Career Development Guide

identify and attain personally rewarding careers
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Together with faculty, staff, industry professionals and UC alumni, the mission of Lindner College of Business Career Services is to enhance the professional acumen of college of business students, while helping them attain personally rewarding careers.

— LCB Career Services Mission Statement

Message from Dean Szymanski

Welcome!

The Carl H. Lindner College of Business Career Services team is an excellent resource throughout your collegiate career at the University of Cincinnati. With their guidance, you will gain confidence to articulate your personal skills and interests as well as identify career options that are the right fit for you. Their goal is to help you build your professional capabilities and implement a successful career search strategy.

Although many students are anxious about career choices and preparations, you are the primary owner of this process. I encourage you to take a proactive approach to your professional development and career planning. The Career Development Guide is written to support your efforts to attain a personally rewarding career.

The Lindner College of Business Career Services team is poised and ready to deliver on their promise, preparing you to compete and excel in today’s job market. Good luck!

Proudly UC,

David M. Szymanski, PhD
Dean and Professor of Marketing
Carl H. Lindner College of Business
University of Cincinnati

Thank You!

The Carl H. Lindner College of Business would like to thank Prudence Huang and all of our supporters for their generous gifts that made the creation of the Career Development Guide possible.
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listservs
listserv.uc.edu (UC distribution lists)
for LCB Undergraduate Career Services, search for LCB-UGCareer
for LCB Graduate Career Services, search for LCB-GradCareer

Lindner College of Business Career Services – Student Services

Career Assessments
Career Conversations (Mentoring/Networking Portal)
Career Development Guide
Career Fairs
Employer Information Sessions
Industry Specific Panels
Interview Stream Virtual Interview System
Job Search Strategies
Mock Interviews
Networking Events
On-Campus Interviews
Professional Development Workshops & Events
Recruit a ‘Cat (Career Opportunities)
Resume Critiques
Student Newsletter
Student Organization Support
Undergraduate Drop-In Hours
Weekly e-Newsletter
Exploring Career Options

Hit the ground running! Professional development and career planning start as soon as you arrive at the University of Cincinnati Lindner College of Business and continue throughout your professional career. The following information will assist you with understanding the steps necessary to explore career options, starting with your transition to college and continuing through graduation.

Leverage Your Resources at UC

Complementing the Lindner College of Business Career Services team, there are two professional development and career planning related departments to assist students with identifying and attaining personally rewarding careers.

**Career Development Center (CDC)**  Located at 104 University Pavilion, the CDC assists students, as well as alumni, across all majors and all colleges in their career quest. They provide:

- Recruit a ‘Cat job postings for all majors across all colleges
- Events to connect all students across the entire university with employers
- On-campus Interviews, including facilities, for employers recruiting multiple majors across multiple colleges
- Employer Information Sessions for students in multiple majors across multiple colleges
- Video-taped Mock Interviews with employers
- On-site Interview Stream Virtual Interview System
- Several CDC Listservs, including the Lindner College of Business: COB-Careerlink
- and much more!

For more information:
- [www.uc.edu/career](http://www.uc.edu/career)
- cdc@uc.edu
- 513-556-3471

**Division of Professional Practice**  Located on the 7th floor level of the Joseph A. Steger Student Life Center, the Division of Professional Practice is the academic unit at the University of Cincinnati which administers the Cooperative Education and Academic Internship Programs. Through co-op and internships, the professional world partners with the university to integrate theory and practice. Students gain practical experience in their chosen field, acquire an understanding of their profession, and have the opportunity to further develop their professional and interpersonal skills.

For more information:
- [www.uc.edu/propractice](http://www.uc.edu/propractice)
- coop@uc.edu
- 513-556-2667
Professional Development and Career Planning Roadmap

As a Lindner College of Business student, you will create a customized platform for developing proficiency in professionalism, academics, character and engagement that fits your personal goals and enables career success — this model is known as PACE. According to PACE, professionalism is defined as:

Professionalism – Students will acquire and refine the soft-skills necessary to effectively lead and perform in business and social situations. These “soft-skills” include the ability to: exhibit a professional appearance, accurately convey ideas in written and verbal communication, work productively in teams, and execute compelling presentations.

Therefore, the following provides guidance on where you should be with your professional development and career planning during each stage of your collegiate career.

Freshman Year
☐ Sign-up for the LCB-UGCareer Listserv
☐ Explore your interests and abilities through academic courses
☐ Utilize self-assessment tools to gain a better understanding of your interests, values and skills
☐ Join student organizations that will offer you leadership roles in the future; at least one related to your personal interests and another tailored toward your major or career interest
☐ Learn about and apply for the Cooperative Education and/or Academic Internship Programs offered through the Division of Professional Practice
☐ Attend career fairs to gather information on potential careers and employers
☐ Familiarize yourself with services and resources available through Lindner Career Services
☐ Update privacy settings on personal social media profiles and build your personal brand on professional social media sites
☐ Create a first draft of your resume, have it critiqued and make refinements
☐ Create a Recruit a ‘Cat profile and make it active for employers to explore; check often for career opportunities
☐ Become familiar with your interview skills through the Interview Stream Virtual Interview System
☐ Build your Elevator Speech
☐ Identify and comprehend the difference between professional and general communication
☐ Invest in professional business attire and accessories

Sophomore Year
☐ Choose a major that fits your interests, skills and goals – and that you truly enjoy studying
☐ Obtain a co-op or internship through the Cooperative Education or Academic Internship Programs offered by the Division of Professional Practice or independently through Recruit a ‘Cat
☐ Take on more responsibilities in student organizations and affiliations
☐ Explore at least three career options within your major
☐ Attend career fairs and employer information sessions related to your major or career interests
☐ Build your interview skills by continuing to leverage the Interview Stream Virtual Interview System and participating in Videotaped Mock Interviews through the Career Development Center
☐ Connect with employers in your intended field through Career Conversations in Recruit a ‘Cat
☐ Update your resume, have it critiqued and make refinements
☐ Learn how to write a persuasive cover letter
☐ Refine professional communication skills both verbal and non-verbal
☐ Refine your Elevator Speech
☐ Update your Recruit a ‘Cat profile and check regularly for career opportunities
☐ Meet with the LCB International Programs to explore study abroad opportunities and begin researching grants and scholarship options
☐ Invest in professional business attire and accessories
Pre-Junior/Junior Year
☐ Narrow your areas of career interest
☐ Research potential employers and related career attributes that are important to you
☐ Build a LinkedIn profile and join groups to help you network within your industry
☐ Attend career fairs and employer information sessions that relate to your interests
☐ Contact recent alumni from your major about the job market and potential employers through Career Conversations and LinkedIn
☐ Continue to co-op or obtain an internship or other practical career experience
☐ Continue building your network through Career Conversations in Recruit a ‘Cat
☐ Update your resume, have it critiqued and make refinements
☐ Draft a cover letter that can be adapted for a variety of employers and have it reviewed
☐ Master your Elevator Speech
☐ Update your Recruit a ‘Cat profile and check weekly for career opportunities
☐ Join a professional organization related to your major or career interest
☐ Take a leadership role in a student organization
☐ Identify and build a relationship with a mentor
☐ Strengthen your interview skills by participating in 2–3 mock interviews with the Lindner Career Services team or mentors
☐ Take BA3080: Business Professionalism
☐ Invest in professional business attire and accessories
☐ Enhance professional communication skills both verbal and non-verbal

Senior Year
☐ Stay up-to-date on the Career Services event calendar and participate in on-campus recruiting activities
☐ Mock interview for each impending career interview with a mentor, friend or Career Services team member
☐ Develop a list of potential employers with contact names and information from organizations you are interested in pursuing
☐ Leverage your transferrable skills and career-related strengths with employers
☐ Update your resume, have it critiqued and make refinements
☐ Refine your cover letter and make it adaptable for each career opportunity to which you apply
☐ Update your Recruit a ‘Cat profile and check 2–3 times per week for career opportunities
☐ Apply actively for career opportunities online via Recruit a ‘Cat and employer websites
☐ Exhibit professional communication skills both verbal and non-verbal
☐ Research information on realistic salary expectations
☐ Go on employment interviews, evaluate job offers and accept one
☐ Complete the Career Services Graduation Employment Survey, to share your plans after UC

Graduate Programs
Due to the accelerated nature of most Lindner College of Business graduate programs, it is important to adopt a career-oriented mindset from your very first day on campus. Familiarize yourself with graduate recruiting and networking resources and make a note of the recruiting timeline (provided in the Job Search Strategies section, page 14 of this guide). Some basic steps to get you started include:
☐ Sign-up for the LCB-GradCareer Listserv
☐ Develop your Personal Marketing Plan (For details, see the Job Search Strategies section of this guide.)
☐ Create (and update each semester) your Recruit a ‘Cat profile and check 2–3 times per week for career opportunities
☐ Get involved on campus! Consider joining student/professional organizations or volunteer groups to build your network, become engaged, and give back to the community.
☐ Build on your academic achievement by developing as a whole person. Take advantage of opportunities outside the classroom to enhance professionalism and, as a result, career marketability.
Self-Assessments

Do you know yourself inside and out? Do you know what type of environment you thrive in? Are you aware of what fuels your long-term success? Can you systematically identify your interests, values and skills? All of this information, and more, is important as you identify careers and industries to pursue; as well as market yourself to potential employers or individuals that can catapult your career. To gain a better understanding of yourself and how to professionally leverage this information, begin by completing self-assessments early and often. As you gain more experience collegiately and professionally, your results have the opportunity to shift.

Lindner Career Services also provides Lindner College of Business students with access to:

- **CareerLeader**  A fully integrated approach to business careers this self-assessment is built on the premise that one's interests, motivators and skills will drive their future career success and satisfaction. It predicts career paths you are likely to enjoy and succeed in, elements of organizational culture key to your success and happiness and identifies personal weaknesses. Learn more at [careerleader.com](http://careerleader.com) and contact a member of the Lindner Career Services team to complete an assessment.

