

Making It a Reality

Strategies and Resources for an Effective Job Hunt in the Communications Industry



Congratulations!

You did it! Finishing your degree is definitely reason to celebrate. However, whether you're back at home or on your own, looking for a job may feel overwhelming... and the farther you are from campus, the lonelier you may begin to feel.

Don't fret! The Newhouse Career Development Center (CDC) has created this guide to assist and encourage you as you pursue that first job (and to serve as a refresher later on when you are ready to move on to job #2!).

Use this booklet to keep yourself focused and organized, and remember that the CDC is here to help along the way. Following this advice will help you stay on track and make sure you're spending your time on the most effective job-hunting methods.

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Chapter 1: How People Find Jobs

Communications Industry Quirks

The communications industry has some unique characteristics that will likely have significant influence on your job search.

The industry hires on an “as needed” basis.

Positions are usually filled within a short time frame. This means that very few companies can recruit months in advance or hire large numbers of people at a time. Communications companies may anticipate openings, but they will only look for candidates when those positions are ready to hire.

Outside experience is a requirement.

The single most important factor to communications employers is hands-on, relevant, professional experience. Real world experience in the field is critical to set you apart from other applicants.

People hire who they know.

As stated above, companies tend to fill positions quickly and they'll often hire through word-of-mouth. The more people who know who you are and what you're looking for, the greater your chances of finding it.

Additional Considerations for International Students

The process for finding a job in the United States is the same for international students as it is for those from the US (network, network, network!). However, international students have another step, which is to research companies that offer sponsorship.

One resource that may assist in this process is GoinGlobal. To access GoinGlobal, click on the resources section on syr.joinhandshake.com. This comprehensive resource includes many kinds of information on working in a country other than one's home, and includes information on H1B-sponsoring employers in a database that is searchable by location or industry. Additional country profiles include job searching resources for students focused anywhere in the world.

Tips for Job-Hunting in Times of Economic Uncertainty

1. Research and assess the trends and landscape of the current job market.

Focus on the industry. Do your research. Which industries are laying off or have hiring freezes? Which are hiring? Flip ahead and check out the resources pages for sites that will be helpful in this research.

2. Assess your transferable skill sets.

Communications professionals, in particular, have skills that can be put to work in many different industries. Review your talents and understand how they can help you in your job, no matter what kind of job it might be.

3. Build relationships/get connected with people who know about the industry.

Even in a good economy, networking accounts for some 85% of successful job-finding. In times of economic downturn, fewer jobs are advertised and job leads tend to “go underground.” It’s important to stay connected. Let your family, friends, and professional contacts know that you’re looking for a job. Inform them of what you’re interested in and keep these people updated! A good job lead could come from anyone.

4. Practice your 30-second pitch/do mock interviews.

You never know who you might meet—including potential employers. Be ready with a 30-second pitch describing yourself, your skills, your interests, and why you’re interested in a particular job/career. Practice interviewing as well. After all, getting the interview is half the battle; doing well in the interview is the other half. More on what goes into a successful elevator pitch in a few pages.

5. Have your résumé and business cards ready to go.

You don’t have to be employed to have a business card! List your career focus (public relations, new media, radio, etc.), add your top skills or area of interest, and, of course, include your contact information (including links to portfolios or personal web sites). At the same time, keep several copies of your resume nearby (in your car, or in a folder you carry) to give to someone who might help with your job search.

6. Be persistent and have patience.

In a good economy, it takes an average of six to nine months to find a job; it may take longer in times of recession. Finding a job is a job itself! Carve out some time on a weekly basis to assess your skills, research the job market, create a target list, network and follow up with contacts. If you stay prepared, that hidden job will appear when you least expect it.

Chapter 2: Devising Your Game Plan

Now that you see that no one is going to find you, let's work out how you can find them. Strategically seeking out employers and knowing how you can relate your experience to the roles they are looking to fill is an essential skill in today's job hunter's toolkit.

The four key steps are: FOCUS, TARGET, RESEARCH, NETWORK.

FOCUS

Know what skills, interests, and strengths you want to bring to the company that eventually employs you. Be able to speak about how your past has shown you what you like to do and what you're good at. Think about what you've learned, what that allows you to do, and what is important to you in an employer.

An important part of the focus step is being able to take this information and turn it into your elevator pitch. You have to be able to put into words what you're looking for and what you will bring to the table. A strong elevator pitch tells the listener how your experiences have shown you what you want to do and what you're good at, and the direction you want to go with these skills and strengths. Remember: strengths are factual. Being able to speak about what you do well in a pleasant way while providing context will eliminate any chance of arrogance.

TARGET

Find companies that need these skills or offer the environment that you're looking for. Build a target list of 20 to 30 specific companies that may offer you what you seek. This step gives your search purpose and direction. If you don't take the time to give your job search this structure, you will resort to passive (i.e. much less fruitful) methods like applying to leads blindly online or sending out unsolicited résumés.

Having options is a good thing but in a job search, too many options is overwhelming. Creating a target list will keep you focused on organizations that will be a good fit for you and keep you from relying on passive job-hunting methods. Going back to your polished elevator pitch, what were some of the skills and strengths that you want to use on the job?

Now, keeping those in mind, what TYPES of companies (not specific company names) might allow you to use those skills?

And where do you want to be geographically? If you have one place in mind and it's a big city, that's enough. If you're debating among a few places, pick three cities MAX (remember, to keep this feeling doable – aka not overwhelming – you have to put some limits on yourself. If you start to look into companies in a city and it isn't a fit, that's ok. You can shift then and select somewhere else at that time). If you are going into the broadcast world, picking cities is just not

realistic. Instead, pick a region (e.g. the Northeast) rather than a city (Boston, MA). International students may also want to use regions instead, too, to increase options.

Finally, using the types of companies you came up with, look within the geographic areas you listed to come up with companies for your target list (it's ok to list more than one specific company per TYPE of company). There will be a fair number of companies that you can name off the top of your head, but you will likely need to do some research to get your list to a full 30 companies. In addition to the recommended resources list at the end of this workbook, good sources to tap into include:

- Industry directories (see the "Resources" section on newhouse.syr.edu/cdc for a list)
- The Newhouse Network (see where alumni are working)
- LinkedIn (ditto)
- Trade magazines (who are the movers and shakers?)
- CDCNews/CDCGradNews/JobOps (which companies have Newhouse on their radar?)
- Chamber of commerce web sites (especially in smaller markets or cities that aren't media hubs)
- Professors, friends, relatives
- Past internship supervisors
- Past coworkers and former classmates

RESEARCH

Read your trade magazines, peruse industry web sites, speak with current contacts, and use any other resource that will give you a good primer on the companies you're interested in.

Knowing your stuff will give you something to discuss with networking contacts, impress your connections, and set you apart from other job hunters through your seriousness and focus.

It will be essential to research both companies, as well as the individuals you're reaching out to. The best way to impress contacts and start building a positive rapport is to go into your conversation prepared. Many people prematurely move on to networking before they research, which is unfortunate. "Lack of research" is one of the biggest complaints the Newhouse CDC hears from alumni about graduating students! You'll know you're ready to wow your new contact when you can answer the questions below. If you can't find the answer to one of these questions after doing some wholehearted research, add that question to your list to ask the question when you connect. Questions originating from research are usually the most impressive and thought-provoking to contacts.

Who is this person? Ideally you should find out the person's job title and department, as well as how long the person has been at the company and where the person worked previously. Recommended resources: Company web sites (look for a bio), LinkedIn, The Newhouse Network

Who is this company? What does it do? Where is the company's headquarters? Where does it have other branches? What does the company make or do? What are some of its current projects? Where does your contact fit in? Recommended resources: Company web site,

company LinkedIn profile, industry/trade publications, setting up Google news alerts for the company name, searching online for the company's productions/stories/campaigns/awards won

What is the company's "vibe" or personality? What is important to its mission? Recommended resources: Company web site (check the "about" section or search for a mission statement), company social media handles

Do/have any (other) alumni worked there? Recommended resources: LinkedIn, The Newhouse

What industry trends or hot topics are affecting this company? Recommended resources: Industry/trade magazines

What other information would be helpful to me at this stage of my job search that this person would be able to answer?

NETWORK

Seek out individuals at the companies on your target list and ask them questions about their experience and role at the company. Remember that companies only have to post a small percentage of their job openings to the public, so networking is the key to finding out about leads before they are advertised! Don't be tempted to just skip the first steps and dive into your job search here, though. It's important that you have all of the other elements in place before speaking with contacts in order to get the best outcome.

Jump Starting Your Job Search

You must devote specific time each day or week to your job search. We recommend a minimum of eight to ten hours per week dedicated to proactive job hunt activities. Here are some suggestions for how you can get started and set your goals:

1. Contact one new person each day.
2. Stay organized – keep files, phone numbers, email addresses.
3. Research companies and professional organizations. Join groups appropriate for your field. Go to luncheons, panels, alumni gatherings, and other events to network.
4. Read trade magazines weekly.
5. Review skills you want to use on the job – stay focused.
6. Talk to at least one person who doesn't do what interests you. This will help eliminate doubts about what you want to or "should be" doing.
7. Maintain regular contact with your networking contacts (the ol' "keep in touch"). Every three to four weeks is recommended. A voice or email update is fine – you must remain "top of mind."
8. Use job leads as networking leads. It's MUCH more effective and separates you from the nameless, faceless sea of job hunters.
9. Volunteer somewhere you can use your skills to keep them fresh (if financially possible).
10. Join an appropriate professional organization (SPJ, PRSA, AAAA, Women in Film & Video, etc.). Many not only have regular meetings and events (great places to network) but they often provide membership directories to members.

