To Social Education

HOW TO START YOUR CAREER AFTER COLLEGE

JASON/NAVALLO

Driven to Succeed

How to Start Your Career after College

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What will you learn from this book?

How to start your career after college. More importantly, you will learn how to find and get the right job to start a successful career after college.

If you're asking yourself:

- Which field should I choose?
- How should I write my résumé?
- Where should I look for jobs?
- How should I prepare for interviews?
- How should I start a job search?

This book will answer all of your questions.

Call me your career advisor. I'm here to point you in the right direction and weather you through the storm. What makes me qualified? Well, I am hired by some of the world's largest corporations to find and hire talented people to work for them. I work with hundreds of successful people, including executives, in their job searches. I know what employers look for in applicants, and I know the mistakes you can easily avoid to significantly increase your chances of being hired.

So, which field should you choose? Find out on the next page.

Which field should you choose?

Ideally, in a field that's growing and that interests you. Believe it or not, a lot of successful people just "fell into" the career fields they work in. However, you don't have to rely on chance like they once did. If you have your heart set on working in a specific career field, like medicine or law, I urge you to skip this section and move on to the next. If you're not sure which field you want to work in, here's a quick guide to help get you started.

The answer is in your research. Find the answers to the following questions and write down all the fields that interest you:

- 1. Which fields are growing? (Tip: Search online for "[year] growing fields")
- 2. Which fields relate to your college major? (Tip: Search for "[major] career fields")
- 3. Which fields are your friends and family members working in? (Tip: Ask them!)
- 4. Which fields have you always been interested in?
- 5. Which fields do you have prior working experience? (*Tip: If you interned at a brokerage firm one summer, "stockbroker" can be added to your list.*)

Next, sort the list by your level of interest. This is your "hit list." Although you should apply for all entry-level positions that interest you, these fields should be your primary focus. Learn as much as you can about each one, especially the typical career path so you'll know where you can be five to ten years from now.

How should you write your résumé?

With great detail. You are your own brand. When employers hear or read your name, you want them to think just like society does about products from corporate brands Trump, Ferrari, Michael Kors, and Louis Vuitton—high quality. There's a reason why the world listens when Bill Gates and Warren Buffett speak. They spent years branding themselves and strived to be the best in their industries. Benjamin Franklin once said, "It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it." Warren Buffett has a similar quote: "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."

Think of your résumé as a product, like the iPhone or Samsung Galaxy. When employers are looking at your résumé, they're deciding whether or not they're going to "buy" you. Why do we buy things? Sometimes we buy on impulse and experience "buyer's remorse" afterward, but most of the time, it's because we see value in certain things and because that particular product stands out from the rest. It's like that famous quote says, "Fortune favors the bold." You are unique, and there is something about you that makes you stand out from your competition. What is it? Only you know, and it's your job to write it in just one page for all of the recruiters and employers to see. Some jobs can get hundreds of résumés, so how will you make the cut? I'll show you.

The Format

There are many ways you can format your résumé. Your college or university's career center usually provides résumé templates and other valuable resources you can use. You can also find plenty of résumé templates online. It really comes down to what you're the most comfortable with. However, here are the main parts of a résumé:

Name and Contact Information

Always at the top and centered, unless there's another style you like. I like to put my name in bold and have the font be the largest on the résumé. Below your name should be your home address, followed by your cell phone number (or home phone number) and email address. As a side note, when you're sending your résumé to an employer, you want to be professional. You're not professional with a voicemail that has background music or an email address like jaymoney710@email.com (not my real email address, by the way).

All employers want to hire professionals, so setup a voicemail saying something like, "You have reached the voicemail of [your name]. Please leave your name, number, and a brief message, and I'll get back to you as soon as I can," and change your email to a format like "first.lastname@email.com."

Example:

Jason B. Navallo

Street Address
City, State, Zip Code
(XXX) XXX-XXXX
firstname.lastname@email.com

Objective (or Professional Summary)

An objective (or professional summary) gives employers a clearer picture as to what you're trying to accomplish. Some applicants prefer to write short objectives, like "A recent college graduate seeking an entry-level position in the financial services industry." Others like to be more creative and outline their strengths in a few sentences. Again, it all depends on what you're the most comfortable with. If you're confused, an online search for "résumé objectives" will give plenty of examples to put you on the right track.

Example:

<u>**Objective**</u>: A recent college graduate seeking an entry-level position in the [industry name] industry.

Education

Next is your education. The main parts are: 1) college or university, 2) degree type, 3) major(s)/minor(s), 4) GPA, and 5) graduation date (or expected graduation date). You could also include any honor societies or organizations you've been a part of, or just include these in a different section on your résumé.

Example:

Baruch College – New York, NY

Bachelor of Business Administration January 2012

Major: Finance & Investments, Major GPA: 3.4, Overall: 3.1

Awards/Honors: Peter F. Valone Academic Scholarship, UNICCO Scholarship

Work Experience

To be placed after your name and contact information, objective (or professional summary), and education, your work experience should be presented in reverse chronological order, or with your most recent work experience listed first. There are five parts that make up a work experience: 1) company name, 2) position title, 3) location, 4) dates of employment, and 5) responsibilities and accomplishments.

Example:

Discounted Jewelers, Inc. – Marketing Intern

New York, NY – Summer 2013

- Increased the company's Twitter followers by over 350%
- Implemented strategies that increased website traffic by over 600%
- Installed and maintained a company blog to update loyal customers

Other Experience

I recommend you add an "Other Experience" (or whatever title you choose) section to sell your other accomplishments to employers. Are you involved with charitable organizations? Have you co-founded a small start-up in the past? Were you the leader or officer of an organization on campus? Whatever you accomplished, add it here. The same formatting exists as with your "Work Experience" section, although your "Other Experience" section should always come after.

Example:

Chess Club - President

New York, NY - April 2008-Present

- Lead a 50+ person organization with a \$10,000 annual budget
- Initiated marketing campaigns that increased yearly membership by over 60%

Computer Skills (or Technologies)

Another important section is your "Computer Skills" or "Technologies" (especially if you're planning to work in IT). This section is important because it shows employers and recruiters which computer hardware and software you have experience with. There are many ways to do this, but the key here is to list and indicate your level of proficiency for each one.