The Career Development Center provides all University of Cincinnati students with access to:

- **FOCUS-2**  A self-guided, interactive assessment program designed to help you select the right college major and plan your career based on your personal interest, values, skills, personality, and aspirations. To learn more and to complete the assessment visit: [www.uc.edu/career/students/career_exploration/career_assessments/focus-2.html](http://www.uc.edu/career/students/career_exploration/career_assessments/focus-2.html) and call Career Resources at the CDC, at 513-556-3471, to obtain an access code.

- **DISCOVER and SIGI3 are Computerized Self-Assessments**  Two computerized, self-directed career assessment programs that enable students to assess your interests, values, and skills. Subsequently, you can match those findings to potential careers and majors, research these careers and majors, and find out more about graduate schools. All this can be accomplished in about 1½ to 2 hours. These programs are FREE plus can be utilized from your own computer. Call Career Resources at the CDC, at 513-556-3471, to obtain an identification number.

You will also interface with other professional development assessments throughout your collegiate career via classroom assignments, leadership development opportunities and employer obligations. Again, as you grow in your collegiate and professional career, your results and the insights they provide will shift. Approach each assessment as an opportunity to inventory your competitive advantages to an employer.
Professional Communication

Communicating with others is a part of everyday life. In large part, communication is about explicit language (spoken and written words) but also about implicit (non-verbal) messages, such as tone or eye contact. Learning to communicate effectively both implicitly and explicitly is a valuable skill for any professional.

Verbal Communication

Business professionals demonstrate effective verbal communication skills by using spoken words to convey a message clearly and concisely. By successfully delivering a message, business professionals describe ideas, thoughts and directives that allow colleagues to work better together. Professional verbal communication includes using proper word choices (everyone vs. you guys, I understand vs. it’s cool, etc.) and having the proper tone for the conversation (not sounding like you are asking a question for each statement you say, etc.).

Voicemail

A proper voicemail greeting can make a positive impression on callers or it can alienate them before even speaking to you directly. It is important to always have a professional voicemail message when job searching.

For example:

- Hi, this is (name). I’m sorry I cannot take your call right now. Please leave a detailed message at the tone along with your name and telephone number. I’ll return your call as soon as I can. Thank you.
- Hello, you have reached the voicemail of (name). Please leave your name, number and a detailed message and I will return your call as soon as possible. Thank you.

Elevator Speech

The elevator speech is a fundamental communication tool you will use in conversations throughout your job search in networking meetings and interviews. You will also use a written version of it in cover letters and resumes if you opt to include a summary statement.

This speech answers the question you will hear frequently throughout your job search: “Tell me about yourself” and it offers a great opportunity to succinctly and confidently position yourself in the minds of listeners.

Limit your elevator speech to 1–2 minutes and include:

- Education/Accomplishments
- Work Experience/Affiliations
- Future Plans

For example:

- I am a senior at the University of Cincinnati with dual majors in finance and accounting. My co-op experiences have been in the financial services industry, where I developed expertise in financial analysis, client relations and accounting. I am currently seeking a position allowing me to use my background and skills to increase the productivity and profitability of an organization at the corporate level.
- I am an MS Marketing student with a strong engineering background. My field of experience is diverse. I have done research in international business and was the youngest leader to win a prestigious national business plan competition. I have completed projects for several Fortune 500 firms on consumer behavior research, supply chain management and facility design. My strengths include strategic planning, quantitative and qualitative analysis, product design and multi-national communication. I am now looking to apply my education and experience to a challenging marketing position.
Non-Verbal Communication

Research stresses that less than 10% of our communication is verbal as compared to 90% stemming from timing, appearance, and body language. Don't just SAY what you want to say — EXPRESS yourself and make a positive first impression by honing your nonverbal communication skills. Keep in mind that these skills are not reserved for interviews — you should start building your professional image on your first day of undergraduate or graduate studies. Everyone you encounter — from faculty to staff to fellow students to employers — will form an impression of you and may play a key role in your job search network.

Be on Time

“Time is money.”

• Be on time — not just for interviews, but for classes and meetings as well. Know where you’re going. If unfamiliar with the location of a meeting or interview, obtain and clarify directions the day before. Allow extra time for parking, traffic, etc.
• Arrive a few minutes (no more than 10) early for an interview. This will not only help you relax and compose yourself, but will give you a chance to observe the organization’s culture (dress, activity level, formality, etc.) and to review company materials that might be in the reception area.

Dress to Impress

• Professional attire enhances your first impression as someone who takes the interview process seriously and shows respect for the interviewer. Business professional* attire is recommended for all interviews — even if the work environment is casual — unless specifically told otherwise by the employer.
• Consider adopting a business casual* dress code while on campus. Seize the opportunity to project a positive image of yourself to instructors and campus visitors. Ramp up to business professional attire for all planned interactions with prospective employers on campus — in the classroom, at information sessions, or at student organization meetings. Dressing to impress in your daily pre-professional environment will help prepare you for the “real world” of business after graduation.
• Shopping tips:
  • Focus on quality over quantity
  • Shop off season or visit thrift stores, consignment shops, and outlets for the best deals
  • Invest in one piece at a time
• Don’t forget good grooming:
  • Hair should be clean and neat (be conservative with style for interviews)
  • Shoes should be in polished condition. Make sure heels are not scuffed/worn.
  • Check for missing buttons and remove lint, external tags and tacking stitches (from suit pockets and vents)
  • Make sure fingernails are clean and trimmed. Be conservative with nail polish colors.
  • Clothes must be clean, neatly pressed, and fit properly
  • Perfume and cologne should be used sparingly or not at all. Remember that some people have allergies or sensitivities and overpowering scents can offend
  • Padfolios are preferred over a bulky briefcase or book bag

* Detailed tables for Business Professional and Business Casual attire can be found on pages 10 and 11.
### Business Professional Attire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th><strong>Men</strong></th>
<th><strong>Women</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Suits</strong></td>
<td>• A two-piece matched suit in navy or dark gray</td>
<td>• A two-piece matched suit in navy, dark gray, or black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Solid or subtle pattern</td>
<td>• Solid or subtle pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Wool, wool blend, or high quality blends</td>
<td>• Wool, wool blend, or high quality blends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Tailored pants or skirt suit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Skirts should cover your thighs when you are seated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• A skirt that ends at the knee when you’re standing looks chic and professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shirts</strong></td>
<td>• Long-sleeved</td>
<td>• Tailored blouse in a color or small print that coordinates nicely with your suit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• White, light blue solid, or conservative stripes</td>
<td>• A Knit shell is also appropriate underneath your suit jacket</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Don’t show cleavage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Shoes</strong></td>
<td>• Leather, lace-up or slip-on business shoes</td>
<td>• Leather or fabric/micro fiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Black or brown</td>
<td>• Closed-toe pumps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• No stilettos or chunky platforms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Make sure you can walk comfortably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hosiery/Socks</strong></td>
<td>• Dark dress socks, mid-calf length so no skin is visible when you sit down</td>
<td>• Sheer is most conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Neutral colors that complement your suit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• No pattern</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Jewelry</strong></td>
<td>• Watches are appropriate</td>
<td>• Watches are appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Earrings should be taken out for the interview</td>
<td>• 1–2 earrings per earlobe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conservative in the number and kinds of other jewelry worn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Belt</strong></td>
<td>• Leather when possible</td>
<td>• n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ties</strong></td>
<td>• High quality or silk ties</td>
<td>• n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cosmetics</strong></td>
<td>• Nails should be clean and well groomed</td>
<td>• Keep makeup conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Nails should be clean and well groomed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoid extremes of nail length and polish color, especially in conservative industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purse/Bag</strong></td>
<td>• n/a</td>
<td>• Small and simple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Color should be neutral or match your suit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Business Casual Attire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pants</td>
<td>• Khaki, gray, black, brown, or navy</td>
<td>• Fits well (not tight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• NO SHORTS</td>
<td>• Fabrics should be crisp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Conservative colors (black, navy, gray, brown, khaki)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• All skirts should be at least knee-length when standing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirts</td>
<td>• Long-sleeved shirts</td>
<td>• Tailored shirts or blouses</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Short-sleeved polo shirts tucked in</td>
<td>• Tailored knit sweaters or sweater sets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cotton, silk, or blends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Fits well (not tight)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Cleavage is not appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shoes</td>
<td>• Leather when possible</td>
<td>• Leather or fabric/microfiber</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No athletic shoes or sandals</td>
<td>• Conservative colors and patterns</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Toes should be covered in most conservative industries/companies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Some sandals if conservative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Thin straps, spike heels, chunky heels and platforms are not appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Make sure you can walk comfortably</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewelry</td>
<td>• Watches are ok</td>
<td>• Watches are ok</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• No earrings is the safe route, but watch others in your company to see if they are</td>
<td>• 1–2 earrings per earlobe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>appropriate</td>
<td>• Conservative jewelry and/or scarves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Watch those around you to see how much and what types are appropriate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belt</td>
<td>• Should match your shoes</td>
<td>• Brown or black</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ties</td>
<td>• Generally not necessary, but if in doubt, wear one</td>
<td>• n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cosmetics</td>
<td>• Nails should be clean and well groomed</td>
<td>• Conservative and natural looking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Nails should be clean and well groomed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Avoid extremes of nail length and polish color, especially in conservative industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hosiery/Socks</td>
<td>• Dark color socks that are high enough that no skin is exposed when you are sitting</td>
<td>• Not essential for business casual, but usually recommended if wearing a skirt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Body Language and Facial Expressions
Your body language — facial expressions, gestures, nervous habits and posture — is an important part of your overall professional presence and can contribute to your success in class, on the interview, and at work. Be aware of what your non-verbal communication says to prospective employers, classmates, colleagues, and clients and polish your professional image.

Posture
Confidence is exuded when you walk tall with your head up and shoulders back. When interviewing, your posture should embody a confident and friendly entrance into the reception area and continue when you are greeted by the interviewer. During the interview, sit up straight and find a comfortable position for your legs. This will ensure good posture and project interest and alertness. When someone says something, it is good to turn a little with your shoulders towards this person and to lean forward a little. This shows an interest in what the other person is saying. You can emphasize this by slightly tilting your head or nodding periodically.

