, yet diplomatic and flexible
 Sincere and preserves integrity
 Ambitious and takes risks
 Uses common sense

Adapts Textbook Learning to the Working World

Quick learner
 Asks questions
 Analytical; independent thinker
 Willing to continue education and growth

Committed to excellence
 Open-minded, willing to try new things

Knowledge of Computers

Established word processing, spreadsheet, database and presentation software skills
 Excellent computer literacy

Communications Skills

Good writing skills
 Excellent oral communication skills
 Listens well; compassionate and empathetic
 Excellent problem-solving and analytical skills
 Creative and innovative

Leadership Skills

Organizational skills and attention to detail

Accepts and handles responsibilities
 Action-oriented and results-driven
 Loyal to employers
 Customer-focused
 Team-spirited; understands group dynamics
 Always willing to help others
 Mature, poised and personable
 Diversity aware; treats others with respect and dignity

Oriented to Growth

Acceptance of an entry-level position; doesn't view required tasks as "menial"
 Academic excellence in field of study
 Views the organization's total picture, not just one area of specialization
 Willing to accomplish more than required

Network Your Way to a Job

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

Networking Defined

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

Eight Keys to Networking

- 1. Be Prepared** First, define what information you need and what you are trying to accomplish by networking. Remember, your purpose in networking is to get to know people who can provide information regarding careers and leads. Some of the many benefits of networking include increased visibility within your field, propelling your professional development, finding suitable mentors, increasing your chances of promotion and perhaps finding your next job.
Second, know yourself—your education, experience and skills. Practice a concise, one-minute presentation of yourself so that people will know the kinds of areas in which you are interested. Your networking meeting should include the following elements: introduction, self-overview, Q&A, obtaining referrals and closing.
- 2. Be Targeted** Identify your network. For some, “I don't have a network. I don't know anyone,” may be your first reaction. You can start by listing everyone you know who are potential prospects: family members, friends, faculty,

neighbors, classmates, alumni, bosses, co-workers and community associates. Attend meetings of organizations in your field of interest and get involved. You never know where you are going to meet someone who could lead you to your next job.

- 3. Be Professional** Ask your networking prospects for advice—not for a job. Your networking meetings should be a source of career information, advice and contacts. Start off the encounter with a firm handshake, eye contact 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.

Dealing With Rejection in the Job Search

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

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

Eight Guidelines to Ward Off Rejection

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

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

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