Example:

Computer Skills

Proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access) Experience with financial systems, including Bloomberg Professional

Languages

Speaking different languages can be valuable for some employers, which is why you should include your language skills on your résumé. On top of listing which languages you know, it's important you indicate your level of fluency for each one too, so you don't paint the wrong picture of how well you know them!

Example:

<u>Languages</u>: English (Fluent), Portuguese (Conversational), Spanish (Elementary)

Personal Interests

I also recommend adding a "Personal Interests" section to your résumé. It's usually no more than one line and placed before your references, and listing a few of your favorite hobbies (the relevant ones too, of course) can help you connect with employers. You may just have them whispering to themselves something like "Oh, he's a golfer too?" or "Wow, he's a runner—that shows commitment." You'd be surprised at how some of the littlest things can make all the difference in whether or not you'll be called for an interview. However, your work experience is more important, so if you don't have enough space for this section on your résumé, don't add it.

Example:

Personal Interests: Investing, Golf, Snowboarding, Paintballing, Football

References

The last section of a résumé is usually references. Most people simply put "References: Available upon Request," letting the employer know to ask if they're interested in speaking with their references. It's important, in this case, that you speak to your previous employer(s) first to get permission before you include them as a reference. Also, if an internship or work experience didn't end too well, be cautious of adding someone as a reference if you know they may not have the kindest words to say about you.

Example:

References: Available upon Request

Keywords

Large corporations can get hundreds of résumés every day. Recruiters don't read every single one. Instead, they have a computer program that filters through them and displays only those résumés that have specific keywords. For example, if you're applying for an entry-level position in business management, recruiters may look for the keywords "management" and "customer service" in résumés (as a lot of business management positions can require experience in these areas), and only those résumés that have the specific keywords will be displayed.

Keywords are also important to help recruiters determine whether or not you're qualified for the job. Most recruiters are not even close to being experts in the fields they recruit for. For example, the average technical recruiter is not technical at all. Most haven't written a single line of code before. However, they are good at picking apart a résumé and making "educated guesses" as to whether or not a candidate is worth presenting to their client (the company the job is for), which heavily depends on the candidate placing the right keywords on their résumé for them to see.

What keywords should you use? It all depends on the position you're applying for. A good way is to dissect the job description. What responsibilities match up with what you've done in the past on an internship, or, say, a class project? For example, let's say you've found an administrative assistant job opening you're interested in and one of the key responsibilities is maintaining large Excel

spreadsheets. Now, let's say you've done this all last summer on an internship. Shouldn't you include this on your résumé somehow? A good bullet point would be "Maintained complex Excel spreadsheets..." This couldn't make it any clearer to the recruiter that you have the specific work experience they're looking for in a candidate for that position. However, a lot of students don't take the time to tailor their résumé before applying for positions. Although you may still get called up for interviews, spending just a couple of minutes beforehand tailoring your résumé will significantly increase your chances of being interviewed.

Be Interesting

Interest is the glue that sticks us to things. I remember asking myself, "There will be hundreds of people who will apply for the same jobs as I am. How can I make my résumé more interesting? What will make me stand out from my competition?" The key is to think about all of the interesting and challenging projects you've worked on, either in class or in your spare time.

In my case, I had a Series 7 license at eighteen years old and I created websites that thousands of people visit every day. Overall, it makes me more interesting. I was the teenager who passed the test a lot of grown men, including doctors and lawyers, can't pass, as well as the entrepreneur who created websites that provided valuable information for thousands of people every week. Now, compare that to ninety-nine other candidates' résumés that all look very similar to each other. Who would you choose?

I want you to reflect upon the past four years of your life and write down all of the most interesting projects you've worked on that you can remember. What were you the most passionate about? It could have been a project for one of your classes or something you've done in your spare time. What did you do that you are most proud of? I've met a lot of people who could not answer this question the first time I asked them. Why? They just didn't believe what they were doing was great to begin with. It takes a friend, family member, or even a bystander to tell them before they begin to realize it.

While going up to your friends and asking them what you're particularly good at may be weird for you, a good indicator would be the awards you've won in the past. Are you a talented athlete or musician? Are you an aspiring entrepreneur

who has worked on developing ideas in the past? Are you part of a club or organization where you took on the top leadership position? These are questions you have to ask yourself to find out what makes you interesting. What are you better at than others? Write your thoughts down and pick the ones you're the most proud of to include in your résumé.

Words That Sell

So, you know you have to include relevant keywords in your résumé and you have to be as interesting as possible (without confusing anyone), but how should you say it? For example, let's say you took on a social media internship at a local jewelry store one summer. Your day-to-day tasks included managing the store's Twitter account and promoting the company website as much as you could. Interesting, but from the start it doesn't sound too complicated, right? Now, let's compare two different ways of how to sell your experience to the employer, and let's assume all the following information is true:

Résumé A

Discounted Jewelers, Inc. – Marketing Intern

New York, NY - Summer 2013

- Managed the company Twitter account (Boring)
- Promoted the website by using social media and word of mouth (Boring)
- Created and maintained a blog to attract more visitors (Oh yea, and boring)

Résumé B

Discounted Jewelers, Inc. – Marketing Intern

New York, NY – Summer 2013

- Increased the company's Twitter followers by over 350%
- Implemented marketing strategies that increased website traffic by over 600%
- Designed, installed, and maintained a company blog to update loyal customers

Which one would you choose? Both are true, but one is "telling" and the other is "selling" the employer. You will not get a phone or face-to-face interview without first selling the employer with your résumé. They will not pick up the phone to call you unless they think you'd be worthwhile to speak to. If you're having trouble coming up with what to say, ask a friend to help you. You may not be the best writer or salesman, but you know how to sell yourself. It may come easier for others, but the harder you work, the easier it'll become for you. Sell yourself.