Handshake
At its most basic level, a handshake sets the tone for the rest of the interview or meeting. A good handshake communicates confidence, trust, and goodwill. A poor handshake, however, will make it difficult to build rapport.

Do:
✓ Shake with your right hand
✓ Grasp the other person’s hand firmly
✓ Keep fingers together with thumb up and open. Make sure each person’s web of skin between thumb and forefinger touches the other’s
✓ Squeeze firmly and hold for 2–3 pumps, pause briefly, and drop the hand
✓ Make eye contact
✓ Smile

Don’t:
× Place your palm downward — this is a way of showing dominance. (If you are the recipient of this type of handshake, a small step to the left will force both of your hands to naturally straighten.)
× Be a bone crusher (exert no more pressure than you would to turn a door knob)
× Be a “dead fish” — you will appear nervous, disinterested, or distracted
× Use two hands — this seems disingenuous/insincere
× Shake with cold, clammy or sweaty hands — if you are nervous during introductions, keep a paper towel handy. Avoid holding cold drinks in your right hand.

Arms and Legs
Being aware of the positions of your arms and legs is also important to your professional presence. Crossing your arms tightly across your chest, for example, can tell others that you are closed-off or unreceptive. Touching your face, twirling your hair, or fidgeting your feet/legs can exude nervousness, anxiety, or impatience. Keep your limbs relaxed and natural, conveying confidence and openness.

Eye Contact and Facial Expression
Dropping eye contact, rolling eyes, and furrowing your brow are non-verbal cues that disclose your disinterest in or dissatisfaction with a conversation. Make a conscious effort to practice cues that improve professional presence, such as holding eye contact, relaxing your brow and smiling or nodding when appropriate.

Personal Space
Establish a comfortable amount of personal space between you and the interviewer. Invading personal space (anything more than 20 inches) could make the interviewer feel uncomfortable and take the focus away from your conversation. Notice what distance you are comfortable with and be respectful of the personal space of others.
Etiquette for Electronic Communications

Email
When emailing prospective employers, instructors, fellow classmates or colleagues, it is important to maintain professionalism. You are communicating with others who deserve consideration and respect.

- When writing an email, include something meaningful in the “subject” line. Do not leave this line blank.
- Begin the communication with the appropriate salutation: Dear Ms./Mr. Employer, Dr. Instructor, etc. Starting a professional email with “hey” is not an option.
- Write complete sentences and use correct grammar. This includes the correct use of capital letters to begin the sentence and a period to end the sentence. Organize your thoughts and delineate ideas with paragraphs. Do not write in all capital letters — the recipient may perceive anger or hostility.
- Re-read the message before sending and check for spelling errors, thoughts that might not be clearly stated, or other organizational errors. Make sure you actually attach documents mentioned in the email.
- Include a signature (with contact information) in your email. Make it easy for the reader (especially employers) to be able to find you to clarify questions or request additional information.

- Know where your message is going. Check to see that you are “replying all” if necessary (or not if you don’t want all recipients to see your reply). If you are replying to a message sent to a listserv, please be aware that you may be sending your message to everyone on the list.
- Be aware of what your email address can say about you. Would you take partygirl247@yahoo.com seriously? Keep your address professional and easy to type.
- Last, but not least, be courteous and never put anything in writing that you wouldn’t say aloud. Write suggestions, criticisms, or comments in a constructive manner and neutral tone.

Social Media
Anyone can find anything that’s been on the web. Nothing is completely private and hiring managers will look at LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter on a regular basis. Don’t give them a reason to fear investing in you. Refrain from tweeting negative comments about co-workers or about leaving work early. Don’t have mediocre recommendations on your LinkedIn page or embarrassing pictures or comments on Facebook.

For more on how to build your personal brand with social media, see page 27.
Job Search Strategies

Because many organizations recruit during the fall or winter for positions that start the following summer, it is important to plan ahead, know recruiting timelines for your major or program, and have a plan to hit the ground running as soon as possible.

Recruiting Timeline

The following recruiting timeline graphic shows major events throughout the academic year: note how many take place in September!

**Fall Semester 2012**

- Part-Time Career Fair (on/off campus jobs)
  - September 5
- Fall Semester On-Campus Recruiting Begins (register via Recruit a ‘Cat)
  - September 6
- Diversity Network Event (register via Recruit a ‘Cat)
  - September 25
- Career Fair Interview Day
  - September 28
- All UC Career Fair
  - September 26–27
- Graduate Networking Event
  - October (TBD)
- UC Virtual Career Fair (Recruit a ‘Cat)
  - November 22–28
- Beta Alpha Psi “Meet the Firm” Night (for Accounting/Finance Majors)
  - September 5
- Beta Alpha Psi “Meet the Industry” Night (for Accounting/Finance Majors)
  - September 6
- Lindner Career Services All UC Career Fair Prep (walk-in hours)
  - September 25
- Graduate Networking Etiquette Seminar
  - October (TBD)
- Big East e-Career Fair
  - November 5–7

**Spring Semester 2013**

- Winter Semester On-Campus Recruiting Begins (Recruit a ‘Cat)
  - January 14
- Spring Career Fair (Campus Recreation Center)
  - February 6–8
- International Career Forum (TUC Atrium)
  - March 6
- Dining Etiquette Event
  - January (TBD)
- Internship Month at CDC
  - February
- Sales Career Fair (Lindner COB)
  - February 13
- Dress to Impress Fashion Fair (TUC)
  - April 3
Job Search Strategies (continued)

Your personal job search strategies will include a combination of the following:
- Developing a Career Marketing Tool Kit that includes:
  - Personal Marketing Plan
  - Resume
  - Cover letter
  - Reference list
  - Business cards
- Making the most of social media
- Building and utilizing a strong network
- Participating in on-campus recruiting (uc.edu/career - Recruit a ‘Cat)
- Attending information sessions and career fairs
- Checking business.uc.edu/studentservices to utilize the Interactive Book of Lists, Bizjournal, and CareerToolsPLUS
- Participating in college and on-campus programs and events where employers are present
- Attending networking events and conducting information interviews to gather key information and build relationships
- Responding to open positions listed on corporate websites and job search sites
- Utilizing executive recruiters and contract employment agencies

Personal Marketing Plan

Job searches often lack focus, resulting in wasted time and energy and producing lackluster results. Try approaching your job search as you would a class project, breaking it down into smaller, more manageable pieces. Developing a sound marketing plan is the first step and will serve as your blueprint in the execution phase. Know where you want to go and be able to specifically tell people in your network what you are looking for and how they can help.

Components of a personal marketing plan include:

**Elevator Speech**
Use this to describe the type of work you would like to pursue. It reflects your interests, strengths, experiences and education and should be easily understood by anyone in your network — even those not in your profession.

**Target Market**
Narrow your target market: think about geographic location, industry, size of organization, culture, etc. Assessing your values can be a helpful exercise to help determine your target market.

**Target List of Companies**
After narrowing your target market, identify and create a list of your top 50 companies or organization. (Note: if you are struggling to come up with 50, you may have to expand your market). Use the resources at business.uc.edu/studentservices for help in identifying companies for your list.

**Resumes**
The purpose of a resume is to attract the attention of the employer, in order to move to the next round of the recruitment process. This will then provide the opportunity for them to learn more about your education, experience, skills and qualifications for the job.

Overall, your resume should:
- Provide a summary of your skills, abilities and accomplishments
- Demonstrate how you will add value to the organization
- Include content that is relevant to the opportunity
Getting Started — Writing Your Accomplishments List

Draw up a list of your accomplishments, going backward in time through your jobs and internships. List as many as you can under each position, drawing from your memory, past job descriptions, performance appraisals, or other available sources. Of note, don’t forget about unpaid opportunities that also assisted with building your skillset and expertise, consider: academic projects and research, community or volunteer service, professional or student organizations, etc. At this stage, work on quantity. Later, you can prioritize your achievements and be selective.

Your accomplishments list should show the breadth and depth of your experience and your versatility as well. Try to jog your memory by reviewing this list and adding accomplishments that may be recalled by responding to the questions below:

1. Did I help to increase sales?
2. Did I save the organization money?
3. Did I institute a new system or procedure?
4. Did I identify a problem in the organization that had been overlooked?
5. Was I ever promoted?
6. Did I train anyone?
7. Did I suggest any products/programs that were utilized?
8. Did I help to establish any new goals or objectives for the organization?
9. Did I change, in any way, the nature of my job?
10. Did I have any important ideas that were put into effect?
11. Did I do anything on my job that I thought I couldn’t do?
12. Did I ever undertake an assignment or project that wasn’t part of my job just because I was intrigued with the problem?
13. Did I ever do anything to make my own job or others’ easier?
14. Did I develop a new tool or new approach that improved efficiency or productivity?
15. Did I perform a task with fewer resources or lower costs than used in the past?
16. Did I contribute to a group project where my input was a key part of the process?

Precede each accomplishment with an “action” word, and use a variety to showcase your diverse skills. All employers, regardless of their industry or your career focus, want to hire people with some key soft skills, so try to use these in your resume to demonstrate you have what all employers are looking for: Lead, Initiated, Implemented, Resolved, Collaborated, Wrote, Presented, Trained, Researched and Analyzed, Negotiated, Persuaded, Improved, Managed, among others. A list of action verbs can be found on page 19.

Writing a Resume

Now that you have taken an inventory of your experiences and accomplishments, marry it all together in a manner that magnifies you are the applicant to consider. Of note, for undergraduate students, high school information should begin to fall off your resume after your freshmen year. Employers are most interested in how you have leveraged collegiate opportunities since it is more recent and perhaps more relevant.

A great resource that can assist you with strengthening descriptions of your experiences is O*NET OnLine created for the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, by the National Center for O*NET Development. When researching any job, O*NET OnLine provides a list of tasks, skills, knowledge, tools and technology, work activities and much, much more specific to a given role.