Control and Your Job Search

There are many aspects of the job search that you can and must control: your focus, the quality and amount of industry research you have done, the quantity of networking contacts you have and your efforts to keep increasing that number, staying in touch, the amount of time you dedicate to your search weekly. However, there is one thing that you cannot control: TIMING.

While it would be nice to get a job when you want one, the communications industry doesn't work that way. Finding a job requires time and effort on your part, but you cannot control which companies are hiring, when contacts get back to you, who gets back to you at all. This can be frustrating! To keep yourself moving in times when you might feel helpless keep these things in mind:

- Reevaluate the time and effort that you're putting into your search. Are you doing what you should be doing?
- Stay organized. An organized job hunter will be a successful job hunter.
- Use every opportunity to meet new people. You never know who might be in a position to help (or know someone who is!).
- Stay positive! If you put your time and energy into the right things, you WILL find a job! It's just a matter of time.
- Be like an arrow: have direction. If you're not precise in your focus and action, you're letting other things or people control your search and, ultimately, your success.
- Don't rely on job boards and online job postings. You can incorporate them into your job search to a minor degree, but remember that they are the gateway to a passive job search! You should only spend 20% of your job searching time applying to jobs.
- Keep active. Nobody is going to hunt you down to offer you a job. You must find opportunity.
- Give yourself a start date. Many young alumni want to take a little time off after school to decompress, but give yourself a date that you're going to jump back wholeheartedly into the job search, then let your friends and family know when this is. They can help hold you accountable.

It might be time to totally reevaluate your process if:

- Everything sounds interesting. (You've lost focus.)
- Contacts are sending you to human resources or not asking you to "stay in touch."
- You're getting interviews but not job offers. (It might be time to brush up on your interview skills.)

If any of the above sounds familiar, consider contacting the Newhouse Career Development Center. We are here to help you, even as an alumnus! Get a hold of us at nhcdc@syr.edu or (315) 443-3270.

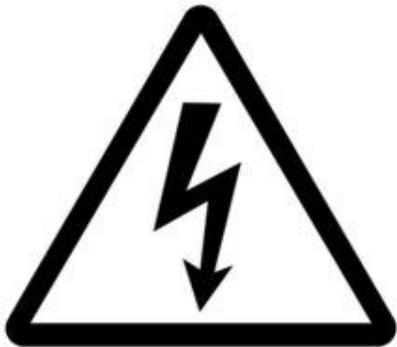
Alternatives to a Full-Time Job

Consider a post-grad internship.

These provide additional work experience, can help you develop networking contacts, and provide you with more exploration time. They often lead to permanent jobs (the company has seen what you can do), and are particularly helpful if you've changed your interests and/or don't have enough hands-on experience. Many of these internships even pay now.

Consider temporary work.

This can also lead to full-time employment. It may not be a good option if you're relocating to another market or if you're truly unfocused and not ready to commit to a full-time job search. Large agencies, publishers, networks often have in-house temporary work or floater programs. This is the one time we recommend contacting human resources to learn more about these programs. It's important to stay in regular touch with HR once you've applied for a temp pool since they usually hire the candidates who stay "top of mind." Small and medium sized companies may employ a temp agency to find part-time or temp workers. Inquire with the company's HR department to find out which temp agency they use and see if you can get a contact name.



Beware: There are some unscrupulous temp/placement agencies out there.

Deal only with those that company HR departments or contacts endorse. Avoid any placement or temp agencies that charge you a fee.

Later in your career, "head hunters" may offer to work with you but even then you shouldn't pay – reputable head hunters are paid by the company that is seeking the talent.

Chapter 3: Become a Skillful Networker

The Golden Rules of Networking

NEVER, repeat, NEVER ask for a job. This is NOT networking. You can only ask for information, advice, expertise, opinion, or another contact. Do contacts know that you are looking for work eventually? YES. However, asking about leads or jobs can kill your relationship with a contact. Don't risk it!

Ask people only for what they can easily and painlessly give. Ask for a job, I'll send you to human resources. Ask for advice, I'll give you 20 minutes (and possibly a job lead). Ask for an hour of my time, I cringe. Ask for five minutes, I might give you my morning.

Go in fully prepared. From your research of the company and the contact, develop a list of questions. If emailing, don't inundate the contact with your list of inquiries. Instead, start with a question or two to get the conversation started. Be ready to talk about your interests and direction (your elevator pitch comes in handy yet again!).

Have specific goals for each contact. Think about *how* each contact can help you. What is the person's position? What information can your contact share with you? Before calling or visiting, write down the things you want to learn or accomplish. If you can't do this, you're NOT ready to network.

Respect people's time and effort. There are probably MANY other things contacts could be doing. Keep your communication short and specific. Ask if contacts are on deadline. Do not call contacts as they're looking to leave for the day at 5 p.m. Showing that you "get it" is key to looking like you're serious about entering their area of the industry. Your courtesy will reflect positively upon you! Respecting their time also means following up – stay organized, thank people for their time, and don't disappear when you should be sharing updates. Provide contacts with a return on their "investment" (the time and effort they have given you) while also staying "top of mind" for leads by keeping in touch.

Be like a reporter – avoid asking yes or no questions. Yes or no questions only give you a 50/50 shot at best. Example: "Do you have any openings?" "No." versus "What advice would you give someone who would like to work at XYZ?"

Always let the other person feel like the hero. Send a thank you. Follow up. Let your contact know what happened, that the advice was helpful, etc. Follow-up is perhaps the most important part of networking.

Diversify your sources for contacts. Gather contacts from past jobs and coworkers, family, friends, professors, LinkedIn, The Newhouse Network, trade magazines, industry directories, alumni clubs, by joining a professional organization, and other sources.

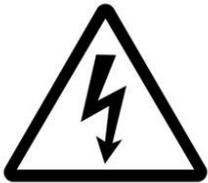
Don't discourage easily. It may take some following-up on your part to get the information you need/want or to find the person who can help you. Polite tenacity reads as enthusiasm.

Every contact is a good contact. Anyone working at a company of interest can at least answer general questions (what it's like to work there, what the hiring process was like, etc.). If the person isn't in the right department or role for your career aspirations, once you've developed a good rapport, your initial contact will usually be happy to connect you with someone else who is. Never underestimate the power of a referral and don't hesitate to speak with multiple people at a company. Having more people in your corner is never a bad thing!

Most rules are made to be broken, even occasionally. You will have to make some of this up as you go along. If you discover the contact you called has left the company for instance, ask the person who answers the phone your questions. You will have to think on your own. But that's what they'll pay you for later...

What to Ask? (And What Not to?)

You can ask anything about the contact's current position or past jobs, anything about the information on their Newhouse Network or LinkedIn profiles, or questions that came up during your research. Think about if you were at a party and didn't know many people. How would you start a conversation? That's networking! Just be sure to be specific and stay away from generic or template questions – these will always read as insincere. Write a fresh email each time you reach out to a contact. It takes time but will ensure the best possible reception.



Caution! There are three things you should never do when networking in order to avoid turning off or just plain offending contacts. Commit these to memory!

1. **Do not send your contact your résumé.**

By sending your résumé unsolicited, you are also sending the message that you want the contact to do the work for you. However, if the contact asks for your résumé, that's different! In that scenario, send away!

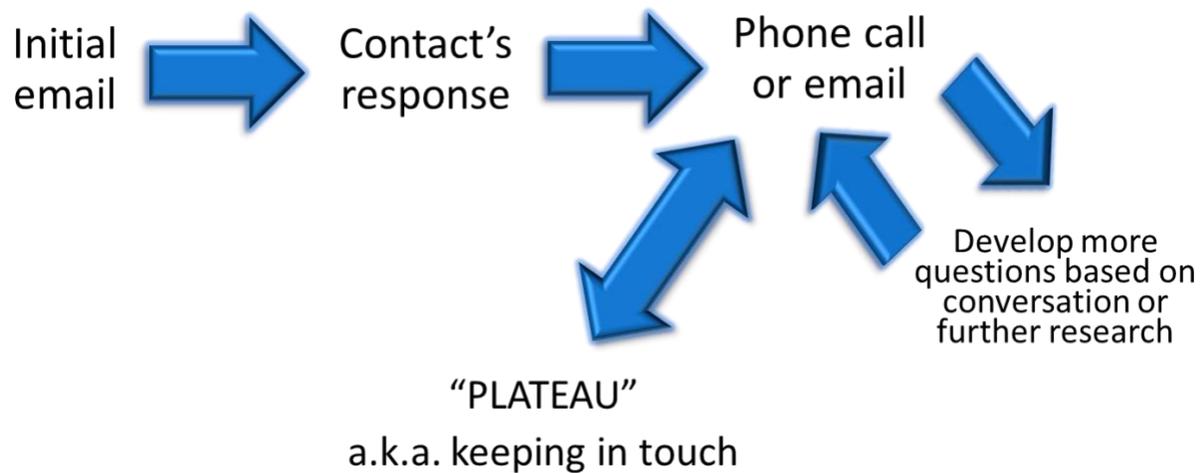
2. **Never ask about someone's personal salary history.**

It is rude to ask about someone's current salary or what the person made starting out in the industry. There is a big difference between doing this and conducting your research to learn about an appropriate range for a position, then asking a contact if it seems fitting.