Applying without Experience

You will come across a lot of positions that require "1 to 3 years relevant experience." You may not have that relevant experience to offer the employer, just a college degree and the willingness to learn. The hard truth is that relationships matter a lot in job hunting. If you're not fortunate enough to have a friend or family member help get you a job to start a career in a field you're interested in, don't be discouraged. You just have to work harder than those who do. The skills you'll learn about job hunting today will benefit you many years down the road when you're working with me to find you a better job with more pay and career growth. Going back to today, here's what you can do:

- 1. <u>Demonstrate passion</u> Show employers you actually want the job, and that you're not just another student/graduate who's submitting résumés at every posting they see. That's why I suggest you add an "Objective" to your résumé, so you can tell the employer exactly what you want to accomplish. Show them you want to work for them and that you will be an employee who will learn quickly and do whatever it takes to get the job done.
- 2. <u>Consider contracts</u> I know a lot of successful people who started off working on short-term contracts. They took whatever opportunities they could get, gained some experience, worked hard, and ended up being hired full-time by great companies where their careers really took off. You can get short-term contracts by working through consulting agencies (search online for "[location] staffing agencies" and "[field] staffing agencies").
- 3. <u>Consider internships</u> If you can afford to, consider taking an unpaid internship to get your foot in the door for a particular field. However, I would aim for contract positions first, unless you find an internship that's an amazing opportunity, where there's a strong chance of being hired once it's over.

Not every employer wants to hire you. This is true for everyone, no matter how successful they are or what field they're in. The harder you work, the greater the chances you'll have of finding those employers who do want to hire you. Keep working and never give up.

Brevity

In the beginning of your career, your résumé should be no more than one page. When you're older and have more work experience, you'll have to add more pages, but for now, you must keep it simple. You also don't want to "oversell" yourself on your résumé either. You don't want to be the annoying salesman you meet in a store who doesn't know when to stop talking. There is such a thing as overselling, even on résumés.

Example:

Discounted Jewelers, Inc. – Marketing Intern

New York, NY – Summer 2013

- Increased Twitter followers by over 350%, sending out over fifty tweets a day
- Successfully implemented brilliant strategies that increased website traffic by over 600%, and answered over one hundred emails a day
- Chief architect over a beautiful blog that many people visit every day

That probably wasn't the most realistic example, but do you see what I mean by overselling? The key is to keep it short and sweet. Sell yourself just enough to keep the employer interested, but don't overload them with too much information. You should simply be selling your most relevant accomplishments. Ask yourself, "Did I do anything more important?" after you think you've completed all the bullet points for a particular work experience. If anything else comes to mind, go back, revise, and repeat the question.

Be a Junior Candidate

If you're applying for an entry-level job, sell yourself as an entry-level candidate. A lot of times, students feel the need to oversell their accomplishments by giving themselves senior titles like vice president or director of a project when it was only them involved in the project to begin with. Senior titles are appropriate for some things, like clubs or organizations in college, but a lot of students have a sense of entitlement and feel they should be a vice president coming right out of college. Although it is fine to be confident in yourself, you're not facing reality, and you'll end up wasting your time when you should just look for positions that are for entry-level candidates.

One of my college friends had this sense of entitlement and sold himself way too much on his résumé. What ended up happening? He kept applying for assistant vice president/vice president roles! The second the employer walked into the room for the interview, he knew they were both wasting each other's time. On top of that, my friend would walk out of the interview all depressed, not knowing what went wrong. You have to crawl before you can walk, and the sooner you realize that, the greater the chances you'll have of landing your first job. "0-3 years' experience" is what you should be looking for on a job description. If it's anything more than that, you're wasting your time!

The key at this point in your life is to get your foot in the door in any way possible, even if the more junior roles aren't that appealing to you. You'll have time later on to prove yourself and take on more challenging and interesting roles as you gain work experience, but for now, you have to focus all of your energy on just getting into a company so you can learn and grow as a professional.

Internships

You may have had internships in college, which is great. However, you must emphasize that these positions were internships on your résumé, as opposed to part-time or full-time jobs. A lot of times, candidates list "[position title]" as opposed to "[position title] (intern)," which is a huge difference. You have to remember that the average recruiter will spend less than ten seconds reviewing your résumé. If they see a work experience on your résumé for three months, which you did not indicate clearly as an internship, and your next work experience was two years later, they're going to assume you were two years out of work because either you were not taking your career seriously or because it took that long to find an employer who would hire you. You cannot afford to have them think that. So, label each internship as either "intern" or "internship" and you'll make your résumé a lot easier to read.

Part-Time Jobs

You also may have had to take on a number of part-time jobs in college to make some pocket money and to help pay off your student loans. This also probably hurt your chances with taking on internships during the summer to gain some

work experience in a corporate environment. However, even if this was the case, those part-time jobs could be used to your advantage too.

For example, let's say there are two candidates who are interviewing for the same position, which in this case would be an entry-level bookkeeper position for a midsize company. Both go to the same school, with the same major and almost the same exact GPA. One candidate, Brian, was able to take accounting internships during the summer, working for local accounting firms. The other candidate, Richard, had to work part time at his parents' Laundromat. Since he's been working there for the past ten years, Richard's developed strong business knowledge and communication skills starting from an early age. On top of that, he is also in charge of all the bookkeeping for the Laundromat, so he's had some bookkeeping experience before, although at a much smaller level.

If you compare the two candidates, they both have a lot to offer. Brian, on the one hand, has the "ideal" experience—interning for local accounting firms. The other, Richard, may not have the internship experience, but he does have some bookkeeping experience, on top of years of customer service and sales experience, which all companies can appreciate. At the end of the day, if your situation is much like Richard's, don't be discouraged. Every work experience you have can be presented as a good thing. It all depends on how well you sell it.

Watch the Gaps

Recruiters and hiring managers don't like gaps on résumés. There's nothing worse than a candidate who has four- to twelve-month gaps between jobs. It shows instability and leads a lot of recruiters to think that perhaps you are not a good candidate because it took you so long to find another job. When you're in college, you have to worry about this problem as well. If you graduated already and haven't been able to find a job for six months because you decided to travel, be sure to explain that to the employer if they ask you.

As time goes on and you are still jobless, it will only become harder for you to find a job. Employers don't want to hire candidates that other employers don't want. It's the exact opposite, actually. If you find yourself six months to even a year unemployed, you're only making it harder for yourself. That's why you should put in a full effort each day in applying and interviewing for jobs, even before

graduation (if possible). It's also a good idea to remain active while looking (volunteering/continuing education) to show that you're always doing something. However, it is most important to not be picky and to take on any job (even if it's an internship) until you find something better, as long as it's in a field you're interested in and/or you're learning a valuable skillset.