Visit: onetonline.org > Find Occupations > Quick Search > Type in Job Title > Press Enter

Example

Before Magnification
Target, Cincinnati, OH May 2011–September 2012
Sales Associate
• Checked out customers and rang items
• Balanced the cash drawer at the end of each shift
• Answered customer questions

After Magnification
Target, Cincinnati, OH May 2011–September 2012
Sales Associate
• Managed customer checkout station independently, ringing up to 200+ customers per shift to ensure an efficient checkout flow
• Balanced the cash drawer in excess of $1,500 on a daily basis with 100% accuracy by properly counting money and measuring against revenue records
• Displayed excellent customer service by answering questions and resolving product issues, resulting in repeat business

Tailor each resume to the specific job you are applying for, so keep one “long” version of your resume that has all experiences, affiliations, awards, etc. This way you can copy, paste and tweak much faster than creating the information from scratch down the road.
Formatting a Resume
Your resume should be one page unless you have in-depth career-related work experience. Most college students do not; therefore, consult with a member of the Lindner Career Services team if you find your resume spilling onto two pages.

Use bold, italics and underlining sparingly and consistently throughout your entire document. The resume should be organized and easy to read. Leverage formatting techniques, such as adjusting your margins, spacing between lines, font type and size, etc., effectively to make your resume more appealing to readers.

In addition, before sending a final version of your resume or uploading it electronically to apply for a job, always save it as a PDF with your name as the title (ex: Last Name, First Name Resume). When you are printing and distributing hard copies of your resume always use high quality resume paper to make a professional impression.

Standard Resume Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Basics</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contact Information</td>
<td>Name, address, phone number and email address</td>
<td>Choose either your home or school address — not both. All email addresses and voicemail messages should be professional.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>Name of university and college, degree, major, graduation date, GPA (if above a 3.0)</td>
<td>Can include relevant coursework, an expanded section on class projects, study abroad, scholarships and if you are financing your own education.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>Paid and unpaid work experience listed in reverse chronological order</td>
<td>Consider the questions: • What did you do? • How did you do it? • Why did you do it? • What was the result/impact?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Optional Resume Components

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Basics</th>
<th>Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliations</td>
<td>List in reverse chronological order. This includes student groups, professional organizations and off-campus groups. List any offices held.</td>
<td>Format the same as experience. Focus on results and the impact you had on the organization or group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Can list separately from affiliations if desired. Must have at least two organizations to be a separate section.</td>
<td>Format and define in the same way as affiliations and experience.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>This can be separate as well to highlight your high level involvement. Must have held at least 3 offices to make it an individual section.</td>
<td>Format and define in the same way as affiliations and experience. Focus on what was accomplished while you were in that role.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills</td>
<td>Language and/or computer. Must have more than Microsoft Office to make this a section.</td>
<td>List in bullet form, and it is optional to qualify your skill level (basic, intermediate, proficient, advanced, conversational, fluent, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Honors</td>
<td>This can be its own section if there are at least 3 different awards or scholarships mentioned.</td>
<td>List in bullet form or expand to give more detail if needed. List under Education if only Dean's List and scholarships.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Resume Dos and Don’ts

Do
✓ Focus on results of your work, achievement and recognition earned
✓ Use action verbs to start each bullet
✓ Get feedback from several people before you send it to an employer
✓ Proofread, and have someone else proofread, to check for spelling mistakes and grammar errors
✓ Include both paid and unpaid positions and volunteer experiences
✓ Write only 3–4 bullets for each position
✓ Tailor your resume for each job description
✓ Use readable fonts and minimal bolding, italicizing and underlining
✓ Use bulleted descriptions versus sentences
✓ Use professional language and frame everything in a positive manner

Don’t
× Round up your GPA to the next whole percentage point (ex: do not round 2.9 to 3.0)
× Use “responsibilities included” or “responsible for”
× Use resume templates
× Keep high school information (except work experience) on past mid-sophomore year
× Copy a job description verbatim
× Say “other duties as assigned” or routine duties, such as “making copies”
× Minimize your experience
× Use sentences or paragraphs
× Use pronouns such as I, my, our, we, etc.
× Submit the same resume for every job you apply for

Resume Checklist Before Sending
☐ Is your name, address, phone number and email on the resume? Are they professional?
☐ Is the resume concise and well-organized, so it is easy to read?
☐ Did you use consistent formatting (bolds, italics, etc.) throughout your resume?
☐ Did you tailor your resume based on the job requirements and responsibilities?
☐ Did you add results and specific tasks for each bullet?
☐ Do all of your bullets begin with an action verb?
☐ Have you been honest when writing your content?
☐ Did you check, and double-check, your grammar and spelling?
☐ Have you had someone else read your resume?
### Action Verbs

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<th>Restructured</th>
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</table>
Pre-Junior Bearcat

Sample Resume

111 UC Pride St. · Cincinnati, OH 45220 · 513.222.3333 · prejunior@email.com

EDUCATION
University of Cincinnati, Carl H. Lindner College of Business · Cincinnati, OH
Bachelor of Business Administration, Marketing and Information Systems · Expected: April 2015
Minor: German
• Prestigious Scholarship
• GPA 3.7/4.0, Dean's List Recipient

STUDY ABROAD
• London (March 2011), Paris and Belgium (March 2011), Montreal (April 2010)

TECHNICAL SKILLS
• HTML, PHP, CSS, ASP, Visual Basic for Applications (VBA)
• Microsoft Office Suite (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, Access)
• Microsoft Windows Server 2003, Windows 2000, XP, Vista, 7

WORK EXPERIENCE
Information Management Leadership Co-op at Future50 Co., Cincinnati, OH May 2012 to August 2012
• Developed a Web 2.0 case study which increased company perspective on how to market and recruit online

Marketing Co-op at Ipsa, Berlin, Germany January 2012 to April 2012
• Created and planned several events for 37 international interns to promote company culture and satisfaction
• Designed 200+ informational packets for company use, benefiting incoming interns with information about their transition into German culture
• Developed a Web 2.0 case study which increased company perspective on how to market and recruit online

IT Help Desk Associate at IT Solutions, Cincinnati, OH May 2011 to August 2011
• Managed Help Desk, utilizing problem-solving skills to provide support to end-users
• Oversaw the corporate tax reporting process which resulted in improved quality and accuracy of tax documentation provided to clients, but also in a reduction in the volume of tax-related questions received by managers during tax season

LEADERSHIP AND AFFILIATIONS
Director of Information Technology at IT Leadershape Institute August 2010 to Present
• Spearheaded 200+ person conference with students and employers to talk about current IT trends
• Coordinated guest speakers, programs and topics for the events to ensure relevant material is being presented

Campus Tour Guide at ROAR August 2010 - April 2011
• Gave 10 weekly student and parent tours around the university to promote UC and increase enrollment
• Served as an ambassador for the university and College of Business by exemplifying involvement, academic success and professional development

Sample Resume

Freshman Bearcat

Sample Resume

0819 Bearcat Lane · Cincinnati, OH 45221 · (513) 556-5555 · prejunior@email.com

EDUCATION
University of Cincinnati, Carl H. Lindner College of Business · Cincinnati, OH
Bachelor of Business Administration, Marketing · Expected Graduation Date: April 2017
• GPA: 3.5/4.0, Dean's List Recipient
• Finance 70% of education through part-time employment

Project Fast Track – Procter and Gamble August 2012 to November 2012
• Studied P&G’s business practices and conducted a SWOT analysis, while focusing on internal and external strengths and weaknesses of the Pampers brand

LEADERSHIP, AFFILIATIONS AND SERVICE
Senior and Marketing Committee Chair at University of Cincinnati Student Government January 2011 to Present
• Served as liaison between the college of business and the university, representing nearly 3,000 students

Director of Information Technology at IT Leadershape Institute August 2010 to Present
• Spearheaded 200+ person conference with students and employers to talk about current IT trends
• Coordinated guest speakers, programs and topics for the events to ensure relevant material is being presented

Campus Tour Guide at ROAR August 2010 - April 2011
• Gave 10 weekly student and parent tours around the university to promote UC and increase enrollment
• Served as an ambassador for the university and College of Business by exemplifying involvement, academic success and professional development

SKILLS
• Language: Proficient in Spanish
• Computer: Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint), Adobe (Illustrator, Photoshop, Reader), Prezi
• Social Media: Pinterest, Facebook, Twitter, Yelp, Google+
Sample Resume

MS Accounting Student
331-123-4567
Student12@gmail.com

EDUCATION:
• MBA, Finance/Marketing, Bombay Institute of Management, Bombay, India - 2008
• BS, Accounting, JNVU, Jodhpur, Rajasthan - 2007

CERTIFICATION:
• Passed CPA examination (Delaware; 93%, 96% in Auditing) - Dec 2011

EXPERIENCE:
Kodak Life Insurance, Ltd – Bombay, India
• Monitored and measured actual sales against budgeted sales target to align projections and results
• Processed and analyzed over 400 life insurance policies in an efficient manner
• Initiated and implemented a operating plan that increased branch profitability by 10% and helped in maintaining good internal controls within the branch.
• Developed and maintained effective customer relations resulting in higher customer retention.
• Achieved top employee of the year award for proposing an operating plan that increased branch profitability.

ACADEMIC PROJECTS:
• Analyzed and resolved an accounting fraud in a company that lacked good internal controls.
• Testified as an expert fraud examiner in a mock trial.
• Conducted a study on the effects of tax problems, including tax treatment of education expenses, gains from home sale exclusions, tax treatment of gambling income and losses, liability on joint return, tax return on first time home buyer credit, and tax treatment of damage awards in wrongful death action.
• Analyzed management cost accounting case studies.

SKILLS:
• Proficient in Microsoft Office Word, Excel, and PowerPoint, CCH Database, Lexis Nexis, RIA Check Point, Lotus Notes, Quick books

AFFILIATIONS:
• Student member of ACPA, 2010 - 2011
• Member of Ohio Society of CPAs, 2010
• Network of Indian Professionals, 2007-2010

Sample Resume

MBA Student
333 Vine Street, Apt. #2
Cincinnati, OH 45222
Student12@gmail.com

EDUCATION:
• MBA, Finance/Marketing, Bombay Institute of Management, Bombay, India - 2008
• BS, Accounting, JNVU, Jodhpur, Rajasthan - 2007

CERTIFICATION:
• Passed CPA examination (Delaware; 93%, 96% in Auditing) - Dec 2011

EXPERIENCE:
Kodak Life Insurance, Ltd – Bombay, India
• Monitored and measured actual sales against budgeted sales target to align projections and results
• Processed and analyzed over 400 life insurance policies in an efficient manner
• Initiated and implemented a operating plan that increased branch profitability by 10% and helped in maintaining good internal controls within the branch.
• Developed and maintained effective customer relations resulting in higher customer retention.
• Achieved top employee of the year award for proposing an operating plan that increased branch profitability.

