



HOW TO LAND YOUR DREAM JOB

by: Ashley Montgomery, Head Assistant Editor

The “real world.” That’s what they call it. The place outside the comforting walls of your school, on-campus job or home, otherwise known as the “workplace.” It’s what your entire college career prepared you for, but the idea of the “real world” can still seem daunting at times. Applying for your first job or even internship is a huge step, and it can be intimidating - even if you already have some experience under your belt. But don’t sweat it! Everyone has to start somewhere, and it all begins with simply having the courage to put yourself out there and knowing how to properly market yourself for the position you’ve always dreamed of having. Keith Schomig, a USF alum who is currently a Talent Coordinator at Legacy Professionals LLC, gave some insight on what employers look for when hiring someone, and tips on how to land your dream job.

WHAT DO EMPLOYERS LOOK FOR ON A RESUME? HOW CAN I MAKE MINE STAND OUT?

It is important to understand that your resume is going to be the first (and possibly last) impression your potential employer has of you. You want your resume to be polished, professional and unique, or else it will end up in the pile with the applicants the employer has no intention of further pursuing. It only takes a few seconds of glancing over that one-page document to form an opinion, so it is crucial to know how to properly word and format your overview of you! When looking at resumes, Schomig commented, “I look at the format and use of the entire page. It is easy to see when people use a template and don’t tweak it. Use a good template, and then make it your own. Your resume should be one page. No more, and no less.” If you have no idea where to start, you can always find impressive resume templates for sale on Etsy that are more striking than a typical

black and white one you might find with a quick Google search. While Schomig mentioned that “Most resumes have to be boring,” consider adding a few pops of color here and there or using icons to indicate your contact information rather than writing “email:, phone number:, etc.” While you want the page to be aesthetically pleasing, don’t get carried away with the layout and forget about the content. Use powerful words that speak to your skills and capabilities, and always remember to proofread, and then proofread again!

WHAT EXACTLY IS A “COVER LETTER?”

Seth Porges, a contributor for Forbes, explains, “At best, a cover letter can help a job-seeker stand out from the pack. At worst, it can make a promising candidate seem like an uncreative cut-and-paster.” Just like resumes, cover letters need to be unique. A cover letter essentially provides a more detailed description of your qualifications, what you

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can bring to the job and why the company should hire you. Don’t undersell yourself. This is an opportunity to show off your writing skills while introducing who you are. Be sure to include a bit of personality in your cover letter, but keep it professional. Again, cover letters should never be longer than one page. You want to keep the employer engaged throughout every line they read. A good tip to keep in mind is that your cover letter should complement your resume, not repeat it. You want to be genuine and honest. Explain how you heard about the position, why you think you’d be a good fit, any references that relate to the company and fill in any gaps your

resume may not explain. Schomig recommends tailoring each cover letter you write to the specific position you are applying for - you should not copy and paste the same letter to multiple applications as each company is different and has different expectations.

WHAT IS THE VALUE IN HAVING A POLISHED PORTFOLIO WHEN APPLYING FOR JOBS AND INTERNSHIPS?

A portfolio showcases all of your work, and it allows you to brag about all the amazing things you can do. After all, salespeople call their portfolios “brag books” so they can do exactly that. It is always great to bring a hard copy portfolio to an interview, but it really stands out if you are capable of creating a digital one as well. Schomig states, “I think a digital portfolio is a great idea. This allows you to show how freaking great you are! It is easy to include a link to a digital portfolio on the resume or email. It allows the employer to look at it without out shoving it in their face.”

I LANDED AN INTERVIEW! WHAT SHOULD I BRING..?

Some words to live by that will aid you in more areas than job interviews are, “You’re never fully dressed without a smile!” It’s true: confidence really is key. Dress for the position you are interviewing for and be confident in yourself and what you can do. When it comes to what materials to bring to an interview, one writer for U.S. news pointed out, “Preparation is more than a new suit and shiny shoes.” Schomig stated, “Most employers will tell you that you need to bring nothing. I suggest bringing a portfolio binder, a pen, something to drink and some extra resumes.” You can never be too prepared. If you have business cards, bring a few of those as well. Another thing that will help you stand out in an interview is to come prepared with questions. Martin Yate, author of “Knock ‘em Dead 2016: The Ultimate Job Search Guide,” writes, “[Coming prepared with questions] helps advance your candidacy because our judgments about people are based, in part, on the questions they ask, since those questions speak to the depth of their interest and understanding.” By preparing in-depth and intriguing questions for the interviewer, it allows you to contribute to and steer the conversation a bit, and shows that you are serious about the position as you have done your research on the company. Schomig adds, “Know things about the place you are interviewing with. Knowledge is power,” and that power will surely reflect in your overall body language.

HOW CAN I PREPARE FOR AN INTERVIEW? WHAT WILL MAKE ME A MEMORABLE APPLICANT?

“Practice makes you perfect,” Schomig states. He suggests partaking in mock interviews, which you can do at the Career Success Center at the University of St. Francis. Think of interviews as presentations. You are presenting yourself as a potential asset to this company! Do anything and everything you can to be prepared. However, as a Talent Coordinator, Schomig interviews a lot of people and he notes that there is always a fine line between looking prepared and looking desperate. He says, “Be 15 minutes early to the interview; being early is being on time in my book. But if you show up too early, you look desperate. If you show up late you aren’t getting the job.” He also stresses the importance of leaving a lasting impression on the employer. “Follow up and send a thank you email within

48 hours of the interview. Please do not send it within hours,” because again, you will appear desperate. His final thoughts on how to be a memorable applicant are, “I say all the time ‘if you can treat the janitor of a company and the CEO the same, you will be successful.’ It is all about communicating; this is a skill that you need to have to stand out.”

FINAL TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

One of the most useful resources we have here on campus is the Career Success Center. Schomig notes that they have “so many tips and tricks to help you stand out,” and they will aid you in refining your resume and cover letters. He also explains that you should create a job log on Excel, where you can keep track of where you have applied and who you spoke with. Again, he emphasizes that you should put research and time into the process. His biggest piece of advice? “Be humble! You will strike out before you hit that home-run. Learn from your mistakes and correct them – this is the definition of true success.”

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