Be Different

Employers want to hire candidates who are unique. You are not unique if your résumé looks like your friends'. For example, my first experience working as a recruiter was when I was searching for a graphic designer in college who could draw a mascot for a website I was planning. I was looking for someone to draw a caricature of an ordinary guy wearing a polo shirt and jean shorts. However, I soon realized that it's quite difficult finding someone with the talent to draw something like that, let alone someone who would draw it for a reasonable price.

Driven to find someone, I signed up as an employer on the career website for a local arts school. As an employer, I was able to search through students' résumés. I must've gone through 200 of them, and I ruled out 196 within a blink of the eye. Do you know which résumés I saved to my hard drive? Those that were unique. Of the résumés I went through, 196 were so dull, I thought to myself, "These people are really art majors?" The four I had chosen took the time to create these beautiful résumés that really demonstrated their artistic ability. However, content also matters in making you different, not just entertainment and glitter, so it's equally important that you spend as much time focusing on the actual content of the résumé as with making it look pretty and different.

When you're putting together your résumé, you have to ask yourself, "How can I make mine different from my competitors'?" Whether it's picking a unique font, creating a personal website (I recommend <u>Bluehost</u> to do this), or adding new and interesting sections to your résumé, always aim to be one step ahead of who you are up against.

Putting It All Together

Putting together the perfect résumé takes time, and it's not something you can do in one shot. You can always improve it. The last thing you want to do is submit

a résumé with typos in it or a résumé that is not clear in what you're trying to accomplish as a professional. Once you feel you've put together a decent résumé, pass it along to some of your friends and family members and have them review it. Also, your college or university may have a career center with advisors who can review it and provide honest feedback and suggestions for improvement.

The font, color, and size also matter. You should use the same font type throughout your entire résumé, as well as the same color. I recommend you use black, unless of course you are an art major! It would be okay if there is some blue because of your email address, and you may want to bold certain areas of your résumé, like the companies you've worked for or certain keywords you'd like to stress, but keep it all the same color. You also want to keep the same font size as well. The font size can be larger for some things, like company names, but they should match up, for example, on all of the bullet points (accomplishments) for all of your work experience.

<u>Note</u>: Always keep a copy of your résumé in both .DOC and .PDF formats. Although .PDF documents secure your résumé's layout, most recruiters will ask you for a .DOC version so they can add it to their company's database. Also, ensure that your résumé is properly formatted for the different versions of Microsoft Word. Sometimes, if the employer has a different version, the résumé you've worked so hard on could look like a complete mess, which is something you cannot afford to let happen.

Where should you look for jobs?

Everywhere. What good is a product if no one knows about it? You may have crafted the perfect résumé, but if it's only saved on your computer, how will you be successful in your job search? You have to get your résumé in front of as many "right" employers as you can. Some employers may not have a job for you at the moment, and those who do may already have a ton of résumés to review by now. Who should you be sending your résumé to? What are the some of the best ways to send it? You will learn in this section.

Finding the Right Job Opportunities

There are two ways to find the right job opportunities to apply for. One, you should work with recruiters directly who work on entry-level positions. Two, you should apply for entry-level positions on websites such as LinkedIn, Monster, Indeed, and Dice. A lot of times, the positions you apply for online are posted by recruiters anyway. One of the best ways to be informed of jobs on LinkedIn is by following those companies you are interested in working for. Most companies have their own LinkedIn page where you can view all of their job openings. Each job opening also lets you see who posted the job, along with a link to their profile so you can contact them (the employer/recruiter) directly. I'll be discussing LinkedIn and its features a little later.

As I've said before, it's also important that you tailor your résumé to the job you're applying for, because you will come across interesting positions for which your originally-crafted résumé may not sell yourself enough or in the right way. For example, if you're a marketing major and the position you're applying for is in advertising, and the objective on your résumé says "To obtain an entry-level position in the marketing industry," you may as well have thrown your résumé out the window. A lot of students tend to rush, thinking that success will come with a greater volume of résumé submissions, which is partially true, but you'll have a greater "hit ratio" just by spending a couple of minutes beforehand tailoring your résumé to the actual job description.

Working with recruiters directly is another smart way to land your first job. A lot of times, recruiters have the "in" you need to get your résumé noticed by the

hiring managers because they already have established relationships with them. You can easily find them and establish relationships yourself. An online search for "[location] [industry] recruiters" will show you hundreds of recruiting agency websites, with each usually having an online résumé submission form.

Another way to establish relationships is by cold calling the recruiters directly (after finding the phone number on their website). I get a handful of these calls every week. It's easy. When you actually get them on the phone, all you have to say is that you're an entry-level candidate and you're interested in any entry-level job opportunities they may have. They'll give you their email address so you can send them your résumé, but they may not have any job opportunities for you at the moment. That is why you should work with a handful of recruiters, because different recruiting agencies have different clients. You should work with a few, say around four or five. You can work with more recruiters, but keep track of everyone you speak with, as well as the positions you're being submitted for.

To find the right jobs, you have to search online using the right keywords. If you're looking for jobs in customer service, search for "customer service jobs." Indeed has an "Advanced Search" feature you can use to target the positions you're looking to apply for. This will allow you to search for positions that have specific keywords, as well as remove those positions from search results that have specific keywords as well. This feature comes in handy when you're trying to pull up entry-level positions in certain areas, as well as remove those positions that are for more senior professionals or in areas that are not of interest to you.

So, if you're searching for "customer service" on Indeed, you're going to pull up both junior and senior positions alike in many different areas. Just by doing a search right now for "customer service" job openings in "New York, NY," you'll see there are thousands of open positions. Now, click on "Advanced Job Search," and where it says "With the exact phrase," type in "customer service AND entry-level." Then click "Find Jobs." By doing this, you've now saved yourself a lot of time and narrowed your search down to only customer service positions that are entry-level. However, performing just one search like this isn't going to cut it. You have to always come up with new ways to narrow your searches down to only those jobs you'd be interested in.

Open to Relocating

Relocating could be one of the best ways for you to land a job you'll love. Let's face it, where you're living now may not be the best place for you to find an entry-level job in one of the career fields on your "hit list." Besides getting the position you want, the cost of living in some places may be a lot lower as well. For example, the price of a condo in Manhattan could buy you a nice size house in other states like Texas.