3. **Do not ask about job leads.**

Never do this. Asking about job leads, future opportunities (however you want to phrase it) is inappropriate, as well as a surefire way to shut down a networking relationship. Once contacts get to know you and trust you, they will let you know about job postings when they hear of them... but it always has to be THEIR decision to do so.

How a Networking Relationship Evolves



A networking relationship will start with a chance meeting at an event, a referral, or you finding someone's name in a database, masthead, or online. From there, you will follow up/initiate conversation. An email is usually the best way to start this conversation, as it gives you time to craft your message and make sure that you're putting your best foot forward (a phone call puts both you and the person you're calling on the spot!)

Following the formula for a successful networking email on the next page, you'll send out your initial email. If all goes according to plan, the person will respond, and you'll then be able to ask some questions via email or set up a time to talk on the phone.

Once your initial "back and forth" is out of the way, you'll have a better idea of just who that person is and what s/he does. Your contact's responses will often lead to other questions on your part, and you'll end up in a cycle of questions and answers.

At some point, you will feel as though you have (for the time being) asked all of your questions. You've reached a plateau! Your goal is to thank the contact for all of his/her good advice, state that you would like to keep in touch, and then ask (tactfully) if there is anyone who the contact would recommend you speak with. This is VERY important question. It helps you to grow your network of contacts! It is an even more useful question when your initial contact is someone who is at a company of interest, but not quite doing the job you're interested in ("Is there anyone you would recommend I speak with on the advertising side of the agency?") or the wrong branch ("... in the New York office?"), and so on.

Writing a Successful Networking Email

1. Establish a connection.

- Start with an introduction: What is your connection to this person? Is this person a fellow Newhouse or Syracuse alumnus? Are you being referred by a mutual contact? (“Cold networking” when you don’t have a built-in connection: Skip to next bullet!)
- How did you get this person’s name? Did you use the Newhouse Network or LinkedIn? (“Cold networking”: be sure to make yourself stand out. This is where your research pays off!)

“Professor Peter Moller said you give good advice and suggested I contact you. I am interested in film development and am looking for some professional input as I begin the job hunting process.”

“Your LinkedIn profile shows that you’re currently an account manager at Edelman, which caught my eye because I am really interested in the work the agency is doing with the ___ and ___ accounts.”

2. Be straightforward about what you want.

- State your purpose. Remember you are to ONLY ask for advice and “few minutes” of the person’s time.
- Be sure to include an example or two of questions that you have. This will keep your letter short but still give the contact a “jumping off point.”
- You can give one or two lines about who you are and why you’re interested but be very careful that you are NOT PITCHING the contact. The quickest way to lose a potentially stellar contact is to seem presumptuous!

“When I interned at Tribeca films, I screened of scripts and really enjoyed not only the actual reading, but the politics involved in the film development. I am curious if you have any thoughts on the career trajectory needed to land in this part of the business.”

“I would love to hear about how you got started in the business, if you are willing to share. For example, _____?”

“I have learned that I really enjoy the work that goes into media planning and I am interested to learn what it’s like to work at XYZ Company. For example, do you think your entry-level employees are able to readily contribute?”

3. State the “next steps.”

- Establish who will make next contact.
- Always express gratitude and acknowledge that your contact likely has a busy schedule.

“Please let me know if this is something you would be willing to do.”

“I will follow up with you later this week.”

“I know you have a busy schedule, but I would greatly appreciate a few minutes of your time to get your thoughts.”

Sample Networking Email

Dear Ms. Jones:

I just wanted to drop you a note and tell you again how much I enjoyed your lecture last week at Syracuse University. I spoke with you after the lecture about how you choose the various subject matter discussed on “PrimeTime Live.” For a second-semester senior interested in television news, it is encouraging to see the honesty and care put into each production of a “PrimeTime Live” segment.

Following graduation in May, I am hoping to get involved in television news and current events. I was wondering if you might have a few minutes to speak with me about ideas or advice about where to start in the news production field. I understand that you are extremely busy and you might not have much time, but I would greatly appreciate any feedback you can provide. I will give the number listed on your business card a call this week to see if we can set up a time.

Sincerely,

Sloane Black

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What makes this email effective:

- The email-writer immediately reminds Ms. Jones of their prior interaction, establishing their connection.
- The writer thoughtfully reflects on their interaction and also uses the opener as an opportunity to note a little bit of her background (after reading the first, short paragraph, Ms. Jones understands that Felicia will be graduating).
- Felicia gets right to the point in the second paragraph: She mentions what she is looking for from Ms. Jones.
- The only things Felicia asks for are advice and a few minutes of Ms. Jones’ time.
- Felicia clearly establishes that she will be the one following up, and she shows respect by acknowledging the contact’s busy schedule.

Keeping in Touch

You may have noticed under “PLATEAU” in the picture about how a networking relationship evolves that there is a note that says “a.k.a. keeping in touch.” Keeping in touch is the final step in establishing a networking relationship! The biggest pet peeve of alumni is helping a student/fellow alum out and then never hearing from that person again!

If contacts have gone to the trouble of responding to you, that means that they want to KEEP hearing from you!

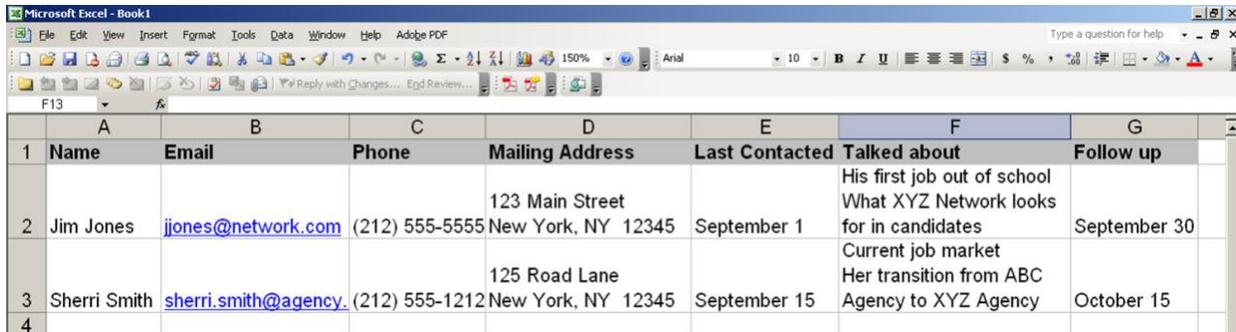
Think about the flip side: You’ve gone to all this trouble to MAKE a contact... wouldn’t that all be going to waste if you didn’t keep in touch? The good news is that keeping in touch is easy.

- Email or Voicemail
Send a quick note or leave a quick message to check in, update your contact on your progress, and say you’ll be in touch again soon.
- SU Postcard
Everyone loves real mail! Jot a quick note (pretty much the same as you’d write in an email) to keep your contacts up to date on what you’re doing. A handwritten thank you note is always appreciated when a contact puts in a good word for you or spends a long time chatting with you.
- Article of Interest
Sucking up? No! Sending a link to info you know would be of interest to a contact or to an article about positive news about his/her company shows that you’re paying attention!
- Referrals
We discussed why getting referrals is so important on the previous page. You can also get an opinion: Notice how the arrows go in both directions from the plateau on the diagram on the previous page? That’s because at any time, you can jump from updating/maintenance mode back into having a “back and forth” with your contacts! Have a question you’d love to get his/her take on for a project? Perfect! Ask away! Always have a REASON to be in touch.

Managing Contacts

Since keeping contacts is just as important as making them, having a system to keep your network up-to-date is vital.

Consider using a spreadsheet in Excel or, better yet, a spreadsheet on Google Drive (that way you can access it from any device). Sort your “follow up” column by date to see which contacts need attention more urgently.



The screenshot shows a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet with the following data:

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
1	Name	Email	Phone	Mailing Address	Last Contacted	Talked about	Follow up
2	Jim Jones	jjones@network.com	(212) 555-5555	123 Main Street New York, NY 12345	September 1	His first job out of school What XYZ Network looks for in candidates	September 30
3	Sherri Smith	sherri.smith@agency	(212) 555-1212	125 Road Lane New York, NY 12345	September 15	Current job market Her transition from ABC Agency to XYZ Agency	October 15
4							

A system like this allows you to keep contacts' information all in one place, make notes about your conversation, and then assign yourself a date on which to follow up. No one will be slipping through the cracks on your watch!

Alumni Networking Wisdom

1. **We know you're looking for work.** This is a given, so there's no need to mention you want a job. That's why you're talking to us. Rather than ask for leads, ask questions that you want answers to. This is where your research will pay off!