ACADEMIC PROJECTS:
• Analyzed and resolved an accounting fraud in a company that lacked good internal controls.
• Testified as an expert fraud examiner in a mock trial.
• Conducted a study on the effects of tax problems, including tax treatment of education expenses, gains from home sale exclusions, tax treatment of gambling income and losses, liability on joint return, tax return on first time home buyer credit, and tax treatment of damage awards in wrongful death action.
• Analyzed management cost accounting case studies.

SKILLS:
• Proficient in Microsoft Office Word, Publisher, Access, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook Express
• Multimdia - Adobe Products, Photoshop, Movie, Final Cut Express, Dreamweaver, Jing, Camtasia, Windows Media
• Other Software - Survey Monkey, Report Builder, Web Trends, Stat Tools, SPSS, Research Databases, DeLorme Maps, Constant Contact, both Mac and PC Operating Systems, and Content Management Systems

AFFILIATIONS:
• Student member of ACPA, 2010 - 2011
• Member of Ohio Society of CPAs, 2010
• Network of Indian Professionals, 2007-2010

City Barbeque Columbus, OH
• Promoted from cashier to marketing manager in first year, creating a marketing campaign that increased profit by 10%
• Created and managed several marketing strategies which built strong student and business-to-business relationships for the company, including a successful food for advertising exchange program

Technical Skills
• Microsoft Office- Word, Publisher, Access, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook Express
• Multimedia - Adobe Products, Photoshop, Movie, Final Cut Express, Dreamweaver, Jing, Camtasia, Windows Media
• Other Software - Survey Monkey, Report Builder, Web Trends, Stat Tools, SPSS, Research Databases, DeLorme Maps, Constant Contact, both Mac and PC Operating Systems, and Content Management Systems
Sample Resume (Experienced Professional)

**Experienced Professional**

**Marketing Leader**

**Strategy Development** • **Brand Equity & Visibility** • **Program Execution**

**Core Competencies**

- Marketing Research
- Advertising Creative
- Media Planning
- PR and Crisis Management
- Merchandising & Events
- CRM/Ownership Loyalty
- Motorsports
- Sales/Incentive Planning

**Professional Experience**

**AUTOBASE INTERNATIONAL – Cincinnati, OH 2000-Present**

**Director, International CRM, Merchandising and Interactive (2002-Present)**

- Spearheaded the development and implementation of innovative marketing strategies to drive profitability at the international market and dealer level.
- Identified and building opportunities and identified through all phases of major initiatives such as CRM budget (US $18 mil).
- **Key Achievements:**
  - Cross functional lead responsibility for the successful international launch of the all-new X-Car and HP, achieving increased sales and profitability.
  - Developed the “Mean Machine”- an interior brand identification, consumer merchandising and furniture program for 900 dealers throughout Europe, strategy development, consumer-building, and overseas communications.
  - Implemented and managed a global internet-based order fulfillment process.
  - Project responsibility for a four-day, high-visibility owner program designed to build loyalty and repeat sales. Participants were given the opportunity to drive new cars and participate in a six-week test driving (increased participation by 50% over previous year).


- Managed all international PR and Communications. Developed planning and launch processes, strategy development, operational planning, design of special displays, and on-site responsibility for all major international motor shows.
- **Key Achievements:**
  - Successfully executed major new product PR launch events at the Frankfurt, Tokyo, and Brussels motor shows including press kit development, on-site media relations, and executive interviews.
  - Developed a strong team that effectively improved the public image of the Corporation and products in international markets.

**REGIS CORPORATION – Cincinnati, OH**


- Directed the planning, development, and deployment of major marketing initiatives for Latin America.
- Managed all marketing programs and dealer incentives.
- Supervised international agency teams to ensure accuracy and efficiency in marketing operations and support functions.
- **Key Achievements:**
  - Directed the marketing launch of the all-new brands outside of NAFTA and Europe. Team lead for marketing and PR with support agencies.
  - Cross-functional responsibility with sales relative to the selection of distributors and the placement of dealer facilities.
  - Proactively created and implemented regional marketing campaigns which yielded in sales that exceeded forecast.
  - Standardized market research studies and established unified trade image and messaging for auto shows and training programs throughout the region.

**Senior Manager, International Advertising & Marketing (1997-1998)**

- Managed the development and execution of all advertising and marketing initiatives and creative support materials for the AMR region.
- Responsible for all new car launches and field coordination. Budget responsibility for all marketing and incentives.

**Manager, International Marketing (1996-1998)**

- Developed and implemented all international marketing activities including strategy development, promotional events, and international auto shows.

**EDUCATION**

- **University of Cincinnati, Lindner College of Business, Cincinnati, OH**
  - MS, Marketing
  - June, 2013
- **Roger Williams University – Bristol, RI**
  - BA, Marketing
  - June, 1990
Cover Letters

The cover letter should complement, not duplicate, your resume. It reveals how your skills and experience relate directly to the opportunity for which you are applying while adding a personal touch. Cover letters must be appealing, convincing, and brief. While you must be professional in your communication, the best cover letters often convey a conversational tone. Well-written communications can be a good marketing tool to differentiate you from a crowd of competition.

Effective Cover Letters

All resumes should be accompanied by a cover letter (your letter is the body of the email and your resume is the attachment), and their combined purpose is to convince the reader that you have the skills and experience to do the job, so you get invited to the interview. They should not restate accomplishments verbatim from the resume and each letter should outline specifically how your skills and experience match the requirements of the job.

Cover Letter Format

**Paragraph #1**  This opening paragraph should contain 2-3 sentences that interest the reader and explains why you are writing (e.g., “(name) suggested I contact you regarding…” , “The requirements for the (title) position listed on your website are directly in line with my skills, experience and career goals.”, “I have been following the performance of Phillips Foods, and the honors your company has been awarded for its management style and consistent growth have peaked my interest”, etc.)

**Paragraph #2**  This includes your self-marketing content. Include a brief summary of your background as it relates to the requirements of the position and cite 3-4 skills or accomplishments (can be in bullet points) that show your marketability.

**Paragraph #3**  Write a powerful closing – one that makes the reader eager to contact you. Request a meeting to discuss how your background would benefit their organization and note your plan to follow up.

Sample Cover Letter

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**Bearcat Student**  
22111 Bearcat Way • Cincinnati, OH 45221 • 513.222.3333 • bearcatstudent@gmail.com  

August 1, 2012

Mr. John Doe  
ABC Company  
100 Successful Street, Suite 1000  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mr. Doe:

I am a third-year marketing major at the University of Cincinnati, Carl H. Lindner College of Business. I am interested in the current Marketing Co-op/Intern position within your firm. After reading the job description, I believe that with my previous work experiences align well with this position. Specifically, I have been involved with facilitating direct mailing campaigns, coordinating projects, and communicating with clients on a daily basis.

During my previous co-op assignment, I was worked with Account Executives to complete projects and deliver strategic client tactics in the healthcare industry. My tasks were varied as I supported multiple account teams and several different clients and vendors. One project included conducting a direct mail campaign that consisted of four waves of branded letters sent to various healthcare professionals in a specific region. The steps of this process included isolating a list of desired targets, creating and obtaining approval of branded letters, designing a timeline and project plan that coordinated with a mail delivery vendor, and finally, facilitating the completion of all steps.

During my co-op, I was assigned tasks by varied and multiple teams, requiring me to enhance my time management skills to ensure completion and quality goals were met. For a particular project, I extensively researched disease data by market and created a reference sheet depicting what data we actually had available for use by the sales team. Other skills I developed include proofing and revising various final marketing materials for client approval and ultimate market distribution. In addition, I was in charge of researching implementation plans for internal organization systems, creating and proofing client PowerPoint presentations, as well as managing specific needs of clients to make sure they were satisfied.

I strongly believe I have the skill set and experience to make a significant contribution in this role. My attached resume further illustrates my experience and skills, and I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you to discuss my qualifications and this position in greater detail. I will follow up with you soon or may be contacted at 513.222.3333 or by email at bearcatstudent@gmail.com. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Bearcat Student

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Sample T-Format Cover Letter

Bearcat Student
22111 Bearcat Way • Cincinnati, OH 45221 • 513.222.3333 • bearcatstudent@gmail.com

August 1, 2012
Mr. John Doe
ABC Company
100 Successful Street, Suite 1000
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mr. Doe:
The sales management position posted on your website represents a good match for my skills. The ad specifies five requirements. As you can see, my experience meets or exceeds those listed:

Position Requirements

Electrical component industry experience  Two years’ experience in sales, marketing and new product development of electrical components

2-3 years’ management experience  Over a period of three years, interviewed, hired, trained and managed more than 15 representatives in the Tri-state area

Planning expertise  Played lead role in developing three-year sales goals and strategies to reach those goals

Marketing  Collected data from customers and sales force to develop promotional literature, enhance products and launch new lines

The enclosed resume outlines my major achievements. I would welcome an opportunity to meet with you to provide details and discuss how my management style and ideas might benefit your company. I’m also eager to hear about all aspects of the opening at your company.

I plan to call within the next few days. If you should wish to contact me in the meantime, please call 513.222.3333 or email bearcatstudent@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Bearcat Student

Sample Bullet Format Cover Letter

Bearcat Student
22111 Bearcat Way • Cincinnati, OH 45221 • 513.222.3333 • bearcatstudent@gmail.com

August 1, 2012
Mr. John Doe
ABC Company
100 Successful Street, Suite 1000
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mr. Doe:
I was excited by your advertisement for a Health Care Operations Executive in the July 14th edition of the Chicago Tribune. As you review the attached resume, I believe you will find that my background fits nicely with your stated needs. I can bring to your organization:

• Over 5 years managing operations in a variety of health care organizations

• Success working with senior leadership, physicians, staff and other stakeholders to create efficient and smooth-running operations

• Expertise in organizational development with a focus on change management, team building and professional development.