Relocating will also put you ahead of a lot of your competitors. A lot of people aren't willing to relocate, either because they like where they are living now or for personal reasons. If you're willing to go the distance, your chances of getting the job will increase. You also should know that just because you relocate doesn't mean you'll be stuck there for the rest of your life. It could just be temporary.

A college friend of mine was accepted into a management program for one of the country's leading retailers. Knowing it is much harder to get into the management program in New York City, he decided to apply for the program in Boston, Massachusetts, instead. His performance ranking there is so high that he is being transferred to the corporate offices in New York City, where the top 5 percent of employees work. In essence, he took whatever position he could get, proved himself, and now is moving back to New York City to join the top 5 percent. If he hadn't taken the risk and relocated to begin with, he may never have accomplished what he has so far, so fast.

A lot of companies would also be willing to pay for your relocation expenses, so take that into consideration as well.

Network, Network

When I was in college, the most common piece of advice I was given was "to network." Practically everyone I spoke to said something along the lines of "it's all about networking." At first, it doesn't sound too helpful, right? It's really just common sense, because people are only going to help who they know. Very few will help someone they don't know over someone they do know. The problem most students have is either they're too lazy to network or they just don't know

how to. It could take years to make a valuable connection. However, it all starts with a single phone call, email, or handshake.

A good example is billionaire Warren Buffett and how he started. Buffett's idol had always been Benjamin Graham since he first read his book, *The Intelligent Investor*. As a result, Buffett studied at Columbia University after learning Graham was a professor there. Repeatedly asking him for a job and willing to work for free, Buffett was persistent in his approach. Even after graduating from college when he was working in Omaha, Nebraska, selling investment securities from 1951 and 1954, Buffett mailed Graham investment ideas every month. Finally, one day, Graham wrote back, "Next time you're in New York, come and see me." Buffett went to New York and the rest is history. If he wasn't persistent, Buffett may never have become the business magnate he is today.

One of the most common mistakes students make when networking is they essentially throw away a connection if they don't initially have a job for them. A lot of students just send mass emails with their sales pitches asking for jobs and then wait for people to respond to them. They only see the short-term gain and disregard the long-term potential they could have if they put the effort into creating a strong connection. Although you should hope to find people who will help you find a job in the short-term, keep an open mind and stay in touch with as many people as you can. Just because some employers don't have a job for you now doesn't mean that will always be the case for the future.

Think about it this way. Let's say you're a successful corporate executive and one day you get a call from your alma mater asking if you could serve as a mentor to undergraduate students. They set you up with a nice online profile, which allows students to send you messages. Then, let's say you receive close to fifty emails a week from students seeking career advice, as well as asking you for a job. Do you honestly think you could help all fifty students every week? Sure, you may be able to help out a few, but if you had to pick one student to help, how would you decide? The answer is the student you relate to the most. The student who spent the extra five minutes making small talk with you, or that student who showed you he was driven to succeed.

The truth is that all relationships take time to grow. If you're persistent enough and determined to make it grow, it will grow. You'll no longer be the college

student or graduate looking for a job to these professionals. You'll become a friend to them.

Connecting with the Right People

You know you have to network and you have to nurture these relationships from the start, but who should you be talking to? There's no one better to talk to than the person you want to become ten to twenty years from now. Unless you have a mutual acquaintance, the best way is a direct approach. LinkedIn is a great tool that will let you search and target these professionals directly.

For example, let's say you went to medical school, and for as long you can remember, it's always been your dream to work for a particular hospital. Who should you be talking to? For starters, try reaching the medical professionals who work in that particular hospital (perform an "Advanced Search" on LinkedIn to find these people). Sure, some people may not want to talk to you, but some will appreciate the hustle and be willing to offer you free advice. Also, you shouldn't be discouraged if they don't respond to you promptly. Put yourself in their shoes—would you be constantly checking LinkedIn all day? I would hope not. Otherwise, you wouldn't be doing your job.

It is your job to create a strong connection, and it all begins with a single phone call, email, or handshake. They may only have a few minutes for you, but if you sound articulate and really demonstrate to them you have the determination to be in their field, you're on the right track. Always end the conversation thanking them for their time and asking to meet in person for a cup of coffee or lunch sometime in the near future. Although we do live in the modern age where the world revolves around email and texting, nothing ever beats doing business in person. Connections are made in person, not through computers.

Using LinkedIn to Your Advantage

LinkedIn can be a very useful tool in your job search. Most college graduates I know don't use LinkedIn nearly as much as they should. It is a great way to manage all of your connections, as well as meet new people. It also has become one of the premier tools recruiters use to find candidates. So, LinkedIn will bring

you one step closer to landing your first job.

Understanding How LinkedIn Works

LinkedIn is a professional social network. Unlike Facebook, which people use mostly to keep in touch with friends and family, LinkedIn is geared toward professional life and managing one's connections. Essentially, you create your own profile, which is like having an online résumé, complete with a profile picture, work experience, and "Skills & Expertise." You are then able to join groups, search and connect with people, and apply for job postings listed on company pages.

There are three levels of connection on LinkedIn—1st, 2nd, and 3rd. 1st connections are those people you are connected with directly, allowing you to message them, obtain their personal email address (if they list it), and view all of their connections and their profile (unless they have certain privacy settings in place). A 2nd connection is someone that is a 1st connection of one of your 1st connections, or a connection of one of your connections. You can connect with these people directly or you could "get introduced" to them, by having your 1st connection who's connected with them make an introduction, which is essentially a message they send connecting the two of you together. Finally, as you could probably guess, a 3rd connection is a connection of one of your connection's connections.

The great thing about LinkedIn is that it's a growing network many successful people are on. With just one search, you could pull up the profiles of even some of the world's most powerful and influential people, including Fortune 500 CEOs, and with just one click of the mouse, you can contact them directly. People use LinkedIn to find work, connect with future employers, and check up on people from their past and see where they're working now.