2. **Be persistent.** The person that sends an email and follows up with a call is the person who gets the information AND begins to develop the networking relationship. Those who sit and wait, well... sit and wait.

3. **Recognize opportunity and take it.** Multiple alumni mentioned landing jobs when they were not even looking. One alumna was freelancing at the US Open and overheard two production people talking about a particular city where – coincidentally – her boyfriend was living. She mentioned her connection to the city, chatted with the fellows, and ended up interviewing with one of their wives. Not long after, she got the job! Had she not chimed in, she never would have known of the opportunity.

4. **Do your homework and research.** Know the company, the industry and what's going on. This clearly separates you from all others who are just "looking for a job."

5. **Have a sense of humor.** Not raunchy or off base one. Showing that you can laugh at yourself and gives a glimpse into the type of coworker you'd be. Most people like to be around people who know how to laugh.

6. **Be genuine and honest.** If you don't mean it, don't say it; if you're not interested in something, don't pretend to be. They can see through it and insincerity doesn't build relationships.

7. **Spend the time to build relationships.** Job hunters expect an automatic job offer after one contact. It doesn't happen that quickly. Alumni and other contacts need to be comfortable with you and what you're looking for. Keep in touch even if you have nothing to ask. People like being remembered, appreciated and acknowledged – this builds relationships. Jobs don't materialize just because you want one.

8. **A vibrant personality helps.** This can be shown through enthusiasm, focus and knowledge of the industry. It separates the, "I want a job" from the, "I really want THIS specific job or type of job."

9. **Networking is like "spokes in a wheel."** You're the middle and everything is connected through you. Keep your network growing continually.

10. **Finally, be CONFIDENT (you do have something to offer); be HUMBLE (you still have much to learn); be REALISTIC (you'll need to "pay your dues"); and be PATIENT (finding a good fit takes time).**

Chapter 4: Themes of Successful Job-Hunters

Three Core Truths

There are three core truths to job hunting. Successful job hunters take these to heart.

1. NO ONE OWES YOU A JOB.

This may sound obvious, but studies show one-third of job hunters give up during the first few months of a job search. They give up because they thought it was going to be simple, quick, and easy. And somehow they expected rescue, awaited rescue, and it did not come. Hard truth: If you want a job, it is you who is going to have to go out and work hard to find it.

2. JOB HUNTING SUCCESS IS IN DIRECT PROPORTION TO EFFORT.

The more you try, the more hours you put into the job hunt, the more likely it is that you will land the job you are looking for. If, that is, your effort is intelligently directed.

3. YOU MUST BE WILLING TO CHANGE YOUR TACTICS.

If you try something and it doesn't work, move on to another strategy. And, if you don't know how to find a job... talk to successful job hunters. This is what networking is about!

A Tale of Two Job Hunters

Suzy Successful

Suzy Successful leaves SU on May 14. Before leaving, she stops by the Newhouse CDC and registers to receive the Newhouse alumni e-newsletter, JobOps. Every week she'll get a list of job leads called into Newhouse, as well as tips on job hunting. Suzy attended the Job Hunt Series and has been working on growing her contact list using The Newhouse Network, LinkedIn, and other sources. She decides to take a couple weeks off to travel and visit friends but maintains reading her trade magazines during this time and leaves quick voicemail messages to her contacts letting them know she's home. She also zips off some quick networking emails to the 10 new contacts she established before she leaves.

Back home in early June, Suzy sets up a job hunt schedule: five hours of research/reading trade magazines, three hours of networking, two hours surfing job boards and company web sites each week.

Suzy visits some companies in her hometown that do what she's interested in doing. She makes a good contact who's worked in the city she wants to be in. This contact gives her a few more names there and suggests a professional organization that might be helpful to her. She joins it and still gets the student rate. She also makes follow up phone calls to the 10 new contacts

(whom she emailed) and sends in two resumes to online postings — one from the Newhouse JobOps newsletter and one through LinkedIn.

Suzy plans a trip to her targeted market (about two hours from her home) for the second week of July. Suzy lines up eight to 10 appointments with contacts there (some from Newhouse, a couple from the hometown contact and one from the professional organization she joined). She prepares a list of specific questions for her contacts, researches their companies, and has a list of five skills she'd like to use on the job and the department she'd most likely fit in at these companies. Through her trade magazine reading, she has learned of a new company that sounds interesting. She plans on getting a contact at this place when she's in the city and will hopefully be able to visit when she's there.

Suzy makes her trip. While she's not told of any openings, she gets some good feedback on her job hunt strategy, some more contact names and all of her contacts ask her to 'keep in touch.' She also filled out applications for temp work at three of the companies. She's told she really needs to be living there before she'll be considered but they'll keep her information on file. Suzy DOES get a contact at that new company but isn't able to set up an appointment. She returns home and writes thank you notes to the contacts she met with, as well as to a networking letter to the contact at this interesting, new company.

Suzy checks in with her local contacts. One asks if she'd like to pick up some temporary, part-time work. She accepts and begins working about 20 hours a week. She's been sticking to her job hunt schedule and lets her contacts know that she's working part-time and keeping her skills fresh. In mid-July, Suzy gets an email from Ellen, the alumna who called in the job lead she applied to in JobOps several weeks ago. While Suzy's not qualified for the position, Ellen says she'll keep Suzy's resume around. Suzy thanks her and promises to stay in touch.

The first week of August, Suzy calls Jim, a contact in the city, with a question about updating her resume with her part-time work. Jim tells her there may be an opening coming up and asks Suzy to send a letter and resume he'll get it to the manager. She gets a call for an interview later in the week and makes appointments to visit four contacts when she's back in town, including Ellen. Suzy interviews with Jim's company and makes her four visits to her new contacts. Ellen, in particular, is impressed with Suzy's organization and focus and brings her into the CEO who says he'll try to find something for Suzy.

Suzy goes home and a week later, gets a job offer from Jim. Suzy calls Ellen to let her know and Ellen, though disappointed, advises her to take it. She asks Suzy to contact her when she gets settled in the city. Suzy starts her job September 1 and dislikes it immediately. She sticks it out for six months—all the while keeping in touch with her contacts, including Ellen. An opportunity pops up at Ellen's company in the spring and Suzy naturally gets an interview and offer (the job wasn't even advertised outside the company.) She puts in her two weeks' notices and leaves her first job for this position, which is a nice fit for her skills and interests.

Suzy was successful because she:

- Took advantage of resources while she was at still at SU;

- Was focused and organized;
- Set a weekly schedule of activities and stuck to it;
- Made the effort to meet with people and made the most of her visits;
- Continued to grow her network of contacts;
- Looked at the local market for contacts and part-time work;
- Thanked her contacts and kept in touch with them;
- Asked specific questions and/or had a valid reason other than, “Do you have openings?” when keeping in touch with contacts;
- Kept in touch with contacts even after landing a job!

Bottom line: Suzy devoted the necessary time and used a combination of approaches to better her chances of finding work. Despite some minor setbacks, she prevailed and her persistence paid off.

Eddie Unemployed

Eddie doesn't know what he wants to do. His lease in Syracuse isn't up until June 30, so he decides to stick around here until then. Eddie stops by the CDC and signs up for the alumni listserv, JobOps. Eddie didn't attend the CDC's Job Hunt Series but is told that if he completes the CDC's “homework” and sets up phone appointments with the CDC as a “crash course,” he'll get to the Newhouse Network database. He sets up an appointment for the week of May 20. Eddie goes to his CDC appointment but finds out that he's going to have to do some work focusing on skills he wants to use on the job and coming up with questions to ask contacts. He doesn't set up a follow up appointment at the CDC, as he doesn't feel ready to look for a job.

For the rest of May, Eddie spends an hour or two a day checking his email and surfing the Internet for job leads. He sends a few résumés out in response — one in Los Angeles, one in NYC. He waits, but doesn't hear anything. He also sends a couple of emails out to past internship supervisors asking if they “know of anything.”

In mid-June, he goes to NYC to visit some friends. While there, he makes a couple of phone calls to contacts he knows through his father. They agree to see him. At the appointments, the contacts ask Eddie what he'd like to do. Eddie says he's not sure but he knows wherever he's placed, he'll do very well. The contacts ask him to leave a résumé. He does so and goes back to Syracuse.

Meanwhile, the CDC gets a job lead in an industry Eddie indicated an interest in. A CDC staff member remembers her meeting with Eddie and realizes this could be a fit for him, but since Eddie hasn't followed up with the office for his other job hunt consultations, the counselors have a hard time connecting him to the information. Eddie has also applied to a number of job leads in the JobOps alumni listserv: everything from sales positions, to TV production, to a sports reporting job. He gets no responses from the résumés he's sent. Eddie's understandably very frustrated. No one is calling or emailing him back! He keeps thinking that if he's “only given a chance,” he'll do well... but no one is willing to give him that shot.

His lease in Syracuse is up at the end of June and Eddie returns home. Eddie resumes surfing job sites on the Internet. He supplements it by applying through LinkedIn. His father suggests he start sending out résumés to companies. Eddie spends an entire week looking online for companies and sends over 50 résumés to various human resources offices. Since he's not really sure what he wants, he keeps his accompanying letter vague. He doesn't want to hurt his chances by pigeonholing himself. He waits to hear from the companies. He receives one automated email saying his résumé was received and is now on file.