• A solid combination of administrative and leadership skills, with the ability to keep the big picture in mind without losing track of the details

I am eager to talk with you and your colleagues about your needs and ways in which my skills might be applied to help create an organization that is efficient, that employees speak of with pride, and that exceeds the expectations of customers. I will follow up with you soon to arrange a meeting or may be contacted at 513.222.3333 or by email at bearcatstudent@gmail.com.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Sincerely,

Bearcat Student
References

These can be the final tool in your interview packet, so make sure that you have prepared and checked out a good list of business- and/or academic-related references.

The process for developing your reference list includes:

- Select your references carefully, be sure they will give you a glowing recommendation
- Choose three to six references — professors, managers, fellow students with whom you have worked closely on projects, co-workers, and colleagues from professional organizations
- Contact your references in advance and obtain their permission to list them as a reference
- Write an email to thank them for helping you and attach a copy of your resume
- Prepare a neatly typed list with the same heading as your resume that is entitled “References” — include name, title, organization, business email, business telephone and nature of relationship for each.
- Carry the list with you to each interview and offer it only when requested.
- **Do NOT send your reference list with your resume when applying for a position.** Your references are busy professionals and you do not want them contacted unless you are a being considered as a final candidate for a position.

When a prospective employer asks for your references, give him/her a copy of the list. Then contact the references **immediately** and describe the job for which you have interviewed, with special attention to those facets of your background and abilities that seem to have been of greatest interest to your interviewer. This will enable your references to be ready for the call and to answer questions in a manner calculated to be most advantageous to you. A sample reference page follows. Use the same header as you have on your resume and cover letter.

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**Sample References**

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bearcat Student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22111 Bearcat Way • Cincinnati, OH 45221 • 513.222.3333 • <a href="mailto:bearcatstudent@gmail.com">bearcatstudent@gmail.com</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REFERENCES**

- Dr. Evan Jones  
  Academic Director, MBA Program  
  University of Cincinnati, Carl H. Lindner College of Business  
  (513) 556-5555  
  evan.jones@uc.edu  
  Current Professor

- Ms. Karen Starrs  
  Vice President, Human Resources  
  ABC Moving Company  
  (819) 555-5555  
  k.starrs@abcmoving.com  
  Colleague in professional association

- Mr. Herbert Hardin  
  Director, MIS Department (retired)  
  ABC Logistics  
  (213) 555-5555 (home)  
  Former Employer

- Ms. Beverly S. Smyth  
  Director, Technical Support  
  ABC Logistics  
  (314) 555-5555, Ext. 123  
  beverly.smyth@abclogistics.com  
  Former Manager
Business Cards

Business cards show professionalism and create a favorable — and memorable — impression when meeting with someone. It also ensures ease of contact when you are job searching or networking. Some good sources for printing include: vistaprint.com, staples.com, and uc.edu/printingservices. 200–250 is a good quantity.

Do’s and Don’ts of Business Cards

Do
✓ Include email address (professional) and phone number
✓ Provide online links, if applicable
  ✓ LinkedIn profile, a blog or another type of online presence, as long as it is professional
✓ Indicate area of interest or major
  ✓ You can use the back of the card to list skills, accomplishments, or objective if desired
✓ List notable affiliations, if applicable
  ✓ UC AMA, Beta Alpha Psi, Delta Sigma Pi, etc.
✓ Proofread to ensure accuracy
✓ Follow the “less is more” guideline

Don’t
× Include the UC logo
  × UC branding standards do not allow for the logo to be used by students on business cards
× Provide sensitive or highly personal information
  × Sensitive information like your birthday or snail mail address should never be on your card
× Make stuff up
× Buy cheap cards
× Give cards during initial greeting
  × When networking wait until you make an authentic connection and have a good conversation before offering your card
× Ask for a contact’s card directly
  × Provide them with your business card and hope they reciprocate; most often they will.

Sample Business Cards

Student Name
University of Cincinnati
Major & Minor
linkedin.com/in/name

Honors Affiliation
Organization Affiliation
student@studentmail.com

Front

Student Name
University of Cincinnati
Major & Minor

(513) 555-1212
student@studentmail.com

linkedin.com/in/name

Front Alternate

@twittername
name.blog.com
facebook.com/name

[more links, image(s), QR code or perhaps information that reflects something about you or paints a fuller picture. You’re only limited by your imagination. Remember to keep it professional.]
Build your Professional Brand with Social Media

Social media is playing a large role in the job search according to recruitment solution provider Jobvite. Its annual Social Recruiting Survey revealed that “92 percent of U.S. employers now use social media networks to locate potential employees, a marked increase from 78 percent of companies that used social recruiting strategies just five years ago.” Because of this trend, it is more important than ever to build a powerful — and positive — professional online presence. Your professional brand is what matters to prospective employers and anyone in your network who could be in a position to advance your career. The following are some recommended steps to take in building your brand:

Google

Google yourself! Be aware of your online presence and take steps to make your professional brand visible, professional, consistent and impactful. Be sure to create multiple online profiles. Websites like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and a personal blog that are all connected via links, help your personal search rankings. Eliminate barriers to employment by removing or privatizing negative information. Stop producing/allowing negative content and start producing positive, career-related content that will push past mistakes or other undesired material off frequently viewed pages.

- GoogleProfile, ZoomInfo, Pinterest, personal blogs and web sites — the list of digital forums to promote personal branding goes on and on — but for the purposes of this guide we’ll focus on the top three sites. For more information on how to optimize your online presence, go to mashable.com/social-media
- Know your credit score and how it impacts your professional brand. While not available without your permission, your credit record is often part of a routine background check (especially with financial institutions and the government) and can positively or negatively impact a job offer.

LinkedIn

- LinkedIn continues to be the most popular platform for recruiters with over 90% of businesses utilizing it at some point in the hiring process. Use LinkedIn to build your professional brand via an online profile and make it public. Your profile can include a summary, work experience, recommendations, and other additional information you what known about you. You can personalize your link, manage contact settings, and reveal the groups and associations to which you belong.
- Once your profile is complete, you can make connections with people/organizations that interest you, expand your network by joining groups and associations, begin researching companies and jobs, and reach out to your mutual connections for an “in” to companies of interest.
- For more information on how to use LinkedIn in the job search, go to learn.linkedin.com/job-seekers

Twitter

- Twitter is an open ended networking and blogging service that can serve as another online vehicle through which to build your brand. Include your elevator speech in your bio; incorporate a custom background that gives more detail about your qualifications; follow industry experts; establish yourself as an expert by tweeting about industry topics; receive targeted job tweets.
- Twitter allows you to make connections with those who can benefit your career and you can also search job openings. twitjobsearch.com is a job search engine that searches Twitter for jobs by keyword. You can also join job and professional lists.
- For more detailed information on how to build and promote your Twitter profile, go to mashable.com/guidebook/twitter

Facebook

- Facebook is another tool to build your brand with social media. While primarily used for social communication, many employers will view Facebook profiles for a snapshot of your character and outside interests. Understand the concept of leaving footprints on the web. Be aware that what you do and you say online is very easy to track. Make your professional image consistent by presenting yourself as someone who would be a positive representative of any organization.
- With over 300 million active users, Facebook is an excellent professional networking platform! In addition to connecting with people who work for a target organization, you can post status updates to make your network aware of your job search and the type of position you’re looking for. Joining and participating in groups on Facebook (much like LinkedIn) can help you establish yourself as interested in — or an expert in — a particular subject. For more information on how to use Facebook in job search, see applicant.com/facebook-as-a-job-search-tool
Develop and Use Your Network

Businessdictionary.com defines networking as “Creating a group of acquaintances and associates and keeping it active through regular communication for mutual benefit.” Networking is most effective when it is driven by “How can I help?” rather than “What can I get?” Networking is the systematic use of personal contacts to assist you and is likely to be your most effective source of job leads. Studies consistently show that between 60–80% of job vacancies are filled by referrals.

The Power of Networking

**Online:** As previously discussed, utilizing LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and other social media have become very important resources in managing an effective job search. To learn more about maximizing these tools, visit sites such as [mashable.com/guidebook/linkedin](http://mashable.com/guidebook/linkedin) or [mashable.com/guidebook/twitter](http://mashable.com/guidebook/twitter).

**In-Person:** Often job-seekers are hesitant to attend networking events or to contact friends and colleagues to assist in their job search. Yet our experience shows that these people are eager to help and are truly your most valuable resource.

We recommend that you attend as many networking events as possible. Look for opportunities to connect with career professionals internal and external to UC. Get involved in a leadership role in a professional association (see list later in this section) or Young Professionals group. It will help you network, build your leadership skills, and you’ll gain experiences to add to your resume.

Who can help you? Start now to develop a network list, brainstorming names of:
- Professors
- Relatives
- Friends
- Business contacts
- School friends
- Fellow members of community organizations
- Undergraduate and graduate alumni
- Members of professional organizations
- Neighbors
- Vendors you dealt with in prior jobs
- Religious acquaintances

List as many names as possible. Don’t omit anyone at this point. After you have made your list, circle those who are most likely to be sources of job leads. Consider these your priorities to contact and follow up with others as time allows.

You may make initial contact by telephone or email, but first examine your reasons for networking. Your contacts can:
- Identify job openings before they are advertised
- Critique your resume
- Provide industry trends
- Identify companies that are hiring
- Give background on a specific firm
- Provide information on salaries
- Help you practice interviewing so when the real interview comes along, you’ll be prepared and feel confident
- Provide secondary contacts so you can expand your network
- Get an introduction to a decision-maker in the company

The best way to connect with a network contact is to request a meeting at a time and location that is convenient for them. However, many professionals are too busy to carve out the time for a face-to-face meeting, and a phone conversation can often net you the same results.

**Making Contact by Phone:** Start by making easier and less critical calls. Call close friends and business acquaintances who will be understanding. Gradually work up to calls with non-personal contacts.