Setting up Your Profile

First, sign up and fill out your profile completely. Think of your LinkedIn profile as your online résumé, complete with the responsibilities and accomplishments of every internship and job you've ever had, as well as your education. Next, add a professional picture of yourself; not a picture of you at the bar with your friends or of you in the sixth grade. Then, add everyone you know to your network. Click here to add me as a connection (I'll accept!). LinkedIn has a great tool that will

search through your email account and pull up the profiles of all those people you've communicated with in the past. Then, join groups and networks that apply to you. Whether it's an alumni network for your college or university, or even a networking group for young professionals, these are great ways to help get yourself noticed online. Join as many as you can.

Adding a Professional Summary

A professional summary is the tagline people see under your name on your LinkedIn profile. Some like to keep it simple and list their current occupation, while others are more creative and describe their goals or even promote their own business. If you're unsure of what to write, either use your current job title and company or something along the lines of "Aspiring [Industry] Professional."

Adding Strategic Keywords

Apart from setting up your profile and adding your work experience, you have to be strategic with how to bring your LinkedIn profile to the top of recruiters' searches. When a recruiter is working on filling an open position, they're taking keywords from the job description and searching for it on LinkedIn. For example, if I'm working on a java developer position, you can be sure that "java" is a keyword I'm searching for. On the other hand, if a recruiter is looking for someone entry-level who has experience working with a particular kind of computer software, those who stress it more in their profiles will come out on top. That is why the keywords or the "Skills & Expertise" section of your LinkedIn profile is just as important, so be sure to include the different kinds of technologies you're familiar with, as well as the skills you have, so you will come out on top of more search results.

Establishing a Way to Contact You

You have to make it easy for recruiters and employers to contact you. Unless they know you or have met you before, LinkedIn does not allow them to "connect" with you (although a lot of people tend not to follow this rule). However, there are ways where you can make it easier for them to reach you. The first would be to add your email address at the end of your profile. Usually, people say something like, "If you're interested in reaching me regarding career opportunities, please feel free to email me at firstname.lastname@email.com."

Another option is enabling OpenLink on your profile. OpenLink allows anyone to essentially message you for free. Usually, recruiters have premium LinkedIn accounts, which allow them to perform more advanced searches and InMail (basically a LinkedIn message) a certain number of people every month. Believe me, these InMails run out fast, and a lot of times recruiters run out of InMails and have no way of contacting people they want to speak with. With OpenLink, anyone can message you for free. You can enable the OpenLink feature under the "Settings" page of your LinkedIn profile.

Going Premium

If you're willing to go the extra mile and maximize your LinkedIn capabilities, I suggest you upgrade to a premium account for a month or two. You usually can get the first month for free. This way, you can take full advantage of LinkedIn's InMail feature and reach out directly to people you want to network with. You may even get lucky and find a few employers with the OpenLink feature activated as well. However, use your InMails sparingly, as you only get a certain amount each month (unless you purchase more).

Connecting with LIONs

LION stands for "LinkedIn Open Networker." This is someone who typically accepts all invitations to connect on LinkedIn. A good way to find LIONs is by simply typing "LION" in the LinkedIn search box. They publicly advertise this in their profiles, as it's a good way for people to find them. I suggest you connect with LIONs who work in the career fields on your "hit list" or connect with LIONs who are connected with the people you want to be connected with.

How to Write Cold Emails (or InMails)

Cold emailing, or emailing someone you've never met before, can be a very effective method for establishing professional relationships. If done right, you could even get responses from Fortune 500 CEOs and other prominent figures, let alone recruiters. The key is to write emails that are short and sweet. The people you're writing to receive hundreds of emails every day. Being respective of their time and writing short, personalized messages with little reply-back required will be much more effective than long, detailed emails. There are four questions you need to answer when composing cold emails:

- 1. Who are you?
- 2. What do you want?
- 3. Why should I help you?
- 4. How long is this going to take?

Here's a cold email to a recruiter to apply for a position you found online:

Subject: Résumé for Business Analyst Opportunity

[Name],

My name is Jason Navallo and I'm a recent graduate from Baruch College. I would like to apply for the Business Analyst opportunity you posted on LinkedIn. I reviewed the qualifications and strongly believe I would be a good fit, given [explain why here].

I'm attaching my résumé for your review. Would you be free for a quick call on Wednesday at 11am to discuss?

Sincerely, Jason

Do you see how I constructed the email so the recruiter/employer can simply reply-back yes or no? All they have to do is look at their calendar. You're more likely to get a response from someone if they have to only write one word, instead of a sentence or paragraph.

How should you prepare for interviews?

Every company has their own interview process. Some have only one round of interviews, while others have ten. Despite their differences, interviewing is an art and the mechanics are always the same. It all comes down to preparation.

Preparing for Phone Interviews

One of the main purposes for phone interviews is to test your communication skills. Communication skills are extremely important in a lot of positions, and sometimes employers are willing to give up some of the position requirements if you communicate well and they feel you are trainable. Whenever you have a phone interview, speak with confidence. Do not cut the employer/recruiter off when they are talking. Listen and wait your turn to speak.

When speaking, do not go off topic. Practice beforehand your responses to common interview questions (you can find plenty online). Also, prepare a list of questions you're going to ask the employer/recruiter. Learn about the company you're interviewing for (studying what the company does, recent news, etc.), and always study the job description inside and out. The last thing you want to happen is the employer asking you what the job entails and you have nothing to say. Why would they hire you if you don't even know about the job you're interviewing for? That only shows you're not taking them seriously. Preparation is key. Always end the interview thanking them for their time and asking what the next steps are (unless they have already said).

Another tip to help you prepare for phone, as well as face-to-face interviews, is to check <u>Glassdoor</u> beforehand to see if other people revealed the types of questions they were asked on interviews. You'd be surprised how many people go online and spill the beans about the interview processes of specific companies. The site is also a great tool to see the employees' (both current and past) opinions toward the company culture and their overall treatment in the organization. This helps you to get a sense of what the work environment is like.

It's also always best to be honest during interviews. If you falsify information, like your current compensation, it'll only hurt you later on because a lot of companies

ask for proof during the later stages of the interview process. However, the most common mistake candidates make is they "badmouth" their employers. Employers don't want to hear you trashing your employers because they're thinking you'll trash them too if you work there and end up leaving. Would you hire someone who does that? I would hope not.