Eddie's getting angry at his contacts. They aren't "doing anything for him" and he zips off a few emails, asking again, if they "know of anything." He still gets no response. His voicemail messages aren't getting any response either and the few contacts he does get on the phone tell him they have no openings or refer him to their job hotline.

In late July, Eddie calls the CDC and explains that he's not getting anywhere. He'd like some alumni contacts. Since he didn't attend the Job Hunt Series or follow up with his individual appointment in May, he's told he needs to complete a few steps FIRST before he gets contacts. Eddie is emailed the "homework" he was provided right after graduation for him to complete again. Eddie does this and talks with a CDC advisor on the phone about the next steps. He's asked to come up with a series of questions that would be helpful to ask industry contacts—the first step in networking. The only thing he needs to know is if they have any openings so he doesn't bother to contact the CDC again.

Eddie starts calling his contacts again to see if they have any suggestions for him. He's referred to a few industry websites but given nothing specific. He continues to answer classified ads from the Internet, the newspaper and JobOps but hasn't yet gotten an interview. He's doing "everything he can," but there are no jobs out there and "no one is willing to help him." As of September 1, Eddie is still unemployed.

Eddie is unsuccessful because he:

- Didn't take advantage of the resources at SU while he was there. The CDC is open the entire summer and he spent two months surfing the Internet at home.
- Is unfocused and disorganized ("give me a job" is his mantra);
- Had no plan or schedule to follow: his job-hunting activities were passive and sporadic, answering classified ads and doing a mass mailing;
- Did no research or made any attempt to learn what was happening in his industry;
- Didn't seek out temporary or part-time work in the industry;
- Relied too much on contacts doing the work for him;
- Only asked contacts if they knew of openings but never took the time to develop relationships with them and have them get to know him and what he wanted to do;
- Was unwilling to put in the time and effort necessary for a true job hunt;
- Found others to blame for his lack of success.

Bottom Line: When you are unfocused, your job search is in trouble. Focus is the foundation of a job search. No amount of research or contacts will help you. Take the time to find it and THEN follow with the research and networking steps. NO ONE will find you a job except YOU.

Chapter 5: Communications Résumé Best Practices

The 10 Most Common Résumé Mistakes

Writing your résumé to sound like a series of job descriptions.

You need to give the reader an idea of what you have done throughout your career, but instead of focusing on the duties you were responsible for at your previous jobs, list your accomplishments along with quantifiable facts to break up your claims. Saying you were responsible for 10 percent growth in overall sales is more impressive than simply stating you managed a sales team.

Writing in the first person.

Your résumé is not a personal correspondence, and should not include words such as “I,” “my,” and “me.” Save the first-person pronouns for your cover letter.

Including unrelated and personal information.

As mentioned above, you do not have much room in a résumé, so why take up valuable space with information unrelated to the position you are seeking? Leave the details about your personal life, marital status, hobbies and other interests on the cutting room floor.

Using passive language or no action words.

Your résumé needs to make a bold, strong statement, and the best way to do this is by utilizing action words to describe your accomplishments. Words like “coordinated,” “achieved,” “managed” and “implemented” will spice up your résumé and make it more interesting and relevant to the reader.

Repetition

While using action words is important, it is also key to make sure you have variety in your résumé. Don’t pick a couple of words and stick with them throughout the entire document. Break out a thesaurus if you are having problems coming up with new ways to say the same thing.

Poor formatting or formatting that is too flashy.

While the most important part of your résumé is the content, there is no question that the document’s overall look and feel is also important. By now you should be comfortable enough with a word processing program to create a clean, polished-looking document. Use consistent formatting for headings and bullet points. In the same respect, steer clear of flashy formatting or overly creative résumés with unconventional fonts or graphics, unless you are seeking a highly creative position. Keep your résumé simple, bold and professional.

Sending a résumé without a cover letter.

One of the worst things you can do is send a great résumé without an official introduction. Résumés and cover letters should be inseparable. Make sure you don’t give up your chance to really sell yourself with a cover letter.

Sending an unfocused or generic résumé.

While your past experience does not change depending on the job or industry you are targeting, your résumé certainly should. If you are seeking a sales-related position, your résumé will include details that are different than those that would be included in a résumé for a management job. Make sure you write to what you are seeking and make it easy for the reader to see why you are a good fit.

Typos and other spelling or grammatical errors.

Before you send out your résumé, make sure you have proofread it several times. If a typo or misspelling is found, many hiring managers won't give a résumé a second look and will automatically toss it.

Sending your résumé to a nameless, faceless person in the department you are targeting

This is often the first and most helpful step to getting your foot in the door. Want your résumé to get thrown out with the recycling bin? Just send it to the company's "Hiring Manager," or "To Whom it May Concern." Do yourself a big favor and take the time to find a real person at the company who is responsible for hiring.

How to Organize a Résumé

- 1. DETERMINE YOUR AUDIENCE**

Who's going to be reading this résumé? What are you applying for? An internship? A specific job? **In order to make your résumé work effectively for you, you MUST know your audience.** Avoid "generic," unfocused resumes that list everything you've ever done. Don't assume your audience will pull out the relevant information. Highlight your skills/experience that most relate to the posting. Networking helps immensely in determining what to include.
- 2. CREATE A "WORD BANK."**

The word bank is a compilation of all your experiences: paid, unpaid, volunteer, extracurricular, class projects, etc. Write down a brief description of all your duties during this experience. You will not be including everything on your résumé, only relevant information. Office work, customer service and administrative experience should also be included. This is a helpful exercise to determine what you've done and identify the most relevant content.
- 3. SELECT A FORMAT**

a. REVERSE CHRONOLOGICAL – Most recent experience first, **b. FUNCTIONAL** - Experiences grouped by skills, **c. COMBINATION OF BOTH OF THESE FORMATS** – This last format tends to be best fit for most communications students; starts with reverse chronological format but then takes relevance into account, "bumping up" those experiences that are most relevant
- 4. WHAT TO INCLUDE**

EXPERIENCE – **The most important part of the résumé. Any time you are building or using skill sets hands-on, that's experience!** Extracurriculars, relevant course projects and unpaid work is still experience. Use phrases rather than full sentences (think "sound bites"). Begin each phrase with an action word. List your most relevant experiences *first* regardless of chronology. **QUALIFY:** Were you selected from a pool of 100, for example? How often did you perform tasks? Convey skill through action words, don't simply list tasks you completed. **QUANTIFY:** How many feature articles did you write? How many people did you supervise?
SKILLS – List computer programs, technical equipment, research skills (LexisNexis, MRI+) and any language skills you have. List specific social media platforms.
EDUCATION – Include Syracuse University, college(s), degree(s), year and major(s) – keep it simple as it won't be your most compelling selling point. Education is best listed after your experience section.
- 5. OPTIONAL ITEMS**

SUMMARY – At the top of your resume. MUCH more effective than a vague objective. Summaries or highlights **specific** skills, experiences or qualities you have for the reader. A very effective tool (page filler) for those with little experience.
GPA –If over 3.5 or if an application requests it, include it; if not, omit.
ACTIVITIES/INTERESTS – Non-career related activities can be a helpful résumé addition if you have the room. Remember – some activities may qualify as relevant experience!
- 6. DON'T BOTHER WITH...**

OBJECTIVE – Usually trite and vague such as "a position in tv/film that will allow me to use my skills." Doesn't add value.
"REFERENCES AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST" – Ted Bundy had references, which goes to show that *ANYONE* can get a reference. Don't bother with this tired, overused line. Besides, potential employers assume that you have references, so to note this is redundant.

Additional Résumé Sections

1. Course projects

These belong in the “Experience” section. Don’t list course titles (which tell the reader absolutely nothing about your abilities). Instead, list what you did, skills used, decision making, team/group work, etc. Format similarly to other entries in the Experience section. Give yourself a title that sums up what you did; the course title sits where you would usually list the company. Example:

- Producer/Director, Multimedia Production Course** Fall
2018
- Worked with team of three to produce three-minute short film using Adobe Premiere
 - Conceived and created treatment for short
 - Coordinated shooting on location with local authorities
 - Responsible for more than \$3000 worth of equipment and its protection
 - Stayed under budget and within shoot deadline

2. ACTIVITIES

Activities belong in the “Experience” section if you can show relevant skills sets being used or learned. This section is good for activities that are relevant in topic but in which your role is more passive or observational. Example of activity in Experience section:

- Public Relations Director, Society of Professional Journalists** Spring 2018
- Responsible for marketing and publicizing two to three group events each semester
 - Worked with other offices to create and conceive speaker and event topics
 - Handle website updates and write content for various publications
 - Designed posters using Adobe InDesign to post on campus
 - Liaison with faculty and administration to encourage participation in events
 - Responsible for \$1500 marketing budget and allocation of funding

Example of activity in Activities section:

- Public Relations Student Society of America, member

3. HONORS or AWARDS

Keep it short and explain (briefly) what the award is for. Awards and honors should only be listed if earned post-high school. Example:

- Phi Beta Kappa Award – Essay written on student activism (May 2017)
- Jim Smith Memorial Award- Academic achievement in history (May 2017)

BOTTOM LINE: Keep the résumé relevant and on one page. Make the sections easy to find and read; graphics and color are fine so long as they are not distracting. Use skill and action words. Know your audience and what they are looking for!