Outline a concise networking “script” including these points:
- Name
- Reason for calling
- Suggestion of time to meet or speak on the telephone. Ask for 20–30 minutes only, at their convenience.

**Sample Script — Friend or professional colleague**

Hello. This is Fred Miller and our mutual friend, John Dodge, referred me to you. I will be completing my MBA soon and am giving serious thought to my next career step. I've developed a marketing plan and I'd like to drop by for a few minutes and get your reaction and suggestions. John said you have a lot of insight and experience in the market research field and that you might be willing to give me some input. Could we spend 20–30 minutes together at your convenience?

**Making the Most of the Networking Interview**

Once your contact has agreed to meet with you, it's time to prepare the agenda. While you must allow time to establish good rapport, remember this meeting has a serious purpose and you need to maintain a business focus.
Professional Resources

There are many resources available to assist you with networking, professional development, and career decision making. For a full list of on-campus resources, visit uc.edu/sas/student_life.html

Management
American Management Association [amanet.org/index.htm]
Harvard Business Review [harvardbusinessonline.hbsp.harvard.edu]
Fast Company Magazine [fastcompany.com]

Marketing
American Marketing Association [ama.org]
Cincinnati Chapter AMA [cincinnatiama.org]
The Advertising Club of Cincinnati [adclubcincy.org]
Public Relations Society of America [prsa.org]
Sales and Marketing Executives International [smei.org]
Marketing Research Association [mra-net.org]
Council of American Survey Research Orgs (CASRO) [casro.org]
Business Marketing Association [marketing.org]
Brandweek [brandweek.com]
Adweek [adweek.com]
Marketing Jobs [marketingjobs.com]
Product Development and Management Association [pdm.org]
International Association of Business Communicators [iabc.com]

Finance/Banking/Accounting
CFO.com [cfo.com]
CFA Institute [cfainstitute.org]
InvestorLinks.com [investorlinks.com]
American Institute of Certified Public Accts [aicpa.org]
Institute of Internal Auditors [cia.org]
Institute of Management Accountants [ima.org]
Financial Executives International [ifei.org]
Association for Financial Professionals [afp.com]
FinancialJobs.com [financialjobs.com]

Operations
APICS-Educational Society for Resource Management [apics.org]
Council of Logistics (Management) [cscmp.org]
Supply Chain Council [supply-chain.org]

Quantitative Analysis
Institute for Operations Research and the Management Sciences-Informs [informs.org]
American Statistical Association [amstat.org]

Information Systems
CIO.com [cio.com]
Darwin Magazine [darwinmag.com]
Association for Information Systems (AIS) [aisnet.org]
Association of IT Professionals (AITP) [aitp.org]
Information Technology Association of America [itaa.org]

Construction Management
Construction Management Association of America [cmaanet.org]
Association of America American Statistical Association [amstat.org]

Entrepreneurship
Forum for Women Entrepreneurs [fwe.org]
Inc. magazine [inc.com]
Making It [makingsuccess.com]
Small Business Development Centers [sba.gov]
Entrepreneurs’ Organization [eonetwork.org]

Environmental Sustainability
Environmental Careers Organization [eco.org]
Sustainable Business [sustainablebusiness.com]

Human Resources
American Society for Training and Development [astd.org]
National Human Resources Association [humanresources.org]
Society of Human Resource Management [shrm.org]
Workforce Online [workforceonline.com]

Real Estate
real-estate.uc.edu/TRADES/tradeassc.html
real-jobs.com
selectleaders.com

Salary Information
salary.com
payscale.com
salariesreview.com
salaryexpert.com
careerjournal.com
jobsmart.org/tools/salary/index.htm
stats.bls.gov/oco/ocos1000.htm
bureauoflaborsstatistics.gov

Other Resources
business.uc.edu/studentservices
vistaprint.com (to order business cards)
internshipgps.com
vault.com
cincinnati.chamber.com
businessweek.com
corporateinformation.com
getthejob.com
fortune.com
idealista.com
mfgc.com
dice.com
aftercollege.com
localjobs.com
indeed.com
icrunchdata.com
hotjobs.yahoo.com
hoovers.com
Participating in On-Campus Recruiting — Recruit a ‘Cat

- Hosted by the Career Development Center, Recruit a ‘Cat is an on campus recruiting service for all majors. Internships, part-time and full-time jobs opportunities are posted giving students 24/7 online access.
- By creating a profile, your online resume will also be available to employers who wish to search the On-Campus Recruiting database and contact you directly.
- Go to uc.edu/career and click on Students, click On Campus Recruiting, and click on Recruit a ‘Cat Login – follow instructions.
- If there are any problems, please contact Ashley Walker at 513-556-6123.

Applying for Positions Online and at Company Websites

You’ve probably heard some of the discouraging stories about the tremendous number of responses to advertisements and the minuscule chance of your letter and resume being noticed. Don’t let this stop you from responding to all ads that match your qualifications. These suggestions will aid you:

1. Read the job description carefully and try to determine what the employer really wants. Then tailor your response to meet his/her needs by using as much of the ad language as possible in your letter. Keep in mind that many resumes are scanned electronically (using key words from the job description).
2. Follow the application instructions and provide whatever information is requested. Generally, it is suggested that you provide a salary range in response to queries about your salary history or requirements. If you feel that salary is negotiable and/or that you are primarily interested in job satisfaction, location, or whatever, you can add these points.
3. Don’t overlook those that are one or two months old. If the company is identified, a direct contact can be productive. They may still be looking for the right candidate.
4. When addressing your cover letter in response to a position posted online and you are not certain whether the person to whom you are writing is male or female, use Dear Employer Representative.
5. Follow up when possible by contacting the individual to whom you emailed your resume. A phone call within 4 business days can ensure that your resume reaches the right desk, and you may even get to give an additional “plug” for yourself.

Interviewing

The job interview provides both the interested parties (interviewer and interviewee) with a chance to meet and get to know each other with the purpose of hiring and getting hired. The interviewer gets a chance to see if the person matches up to the resume and if the personality of the person clicks with the “personality” of the company. The interview is the “commercial” for the interviewee by giving him/her a chance to expand on the good points of the resume and negate the poor points. It is also an opportunity for the interviewee to see what the company is really like and if it would be a good fit for him or her.

Informational Interviews

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

People give informational interviews for several reasons. Generally, people enjoy sharing information about themselves and their jobs and, particularly, giving advice. Some may simply believe in attracting people to their profession and others may be scoping out prospects for their own company.

Setting Up an Informational Interview

You can set up information interviews several ways. If you have someone in mind, you can send a letter requesting a brief informational interview (clearly indicating the purpose of the meeting and communicating the fact that there is no job expectation). Follow this up with a phone call to schedule an appointment. Also, you can make cold calls to set up an appointment. However, the best way to obtain an informational interview is by being referred from one professional to another, a process which becomes easier as your network expands.
Preparing for an Informational Interview

Prepare for your informational interviews just as you would for an actual job interview: update your resume, do research on the company, and create an agenda that includes well-thought-out questions. Here are some examples:

1. Could you describe a typical workday for me?
2. What skills are required in your position on a day-to-day basis?
3. What parts of your job do you find the most challenging? Most enjoyable?
4. How often do you work past 6 p.m. and on the weekends?
5. Is this field growing enough that there’s room for someone like me?
6. Are too many or too few people entering this profession?
7. What developments on the horizon could affect future opportunities?
8. What would be my earnings potential if I entered this field?
9. To get promotions, is job-hopping necessary?
10. How did you get your job?
11. What preparation would you recommend for someone who wants to advance in this field?
12. What qualifications do you seek in a new hire?
13. How do most people enter this profession?
14. Considering my background, how well do you think I would fit in this company and/or profession?
15. How does your company compare with others we’ve discussed?
16. Where can I go to get up-to-date information on salaries, employers, and industry issues?
17. What professional journals and organizations should I be aware of?
18. Is there anything else you think I need to know?

Dressing for an Informational Interview

To make a good impression, dress as if you were going to a job interview. If you are not sure what to wear, you can always ask the person you are interviewing what dress is appropriate.

After the Informational Interview

Follow up with a handwritten thank-you note. Then keep in touch periodically with updates on your progress. Who knows, your informational experience could very well lead to a mentorship relationship, a job referral, or even an outright employment offer. Also send a thank-you note to anyone who helped make the referral (if applicable).

Job Interview Formats

Many job interviews are in-person but they can occur in several other formats including: over the phone, virtual (usually using Skype) or over a meal. Make sure you understand which format your interview will be in so you can prepare correctly.

For phone interviews, you are able to have notes in front of you, but it is important you still prepare answers in advance. Also, your verbal communication becomes more important because the interviewer cannot see your body language. Finally, if you have access to a landline, have the employer call you at that number. If not, make sure you have full service on your cell phone and are in a quiet place when he/she calls.

Virtual interviews are very common if you are looking to relocate for the position. To be successful, always make sure your laptop is plugged in, so not to run out of battery in the middle of your interview. Also, you need to look at the camera, not the screen, when answering questions, so they can see your face.
Dining Etiquette and the Luncheon or Dinner Interview

If you are asked to participate in a luncheon or dinner interview, this is great news! Most likely, the employer has determined that you are under strong consideration and would like to see more of the “whole person.” The employer wants to see you in a setting in which your social skills can be assessed — particularly if you are being considered for a client facing role. You will be scrutinized on your table manners and conduct, as well as your ability to engage in and carry a conversation. The key to a successful luncheon or dinner interview is to relax and confidently present yourself as a well-mannered and interesting person.

Arrival

- Business professional attire is suggested unless otherwise advised by your host
- Arrive 10 minutes early
- If you arrive at the restaurant before your host does, etiquette dictates that you wait in the lobby or waiting area for him or her. Do not proceed to the table without your host.
- When you arrive at your table, wait for your host to be seated or for an invitation to sit down before you take your seat

Place Settings

- Salad and bread/butter plates are to the left of your dinner plate, above your fork. Beverages are on the right, above your spoon. (Solids on the left, liquids on the right, or remember BMW — bread, meal, water)
- Work from left to right with utensils. Those placed above your plate are for dessert.
- Your napkin should be placed in your lap after everyone is seated. If you leave the table briefly, place your napkin in your chair. When you are finished with your meal, place your napkin to the left of your plate.