Preparing for Face-to-Face Interviews

After you passed the phone interview (if there was one), you'll be requested for a face-to-face interview. Always dress sharply. Wear your best suit, unless you've been informed to wear a specific dress code, and be well-groomed. Bring a portfolio and have a few copies of your résumé on hand. The most important rule, however, is to always arrive early. Whether it's taking a test trip out to the interview location the day before or looking online for the estimated time of arrival, always plan ahead. You can be absolutely perfect for the role, but if you show up late, you're severely hurting your chances.

It's also understandable why most employers don't want to hire candidates who are late. The interview process is a reflection of what working there would be like. Employers make the assumption that if you're late for the interview, who's to say you won't show up late to work every day? The first impression is the most important. Plan to arrive at the interview site fifteen to twenty minutes prior to the interview, so that you can prepare for even the worst of traffic. Always account for five to ten minutes to deal with security check-in too, and make sure you have a government/state ID on you as well.

Always have a firm handshake and maintain good eye contact when speaking with people, but don't stare. Never interrupt someone when they're talking. Speak with diction and with confidence, just like on the phone interview. Do not go off topic when you're being asked a specific question. Express your interest in the position during the interview as well. Show them you're the best person for the job. Don't slouch or keep your hands under the table. Stand up straight and have your hands folded in front of you. Body language speaks louder than words. Again, thank the interviewers for their time and ask for the next steps. The recruiter you're working with may have some tips to help you prepare as well. Remember, your interview begins when you walk into the building. The people around you could be your future colleagues, so watch what you say and do!

Following up after Interviews

After you've completed your interviews, call the recruiter you're working with and let them know how it went. Also, write an email to the interviewers thanking them for their time, expressing your interest in the position, and briefly selling why you're the best person for the job. You can even ask your recruiter to review the email too. The "thank you email" is just as important as the face-to-face interview. I have seen many candidates lose job offers because they wrote a horrible thank you email, loaded with typos and grammatical errors. You don't want to make this mistake, especially since it's easy to avoid. Here's a sample thank you letter you can use as a guide:

[Name],

I wanted to thank you for taking the time to speak with me about the [position title] position with your team last Friday. I had a very positive impression about the organization and I am very enthusiastic about the possibility of joining your team. I hope you feel the same way about the skills I can bring to the table to get things done.

I look forward to hearing from you once the final decision has been made. Please feel free to contact me directly at [your phone number] should you need more information.

Sincerely, Jason Navallo

It's Not over until It's Over

It's normal to feel as if an interview did not go well afterward. Days could go by before you get a call from the recruiter saying that the company is going to make you an offer. I've seen candidates who were walked over to human resources halfway during the interview to get offers, and I've seen candidates get offers weeks after completing their interviews. It all depends on the company, how fast they're looking to fill the position, their budget, and the competition you're up against. Never assume an opportunity is dead until it's been confirmed dead. Until the recruiter tells you it's over, it's not over. Don't give up hope until then. You have to remember that you are most likely not the only person interviewing for

the position. A lot of times, employers want to see a lot of candidates before they decide who they want to hire. It's very rare that they would stop their entire search to make you an offer right away.

On to the Next

Once one interview is over, focus on the next one. Never put all your eggs in one basket. Apply to as many jobs as you can every day. Until you receive a job offer in your hands that you're happy with and that's ready to be signed, always be focused on the next opportunity. A lot of candidates, after an interview they felt went well, put their job search on a complete halt. They are confident the interview they just went on was going to work out for them. While it is a possibility, there are so many things that could go wrong. For one, after your interview, the hiring manager may have interviewed someone else who they feel is a stronger candidate than you. Second, the position may have been put on hold. There are so many reasons for you to just move on. Don't stop until you get what you want in your hands—the offer letter.

How should you start a job search?

Sometimes, we are forced to accept certain jobs because we need the money and because we haven't gotten the job we truly want yet. Instead of using these jobs as just stepping stones, a lot of graduates either become too comfortable or don't take the time to plan their escape. They become demotivated and lose their drive to succeed. However, what they don't realize is that they can escape virtually any scenario with the proper planning and execution. Think about it this way (although this probably isn't the best example): do you honestly think a successful prison break happens with overnight planning? Obviously not. It takes months, maybe even years, to plan a successful prison break. However, with a lot of planning, persistence, and patience, anything is truly possible. Here is how you plan your escape, from your current job or unemployment.

Creating the Plan

You have to create a game plan, one that not only provides you with flexibility but also guarantees results. That is why I suggest you create a checklist game plan. This way, you can be more flexible in terms of time instead of having a strict time-based schedule to follow. Let's face it, things happen. There are those nights when you can't follow the schedule exactly, so having a checklist could create the perfect game plan for you.

Example Game Plan (Checklist Edition)

Monday-Friday

- Apply for at least 30 new job openings
- Reach out to 10 new recruiters
- Reach out to 15 professionals (in your field of choice) asking for advice

Saturday-Sunday

- Apply for at least 40 new job opportunities
- Reach out to 15 new recruiters
- Reach out to 20 professionals (in your field of choice) asking for advice

Executing the Plan

Okay, so you created the plan; the next part is to execute it. The hardest part is executing the plan. We (humans) are lazy by nature. We like to procrastinate as much as we can. A lot of times, the idea of having a plan that will be executed is enough to satisfy our present state of mind, isn't it? We also tend to make a lot of excuses for ourselves as to why we cannot execute it on a particular day. Whether it's because we have to wake up early the next day or because we're too tired, who are we really kidding by saying such things? Heck, if we dedicated the time we use making excuses to being persistent, we'd have achieved all our goals already!

One of the best ways to push yourself to execute the plan is to remind yourself that you cannot afford to waste another day. Have you ever heard the expression, "One today is worth two tomorrows"? Well, it's true. Your actions today will be worth twice as much the following day, because you are essentially planting the seeds of your own success. You should close your eyes and focus on all the benefits that would come into your life if you were to achieve your goal. Next, remind yourself that you will never achieve that goal unless you take this first step. Also, think about all the things in your life right now that you are most dissatisfied with and how this goal is the solution to those dissatisfactions. You must know that things can always get better, and get worse too, and that your goals are the solution to making your life better. Now, act.