Résumé Do's and Don'ts

DO...

- Keep it ONE PAGE. The rule is one page equals about 10 years of experience. Multiple-page résumés indicate a lack of understanding of the position – the “here’s everything I’ve done, YOU figure out what’s important” approach. Ninety percent of multiple-page résumés are a result of design problems – don’t skip unnecessary spaces or lines; don’t under-utilize margins; keep font size reasonable; don’t put ONE item per line.
- Keep information RELEVANT to the position you’re applying for. If you want to write news, put writing experience front and center. If you want to convey reliability or responsibility, make sure you include that part-time job you’ve had since high school. The reader should view your résumé and think, “this person can do this job.” If the experience is old or does not use skills necessary for the position, relegate it to the bottom or to a sentence or eliminate it all together.
- Use boldface, capitals and bullet points for emphasis. Underlining is too busy, *italics* fade away and indenting is downright confusing. Keep graphic design simple. It’s your job to make the page easy to read/navigate.
- Start each descriptive phrase with a verb to emphasize skill.
- Use activities and/or class projects to support experience. Sometimes these are your most relevant experiences.
- Keep the space ratio in mind. Dedicate the most space to relevant information, least space to least relevant. In other words, if your name, address and education take up half your résumé, you need to rethink the space ratio.

DON'T...

- Expect the reader to know what you actually did when you use vague terms such as “assisted” or “worked with.” Be as descriptive as possible to represent the skills you have.
- Use narrative to describe your experience. Stick to short, incomplete sentences. It keeps the readers attention better.
- Hang on to the past. By the time you’re a senior, the high school information should be LONG gone. As you go through your college and then professional careers, you will “bump” older, less relevant content when you need the room for newer, more marketable experiences.
- Include information such as health or marital status, country of birth, etc. It’s illegal for companies to inquire about that so best not to offer it!
- Overestimate the value of a college degree. Most people today have a bachelor’s degree. Your experience discerns you from others. This goes for master’s degrees as well. Sell experience first, education second. This is best done with your education at the bottom of your resume, experience at the top.
- Forget your skills section. This helps potential employers see that you have the skills they’re looking for, without having to pick through your experience section.
- Use Times as your chosen résumé typeface. Times is actually hard to read in large quantities on a computer screen. A résumé will less generic without it.

Explanation of Jane Smith's Résumé

1. CONSISTENT LAYOUT AND PRESENTATION. Jane uses caps and bolds to delineate her titles and places she worked. Avoids indenting, underlines and italics – all “eye confusers.” Caps and bolding help reader quickly get a synopsis of her experience – the “10 second glance.”

2. WISE USE OF SPACE. Puts addresses horizontally to save space, and only uses the address that is most relevant to what she is applying for (e.g. If she will be living at home this summer and interning nearby, she uses her home address on résumés used to apply for those internships; if she is interning during the academic year, she uses her campus address). Uses bullets “within” the paragraph of each description to save space. Traditional bullets down the left margin take up a lot of space, which is fine if you need to stretch things out. However, if you have a lot to squeeze in, the “running bullets” layout is much more space-efficient.

3. ONE PAGE. About 99% of two-page résumés use space and/or graphics poorly. The rule is one page = 10 years of experience, so if you have fewer than ten years’ professional experience and are drifting onto two (or even three!) pages, take an honest look at your use of space and the relevance of the experiences included. You don’t have to include everything. Adjust your margins (.5 inches on all sides is as small as you can go to still be able to print on most printers). Demonstrate your knowledge of the field by eliminating irrelevant or extraneous information.

4. ORDER OF INFORMATION SHOULD BE MOST RELEVANT TO LEAST RELEVANT. First and foremost, the reader is looking for indications that you can perform the job or internship. Don’t make the reader search for the info. Pick relevance over chronology if you must choose. Follow up with related skills, your “professional training” (education) and then, if room, interest or activities. EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS SELL, NOT EDUCATION (especially for graduate students).

5. INCLUDES A CLASS PROJECT. The web designer position was a class project but is very relevant and current. Just because you weren’t paid doesn’t make the experience less important. Same goes for relevant extracurricular activities. Consider “experience” to be any time you are showing skills being learned or used hands-on!

6. DESCRIBES EXPERIENCES EFFECTIVELY. Jane assigns a descriptive title and begins her bulleted phrases with action words that convey skill. She does not merely list tasks or nouns (e.g. page layout, took photos) which provide no context for the reader.

7. LIST SPECIFIC SKILLS. Jane avoids generalized skills that aren’t specific to her field or area of interest.

8. EDUCATION DISPLAYED SIMPLY AND CONSISTENTLY. Education and/or degree(s) aren’t what get you hired. Relevant experience and skills do. Don’t inundate the reader with educational awards, honors, etc., which mean little in the real world. NOTE: Jane doesn’t include any honors, GPA, etc, from her undergrad... it’s “old news.”

9. INCLUDES RELEVANT MEMBERSHIP/AWARDS. If you belong to a professional organization or two, include to show you are in touch with the industry – even better if you have received recognition!

10. NO “REFERENCES AVAILABLE” LINE. Ted Bundy had references. It means nothing!

Chapter 6: Effective Cover Letter Writing

Cover Letter Basics

This letter is used only when you know there is a specific job opening. If you're writing a letter to make a connection at a company, you should not write a cover letter pitching yourself. In that situation, you should be writing a networking email! Flip back a few pages and review how/why to network!

FIRST PARAGRAPH:

- Opening Line – Catches the reader's attention with a reference or an accomplishment statement.
- Purpose – Give purpose for writing and mention the specific position you're applying for
- Transition – Prepare reader for next ¶

As lifestyle editor of The Daily Orange, I'm familiar with the frenetic pace of the newspaper business (accomplishment statement). I truly enjoy this high pressure environment (purpose) and am interested in applying for the reporter position (position) at the New Times. My familiarity with the daily operations of a newspaper combined with my writing skills makes me an excellent candidate (Transition).

SECOND PARAGRAPH:

- Cite your experience to demonstrate three qualities that you possess that were listed in the job description. Use a sentence or two for each example.
- Always ask yourself "How will this benefit the company?" rather than how you would enjoy or benefit from the position.

I meet daily deadlines at The DO (I have yet to miss one!) and am comfortable with the stress and high pressure of the industry. My writing skills recently won me the "NYS's Most Promising Newswriter" honor this past winter. Having to oversee a staff of 11 writers has made me a proven team player and my "whatever it takes" attitude has helped me to be successful working alone or with the team. This combination of skill and attitude make me ideal for...

LAST PARAGRAPH:

- The Ask: What do you want to happen?
- The Action: What are you going to do about it? (Always the same idea, "I will contact you.")

Thank you for your consideration. I would like to speak with you about my qualifications (the ask) and will call you in the next few days to see when an interview can be arranged (the action).

JOHN WILLIAMS

123 Tucker Lane • Sometown, NY • 12345
shaunpedderton@gmail.com • 315-123-4567

March 27, 2019

NOTE: Traditionally, letter recipients are addressed as Mr. or Ms., followed by the last name. However, if it is unclear how the person identifies, or if you know the person is non-binary, start your letter with "Dear Jill Murphy:" (i.e. use first and last without the gendered title).

Denise Rudith, Account Director
XYZ Ad Agency
456 Madison Avenue, Fl. 2
New York, NY 10019

Letter starts off strong with a reference and uses an "accomplishment statement" to finish the first paragraph. If the writer lacked a reference, starting the letter with the accomplishment statement would have been an engaging way to start things off.

Dear Ms. Rudith:

I spoke with James Smith in your media department in January. After our conversation, I know I could be an asset to your graphic design department and I am excited to throw my hat into the ring as an applicant for your summer program. My experiences as a planning intern for a local agency and as the advertising coordinator for my campus newspaper have prepared me well to be strong contributor to your organization.

While at Eric Mower and Associates, I not only contributed ideas to daily meetings with the planning team but handled client queries and administrative duties, such as scheduling simultaneously. Multitasking was an everyday occurrence, and I earned top honors from my managers upon completion of my internship. Also, as advertising coordinator at "The Daily Orange," I head up all advertising outreach for the publication and have single-handedly increased revenue for 2019 by 25 percent. I am familiar with MRI data and am an Excel expert. Creating mock media plans for clients such as Butterfinger and Exxon in my coursework has sharpened my research and data-crunching skills.

I am prepared to hit the ground running if selected for your program. I look forward to speaking with you about my qualifications and will be in touch in the next few weeks to set up a time. Thank you for your consideration.

Excellent, proactive, closing paragraph!

Sincerely,

John Williams

Middle paragraph is concise but gives enough detail to prove that the writer has the qualities he is claiming to possess.

Why This Letter Is Strong

1. CONTACT INFO IS HIGH AND EASY TO FIND

Burying your email address or phone number in the body of the letter will make it difficult for the reader to find.

2. ADDRESSES READER BY NAME

Letters addressed to “Whom it May Concern” can seem less personal. In addition, it implies that you didn’t break a sweat to find out to whom you are writing, that you might be firing out the same letter to tons of other companies (the dreaded “cookie cutter” letter!). Do your best to find out the hirer’s name. If you come up empty in your search for the specific application reviewer, try to find the name of the president, CEO or head of the department. That will show some effort and can’t hurt your application.

3. LISTS A REFERENCE IN FIRST LINE

Including a mention of a reference (someone at the company you spoke with/know, or who referred you) gives the employer more of a reason to want to read your letter. You immediately establish that though the person may not know you personally, someone else in their universe does. List a reference if possible.

4. SHORT AND SWEET, BUT PACKED WITH DETAIL

The reader leaves with a clear sense of why this candidate is viable for the internship without having to wade through lots of text. If you detail those things that relate to what the employer is looking for in a clear and concise way, you will demonstrate why you are qualified and that you are savvy about what the position entails. Your cover letter should highlight the things you bring to the table that most relate to the position you’re applying for, not be a list of everything that’s on your résumé.

5. SHOWS INSTEAD OF TELLS

If Shaun had just written that he was great at multi-tasking, researching and working in a fast-paced environment, the reader would have no proof that this was true. By giving examples from your experiences that allow the reader to see you exhibiting these skills in his/her head, you will be convincing in your claims.

6. KEEPS THE FOCUS ON THE EMPLOYER

Employers want to hear why you would be of value, not why an internship/job at the company would help your career, fulfill your lifelong dream, etc. Frame ALL your phrasing around what YOU bring to the table.

7. DOESN’T GIVE THE EMPLOYER HOMEWORK

If you want the job so badly, YOU should be the one who puts effort into the follow-up. Closing with proactive language will show the employer how interested you are in the position and will keep the ball in your court so you have reason to be back in touch. Better for you to call to follow up than wonder if the employer will get in touch with you. (If the posting states “no phone calls,” though, only then can you be a little more passive.)

Chapter 7: Own that Interview!

Interview Preparation

You've applied to leads from networking contacts, or you've applied to a job you saw advertised in the Newhouse School's electronic newsletter, JobOps, and now you have an interview...

Preparation is key. Average prep time per interview should be about three hours! Those who know themselves interview better. Really examine your résumé and be prepared to explain how your experiences have showcased your talents. What makes you a cut above the rest? Know the company and what the position entails, and prepare questions for the interviewer. This DOES get easier with time. Want extra help preparing? Listen to the Newhouse CDC's podcast on interviewing! Visit newhouse.syr.edu/cdc and click on the resources page to find your way to all of our podcasts, including #4: Preparing for Interviews.

Be CONFIDENT. They already think you can do the job. Now they want to interview you to find out the following:

1. Will you fit in with the office, group, culture?
2. Do you offer any additional skills and/or qualities that set you apart from other candidates?
3. Do they want to spend time with you? They have to like you in order to want to hire you!

Send a thank you letter. A thank you letter signifies to the employer that you are respectful and serious. Now's your chance to tell them you appreciate their time, as well as sneak in reminders about your enthusiasm and qualifications. Send it within 24 hours of your interview.

Sample Interview Questions

SCHOOL QUESTIONS

1. How did your college experience prepare you for a business career?
2. What led you to choose your major?
3. Do you think your grades are a good indication of your academic achievement or potential?
4. What have you learned from participation in extracurricular activities?
5. On what committees have you served? What did you contribute?
6. Describe the toughest course you took. Describe the easiest.
7. Which courses did you find most beneficial? Least beneficial?
8. Describe your favorite (or best) instructor.
9. If you could go back to school, would you take the same major?
10. How do you feel about the amount of time spent in extracurricular activities?
11. I see you worked while in school. Tell me about a typical day for you.

JOB-RELATED QUESTIONS

1. What interests you about this particular position?
2. For what reasons should we hire you?
3. In what ways do you think you can make a contribution to our company?
4. Describe your most rewarding professional experience?
5. If you were hiring for this position, what qualities would you look for?
6. What were your highest priorities in your last job?
7. Tell me about a project or procedure you developed and initiated.
8. How large was the last organization you worked for?
9. If you were to get this job, in what areas could you contribute immediately?
10. Give me an example of a time where your supervisor complimented you. Criticized you?
11. Tell me about the toughest sale you ever had and how you handled it.
12. Describe a time in a job when you were faced with problems that tested your coping skills.
13. What led you to seek a position with us?
14. Do you have a geographic preference?
15. Are you willing to relocate? Are you willing to travel?
16. How would you evaluate the company you were with last?
17. What do you think the job entails?
18. What are you seeking in a new position that you are not getting in your present one?
19. Tell me what you know about us.
20. Describe the most significant document or report which you have had to complete.

Handling Tricky Questions

Objections/The “Question behind the Question”

Objections are assumptions employers make about you based on your age, gender, background that might affect your job performance – usually not legal to ask. We *all* have objections; your job as the job hunter is to identify your objections and work “antidotes” into your answers/dialogue with the employer; ask yourself, “Why are they asking me this question?”

Example 1: International student

Objection: Doesn’t speak English language well

Antidote: Address concern openly and assure them that you understand English – give some proof of knowledge (writing samples or test scores like TOEFL); best antidote is to speak well in the interview.

Example 2: 21-year-old recent grad

Objection: Inexperienced, possibly unfocused

Antidote: Do homework on industry; have good questions; know what skills you have and would be able to contribute to the company; eliminate the “likes” and “ums” in your dialogue. The “Question behind the Question” refers to an employer fear behind a question. If you know why the interviewer is asking the question you can give a better answer.

Illegal Questions

You will sometimes get asked illegal questions such as age, health, marital status, what parents do. Employers usually ask them out of ignorance, not malice (HR people will never ask these!) The best way to answer those is to qualify first and then answer the question.

Tough or “left field” questions

It’s ok to have interviewer repeat a question or count to three silently before answering to buy time. Answer the question and end it: don’t ramble; less said is better. Remember to turn negative questions into positives. Usually, with left field questions, they’re looking for the “middle person.” For example, “At a party are you the first to leave, do you leave in the middle, or do you shut the party down? Answer: “I’m not a party pooper, but not a party animal.”

Follow up!

Find out timeline before you leave; how many are they interviewing; when will they make a decision? Get correct spelling and title of person(s) you interviewed with; ask for business cards. Send thank you in timely fashion – include any themes you may have left out or answer objections. If they’re making a decision quickly – okay to email or FedEx the thank you. If you haven’t heard within timeframe, do one short, friendly follow-up call.

Interview Prep Worksheet

Position you're interviewing for:

Interviewer name/title:

Interview date & time:

Company name:

Address:

RESEARCH. It's time to anticipate the employer's needs.

- What does the company do? (If you can't answer this, better get researching!)
- Identify three skills necessary for this position (w/ examples from your resume that demonstrate them).

1.

2.

3.

- Name one industry "trend" or hot topic that might affect this company (read those trade magazines!):

PERSONAL THEMES. Knowing what you do about the company, how will you market yourself? Why should they choose YOU over all other candidates? What makes you different from other applicants? When have you shown initiative?

1.

2.

3.

QUESTIONS FOR THE EMPLOYER. Identify *at least* eight different questions you'd like to ask the interviewer. Why so many? Most of your questions will be answered during the interview. Some questions may come to you as you are interviewing, but don't count on that. *Salary and benefits questions are no-no's* (though internship candidates may ask about compensation)

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

Writing a Great Thank You Note

Date (within 24 hours of your interview)

Interviewer's Name
Interviewer's Title
Company
Address



If using a note card, omit these details. However, include this information if you are typing the thank you letter. See the notes at the bottom of this page for guidelines.

Dear Mr./Ms. Alumnus' Last Name OR First Last:

FIRST PARAGRAPH

- Refer to interview date and thank him/her for time.
- Note something that was interesting or enjoyable that you learned during the interview.

SECOND PARAGRAPH

- Reiterate your themes or selling points and make connection as to how that would help the company.
- If you feel there was something unresolved or an issue/question you didn't address, here's your chance.

THIRD PARAGRAPH

- Restate your interest in working at the company.
- Tell him/her you either look forward to hearing back or will follow up with him/her if instructed to do so.

Sincerely,
Your Name

(Don't forget to sign! If your signature doesn't obviously spell out your name, you can print your name underneath it. If you're sending in hard copy, one blank line after closing followed by your name is fine if sending electronically)

- Thank-you letters should be short (preferably no more than six to 10 sentences) and timely.
- A handwritten card or note is preferred.
- If using a note card, select one with a graphic print, a monogram or the words "thank you" on it. Keep it professional and polished by staying away from cutesy (no field mice or unicorns, of course).
- If your handwriting is not legible, you may type your note and add a personal handwritten note at the bottom of the letter.
- You are noting that you will keep in touch so be sure to do so! Keeping a networking connection "alive" requires that you invest some effort. To stay on a contact's radar, send an update, ask a question, or follow up at least twice a year. Put a reminder in your phone so you won't forget!