Keeping the Plan

After you've created and executed the plan, the next part is keeping the plan. The first few days after execution are always the easiest. However, after a couple of weeks pass, something will happen. You'll either get bored or become discouraged with the lack of results. It is important, especially in times like these, that you remain persistent. One way is to remind yourself who and what you're really fighting for. Why do you think executives have pictures of their families on their desks in their offices? Besides having something to look at, the pictures are also used as a source of motivation to be productive. It is for reminding themselves of who they're fighting for every day. Just because you don't have an office with a desk doesn't mean you can't have your own objects of motivation. Whether it's a piece of jewelry or any small object from a loved one, keep it close

and look at it when you feel you need it the most. Even the smallest objects can draw the right emotions to get your head straight.

At the end of the day, the key is keeping the plan. A famous bodybuilder once said that the hardest part of bodybuilding isn't the actual exercise routine, it's tricking your mind into getting "pumped up" for a workout and stopping yourself from getting lazy. They visualize their goals and what they're trying to accomplish, which eventually pushes them to keep moving forward.

Why do people wake up early in the morning to go to work? Mostly because they need to make money and because they don't want to get fired. Ask yourself, how often would you show up to a full-time job that doesn't pay you any money? Not often (not at all, in my case). This is the kind of mindset you must have with keeping your plans. You must constantly remind yourself why you are doing what you're doing, because planning and executing may be easy, but keeping your plan is the real challenge.

Any other advice?

At the end of the day, your fate is in your own hands. It may not seem like it when you feel you've hit rock bottom, wanting to give up completely when all the interviews you've been on have led to nothing. It's easy to give up. Believe me, I know exactly what you're feeling now.

However, those who are successful know that the true key to success is persistence and taking advantage of every opportunity life throws at them. The next time you get an email saying you didn't get the internship or job, I want you to use all of those feelings inside to push yourself even harder to apply for more jobs and to perform better on interviews.

You deserve to have a job you love. You know how hard you've worked your whole life to get where you are today. Are you going to let anyone or anything get in your way of landing your first job? Take what's yours. You have to earn that position you're fighting for. It's really the survival of the fittest in the job market. You have to constantly be improving your skills and always be monitoring the job market. It all begins with your mindset.

Nothing will stop you if your mind is in the right place. One day, we will all leave this earth. It's inevitable. Since we are only here for a short period of time, we should all make the best of it. Those who fight are the ones who win. You must fight. You must win. So, win!

Below are some quotes I have personally gathered from Fortune 500 CEOs in different industries. You may be asking yourself, "How did you get all these successful people to write a quote for your book?" I hustled, just as you should be at finding your first job. I hope you'll find these quotes as inspiring as I do.

"My career was never straight up. There were many challenges early on, but I found having values, determination, loyalty, teamwork, curiosity, and work ethic matter more than you know, so never waiver on those principles and never be afraid to go for it." – **Bruce Broussard**, *Chief Executive Officer*, Humana (Fortune 500)

"My best advice is that you should continue to throw yourself into situations where you think you could develop a passion for what the company does. Do not fear failure along the way and find something you're passionate about. But it might take you a few tries before you find it." – **Paul J. Diaz**, *Chief Executive Officer*, Kindred Healthcare, Inc. (Fortune 500)

"My advice to young graduates would be to remember that they are coming into the workforce at a time when there are more and more jobs that are better performed by computers than by humans. But what humans can provide, and machines lack, is passion. So, in my opinion, young graduates should focus their search on jobs and in sectors where they have a real passion for the work. Sooner or later, they will gain access to a potential employer who will recognize that passion and reward them with a job. If that takes time, young graduates should have the courage to try their hand at doing a start-up in their area of interest and passion. Even if many start-ups ultimately fail, the experience and exposure you get will ultimately be rewarded during your job search." — **David Crane**, *Chief Executive Officer*, *President & Director*, NRG Energy Inc. (Fortune 500)

"Very simply, I encourage any jobseeker I meet to know where the opportunities for jobs are and to cultivate transferable skills and experiences that can cross industries. Even though the first job they get might not be a perfect fit with their academic background or their ultimate dream, building experience and exposure in a thoughtful way will be very helpful in the future. Ultimately, as they make their career choices, being passionate and interested in their work is the best criterion for successful contributions, and you will always be best at the things you enjoy doing, true in work as well as in life." — **Jonas Prising**, *Chief Executive Officer*, ManpowerGroup (Fortune 500)

"Be as thoughtful as you can in deciding what you want to do. The more you know the answer to that question, the more focused you can be in your search and the more passionate you will be in the interview. If you are not certain or if the market opportunities are too limited, get going with the best job you can find. It is better to start, even if the opportunity is not perfect, than to let the gap in your record build too much. Whether you have landed the dream job or just a filler job, the most important thing is to approach the job with enthusiasm and commitment. This means many things, but it includes working with energy and curiosity every day, volunteering to learn more, do more, and understand more about the why's as well as the how's. Your performance in the job will be the

most important factor in determining what opportunities follow. Have as much fun in the entire process as you can. Your demeanor will be reflected back to you throughout the search and work phases of your career." – **Arne Sorenson**, *President & Chief Executive Officer*, Marriott International (Fortune 500)

"Nothing beats hard work and persistence, persistence, persistence!" – **Russ Fradin**, *President & Chief Executive Officer*, SunGard (Fortune 500)

"I've learned that relationships matter, so focus on establishing relationships that are two-way, in which you first seek to help another. By paying it forward, you will get the reward time after time. Secondly, reputation and integrity are supreme, so always do the right thing even though it may be harder. Next, never give up and never give in. Tenacity and persistence are the keys to success. Finally, be a leader in all that you do. This will create a reputation of which long-standing relationships are made." – James J. Murren, Chairman & Chief Executive Officer, MGM Resorts International

"Take whatever job you can get, and use it as a platform to move toward where you want to go." – **Roger Wood**, *President & Chief Executive Officer*, Dana Corporation (Fortune 500)

"Differentiate yourself." – **Kriss Cloninger**, *President & Chief Financial Officer*, Aflac (Fortune 500)

Which other resources do you recommend?

Monster – An employment website.

<u>LinkedIn</u> – A professional social network.

<u>Indeed</u> – A job search engine.

CareerBuilder – An employment website.

Dice – An employment website (primarily for IT).

Bluehost – A domain/web hosting company (to create a personal website).

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