Salary Negotiation

People usually mishandle salary “negotiation” by saying “I need to make more” or worse, they bring in personal issues such as “I have student loans” or “I just bought a car.” That may be true but those were your decisions, not the employer’s. Personal justifications for a higher salary are NOT salary negotiation techniques.

Proper and effective salary negotiation puts value to the increase you are requesting. Negotiation is not a demand for more money simply because you feel you deserve or need it. Identify some skill or experience you have that the company may benefit from and then assign that a monetary value. For example, if someone offers \$28k and you want \$30k, you need to give him/her value for that \$2k. Some examples of what may be worth that additional \$2k:

- **Working knowledge of the company** or department and/or proof of your value as a worker to employers. For instance, if you interned there before, you have inside knowledge and perhaps relationships with clients/employees... AND they’ve seen you work. This is a possible negotiation point and worth \$2k.
- **Computer or technical skills** are also valued. HTML or basic web updating and computer trouble-shooting, though not a main job description, might be worth something to a company.
- **Fluency in a second language** such as Spanish might also be a negotiating point.
- **Intangibles like personality, work ethic** are also possible negotiation points. You need to give employers hard examples of those and how that intangible will help the employer or make you worth the extra money.

NOTE: Having two internships and a Newhouse degree are NOT negotiating points. They are not things that separate you from other candidates!

The most effective way to present a case is to say to an employer, “I’m very happy you offered me a position with XYZ Company. However, I feel my prior knowledge of your department and the fact that you know me, and that I’m an above average worker is worth an additional \$2,500 to the offered salary.”

At worst they’ll say no. Sometimes they may offer to evaluate you sooner—at the six month mark instead of 12 months. Best case scenario: They agree that your value is worth additional money. Small- to medium-sized companies may be more willing to negotiate. Large agencies and companies do not, as a rule, negotiate entry-level salaries.

The key is to show/provide value and put a price on skill, experience, etc. for the company. Demanding “more money” because you “deserve it” is NOT negotiation. Keep in mind: Salary negotiation implies that you have or offer something additional that the employer values. At entry level, negotiating isn’t always an option.

Chapter 8: CDC Resources

Lifelong Support

The Newhouse CDC is open all year, including summer and most breaks. As an alumnus we are still available to you during your job search and in the future.

If you want to connect with the CDC or set up an appointment, contact us at (315) 443-3270 or nhcdc@syr.edu. Alumni are always welcome to visit in person, as well. Avoid potential disappointment, though, by calling ahead, especially if you're hoping to sit down with someone during your time on campus.

Join the Newhouse Network!

The Newhouse Network is an online community of industry professionals and it is available to young alumni who have attended the CDC's Job Hunt Series. Access the Network at network.newhouse.syr.edu.

Use the CDC's Online Resources

- A variety of resources is also available on the CDC's web site. Visit newhouse.syr.edu/cdc and click "alumni" to see the resources page. Here you will find:
- Lists of on-campus and online job and internship hunting resources;
- Podcasts that review how to conduct a proactive job and internship search, interviewing, using social media to make a positive impression, networking best practices, and other career topics;
- A job search toolkit to help you assess what you need to be doing to find success.

... and much more!

Newhouse Network FAQs

What is the Newhouse Network?

The Newhouse Network is a database of Newhouse alumni who have agreed to serve as contacts for students and alumni interested in the communications industry. It is the single most valuable career resource we offer to our students.

What does being a member involve?

Once you join the Network, your information will be available to students who have attended the Career Development Center's Job Hunt Series, as well as to your fellow alumni. These students and alumni may contact you with career and industry-related questions. Most alumni find that they are contacted a few times a year and the time commitment is very manageable.

How do students use the Newhouse Network?

Students MUST complete the CDC's Job Hunt Series that teaches how to organize a job search, how to network, and how to write networking emails effectively. The seminar tries to ensure that the students are organized and well informed when they contact alumni they find in the Network.

How do alumni use the Network?

As a Network contact, you will be given access to alumni in a variety of fields and geographic markets (quid pro quo). Joining is easy: follow the quick, secure process to sign up at network.newhouse.syr.edu. If you graduated within the last several years and are not yet a member, we will require that you either attended the Job Hunt Marathon Series as a student or that you set up a phone appointment with the CDC to make sure that you understand what is expected of you as a member of the site.

When you become a Newhouse Network veteran...

Chances are good that you will change jobs or positions at some point after joining the Network. Please take a minute to update your network bio and contact information. You update or change your profile at any time at network.newhouse.syr.edu.

Recommended Resources

For Everyone:

Association for Women In Communications	www.womcom.org
Bureau of Labor Statistics	www.bls.gov/oco
Career Shift	newhouse.careershift.com (Access Code: newhousecdc)
Glassdoor	www.glassdoor.com
Guide to Jobs on Internet	www.rileyguide.com
LinkedIn (Syracuse University profile)	www.linkedin.com/school/syracuse-university
The Newhouse Network	network.newhouse.syr.edu
Richard Bolles' "What Color is Your Parachute?"	www.jobhuntersbible.com
Indeed	www.indeed.com
Vault	www.vault.com

Advertising:

Advertising Age	https://careers.adage.com
AdWeek	www.adweek.com/aw/classifieds/index.jsp
American Assoc. of Advertising Agencies	www.aaaa.org
Fast Company	www.fastcompany.com

Broadcast Journalism:

Broadcasting and Cable	www.broadcastingcable.com
Medialine (fee-based)	www.medialine.com/jobs.htm
NewsLab	www.newslab.org
Nielsen Market Rankings	www.nielsenmedia.com/DMA.html
RTDNA (membership required to access)	www.rtdna.org
Society of Professional Journalists	www.spj.org

Graphic Design:

American Institute of Graphic

Arts www.aiga.com

Design Observer

www.designobserver.com

Fast Company

www.fastcompany.com

HOW Magazine

www.howdesign.com

Society for News Design

www.snd.org/jobs

Society of Publication Designers

www.spd.org

Entertainment:

CompanyTown

www.latimes.com/business/hollywood

Deadline

www.deadline.com

Entertainment Weekly

www.ew.com

Media Decoder

www.nytimes.com/section/business/media

Reality Staff

www.realitystaff.com

Variety

www.variety.com

Magazine:

American Society of Magazine Editors

www.magazine.org

ED2010

www.ed2010.com

FOLIO

www.foliomag.com

Magazine Publishers of America

www.magazine.org

Mediabistro

www.mediabistro.com

Mr. Magazine

www.mrmagazine.com

Music/Audio:

Alternative Press

www.altpress.com

Billboard Magazine

www.billboard.com

Electronic Musician	www.emusician.com
Entertainment Weekly	www.ew.com
Mix	www.mixonline.com
Professional Sound	www.professional-sound.com
Rolling Stone	www.rollingstone.com
Spin	www.spin.com
Variety	www.variety.com

Newspaper/Print Journalism:

American Journalism Review	www.ajr.org
American Society of Newspaper Editors	www.asne.org
Columbia Journalism Review	www.cjr.org
Journalism Jobs	www.journalismjobs.com
Society for Professional Journalists	www.spj.org

Photography:

Advertising Photographers of America	www.apanational.com
American Society of Media Photographers	www.asmp.org
Aperture	aperture.org
Editorial Photographers	www.editorialphoto.com
National Press Photographers Association	www.nppa.org
Photo District News	www.pdnonline.com

Public Relations:

Holmes Report	www.holmesreport.com
O'Dwyers	www.odwyerpr.com
PR Week	www.prweekjobs.com

Public Relations Society of America

www.prsa.org

Television/Radio/Film:

American Women In Radio and Television

www.awrt.org

Assistant Directors

www.assistantdirectors.com

B-Roll (TV photography)

www.b-roll.net

CinemaBlend

www.cinemablend.com

Cynthia Turner's Cynopsis

www.cynopsis.com

Directors Guild of America

www.dga.org

Entertainment Careers

www.entertainmentcareers.net

Hollywood Creative Directory

www.hcdonline.com

Hollywood Reporter

www.hollywoodreporter.com

Mandy's Film and TV Production Directory

www.mandy.com

Women in Film

www.wif.org

Writers Guild of America

www.wga.org

Chapter 9: Give Back!

As you move through your career, you can network with fellow alumni for career guidance and opportunities, and tap into our student population to find your next intern, new hire, or fresh idea, all my using The Newhouse Network. You can reconnect with the School through news and events, and give back by providing students with mentoring and professional advice. Being part of the Newhouse “family” bring access to an invaluable resource – and bragging rights!

Once you sign up at network.newhouse.syr.edu, you can return to the site at any time to search for contacts or update your profile. Your contact information will not be shared elsewhere.

Be sure you also email the Newhouse CDC with your career moves! We love to hear from alumni and would like to congratulate you! Email us at nhcdc@syr.edu.

If the company or organization you join has staffing needs, consider listing job or internships with the CDC. As you know, we can quickly get the word out about any openings to current students and/or alumni. Just send a brief description to us at nhcdc@syr.edu or use our online form available at newhouse.syr.edu/cdc under “employers.”

We would also like to welcome you back to campus as an alumnus to represent your company at a career fair, the spring Newhouse Recruitment Collective, or through an employer information session. Don’t hesitate to reach out if we can help you help your company this way.

Thank you in advance for your help!