The Meal

- Order a light entrée that is mid-range in price and is easy to eat. Stay away from greasy finger foods or sloppy pasta dishes. Season your meal only after you have taken a few bites. Conversation should be the highlight — not your meal.
- Consuming alcohol during an interview meal can be detrimental. NEVER consume alcohol if you are under 21 or if your host is not drinking. It is best to stick with water or a soft drink. If your host is drinking alcohol, one drink (sipped slowly) may be acceptable.
- Pass seasonings, dressings, etc. to the left. Pass salt and pepper as a pair (even if only one is requested) and always include the service plate or bowl with dressings. Foods should go directly from service plate to your plate — never to your food or your mouth. Never use your own utensils to transfer food from service plates to your own. Butter should first be placed on your bread plate and should never be spread on an entire piece of bread. Rather, tear (not cut) one bite sized piece at a time, butter it and eat it.
- Let the interviewer guide the conversation, but seize opportunities to reinforce your strengths. You are being evaluated as a whole person, so don't be surprised if conversation shifts from the job and/or organization to general interest topics, including politics. Refrain from taking a controversial stand on any issue and don't let a few laughs tempt you to become too familiar with your host. Remain friendly, but professional, at all times.
- Your demeanor at the table says as much about you as a direct answer to an interview question. Don't speak with your mouth full and treat wait staff and other restaurant employees with respect. You may not have much time to eat if you are being asked a lot of questions, so keep in mind that participating in meaningful conversation is your priority and eating is secondary. You should have a few questions prepared for the interviewer, so remember to initiate conversation to make the flow more balanced.
- Signify that you are finished with your meal by placing utensils across your plate (with knife blade facing you) and napkin loosely folded to the left of your plate.

Closing and Good Byes

- The check will always be picked up by your host. Never offer to share payment or leave the tip. If the check is accidentally placed at your seat, wait until your host picks it up or asks you to pass it to him/her.
- Before departing, thank your host and reinforce interest in the position/inquire about next steps.
- Follow up with an email or hand-written thank you note within 24 hours of your meal.
Problems. ”Guess the Number,” “Brain Teasers,” and “Business Traditionally, there are three types of case questions:

The following is one possible answer:

hesitate to ask questions of the interviewer.

unsure about what is being requested from you, do not

assumptions. If you are unsure about an assumption or

In answering this question, all you have to work with are

reference books, or computers. Can you tell me how many

”You and I are sitting in an empty room with no telephone,

conversation. The best interviews are conversations, not

circumstances. Third, it helps turn the question into a

you are not shy about asking questions under difficult

information, you have shown the interviewer that

much easier. Second, even if you don’t receive additional

information that will make answering the case question

several objectives. First, it allows you to obtain more

more information that will make answering the case question

much easier. Second, even if you don’t receive additional

information, you have shown the interviewer that

you are not shy about asking questions under difficult

circumstances. Third, it helps turn the question into a

conversation. The best interviews are conversations, not

Q&A sessions.

More information about case questions can be found

through these resources:

• Bain & Company Practice Cases: joinbain.com/apply-
to-bain/interview-preparation/Default.aspx
• Capital One Practice Case: capitalone.com/careers/
hiring/business_case.php?linkid=WWW_Z_Z_Z_
CARHIN_CI_01_T_CARHIBC
• Deloitte: mycareer.deloitte.com/us/en/students/
gettingthejob/caseinterviewpreptool
• McKinsey Practice Cases: mckinsey.com/careers/apply/
interview_tips/practice_case_studies
• BCG: bgc.com/join_bcg/practice_cases/default.aspx

Traditionally, there are three types of case questions:

“Guess the Number,” “Brain Teasers,” and “Business Problems.”

Guess the Number Example

“You and I are sitting in an empty room with no telephone,
reference books, or computers. Can you tell me how many

disposable diapers were sold in the U.S. last year?”

In answering this question, all you have to work with are

assumptions. If you are unsure about an assumption or

unsure about what is being requested from you, do not

hesitate to ask questions of the interviewer.

The following is one possible answer:

• I am going to assume that the population of the U.S. is

250 million people. I am going to further assume that

the average life expectancy in the U.S. is 75 years. For

simplicity’s sake, I am also going to assume that there

are an equal number of people in each age group. So

250 million people divided by 75 different age groups

equals 3.3 million people in each age group.

• Children wear diapers from age zero to age three, so

that’s three years. Three point three million children
times three years equals 9.9 million, so let’s say ten

million children. Out of those ten million children,

I am going to assume that 80 percent of them wear

disposable diapers. That’s eight million children.

• I also think that children go through about five diapers

day. Newborns maybe more than five, three-year-

olds maybe less, so we will assume five diapers a day.

Eight million kids times five diapers a day equals 40

million diapers a day.

• So 40 million diapers a day times 365 days a year is

your answer.

Business Problem

The business problem case question often involves market

analysis or new product development. There are several

questions you can ask and steps you can take to ensure that

you have covered most of the main points.

• Step One: Back translate or repeat what you have

heard. You do this for several reasons: First, you get
to hear the case all over again. Second, you show the

interviewer that you were listening. And third, you
do not end up answering the wrong question, which

happens more often than you think and is grounds for

dismissal.

• Step Two: Ask, identify, and confirm the following:

What are the company’s short-term and long-term

objectives—what is it trying to accomplish? Although

the company’s objectives may seem obvious, do not

assume them. There are often hidden agendas in

objectives. It is always a good policy and good business
to ask.

• Step Three: Analyze the market. Determine market

size, identify and benchmark competition. Conduct

industry analysis. Again, ask questions if you do not

know who the competitors are, what their products

are, and what their market share is.

• Step Four: Identify and prioritize strategic issues.

• Step Five: Analyze issues, set goals and objectives,

then reality test these goals.

• Step Six: Identify and analyze all options to reach

goals and address issues.

• Step Seven: Make decisions.

Another way to solve the business problem is with the “4C”
method. The 4 “C’s” stand for company, cost, competition,
and customer. Even if you don’t know that much about the
subject, this methodology makes you touch on all the key
areas.
**Business Problem Example Question:**

“Why can’t General Motors compete?”

- Well, in order to answer this, I think it is important to look at some major issues. The first issue is the company itself. GM is a large, bureaucratic corporation with many levels of management. Decisions and changes are hard to make and implement. Thus, GM has rested on its laurels while other firms have come out with new designs. During the late seventies and throughout the eighties all GM cars looked alike.
- The second problem GM had was that their prices increased but their quality didn't improve. People weren't getting the value they expected. Some people blame the unions for the high costs, but it is probably a combination of labor costs and health care costs.
- Third, GM remained stagnant as the competition hit it from all sides. Ford came out with the aerodynamic Taurus. The Japanese imports seemed to be better built and they got better gas mileage.
- Finally, GM didn't seem to listen to, nor value its customers. GM seemed to think it could rely on the loyalty of customers whose families had purchased GM products time and again. They were wrong and now they are paying for it.

There was nothing earth shattering about this answer, yet it addressed the major aspects of the case and it opened the door for a conversation on the auto industry or large corporations that have had a difficult time competing against smaller, more decisive companies.

**Behavioral Interviewing**

Performance-based interviewing is a common format used by many organizations today. It is based on the assumption that a reliable predictor of future behavior is past performance, so the interview questions request specific examples and probe for details of how you behaved in previous positions.

Many of these questions begin with “Tell me about a time when…” and focus on both work specific/technical abilities and transferrable skills such as leadership, decisiveness, flexibility, creativity, communication skills, analytical abilities, and team orientation. Your challenge is to formulate a concise answer that describes the Situation or Task, the Action that you took, and the Results (STAR).

Suggestions for effectively answering behavior based questions include:

- Before the interview, develop your best STAR (situation/task, action, results) stories that demonstrate the work-specific and transferrable skills you believe qualify you for the open position.
- Answer the question that is asked and limit your answer to 2 minutes or less. Be careful not to ramble with irrelevant information — be clear and concise.
- Respond to negative questions with positive words so that you do not open areas of difficulty. Include what you learned from the situation. Be truthful, but it is not necessary to offer unsolicited information which could detract from the image you are creating.
- When unsure — buy time — repeat the question or say “I’ll have to give it some thought.”

Sample behavioral interview questions and answers:

Describe a difficult problem you had to sort out in your last job

“We were getting a lot of complaints about late deliveries. (Situation).

My manager asked me to figure out why these complaints were occurring. (Task)

I met with the staff involved in the customer delivery department and discovered that the problem seemed to be with the stock coming through on time. I investigated and found that requests for new inventory were not been processed fast enough. The backlog was in the orders department as they were not following up adequately with the suppliers. A system for regular follow up was quickly implemented. (Action)

This sorted out the stock problems and the delivery staff was able to meet their deadlines.” (Result)

**Traditional Questions**

Traditional interview techniques involve asking questions directly related to one’s background or resume. Traditional interview techniques normally use leading questions — meaning it is relatively straightforward for you to determine what the interviewer is looking for. For example, “Do you think you’ll have a problem working in a goal-oriented environment?” is a traditional, leading interview question.

Another example could be:

**Question: What is your management style?**

**Answer:** I believe that the most effective managers are those who advocate for their area across the organization and who keep the lines of communication open with their staff. For example, my former company was ready to launch a new product that required a lot of consumer research. I discussed the research plan with my staff and I discovered that two of my best analysts were excited about expanding their skills in precisely the kind of research that was being considered. With their permission, I spoke with the Director of Research and volunteered my analysts for the project. The result was that my analysts gained new skills and really understood the value of working for the company. And it didn’t hurt that my department’s reputation was greatly enhanced.
Getting the Interview

It is important to follow up on your letter/resume after you email it to your contact. We recommend that you telephone or email the person 3–4 days after you send your resume to request a meeting. If they do not respond, try again 3–4 days later. If they still do not respond, let it go.

Pre-Interview Checklist

Before the interview, you should have:
- Finalized your resume
- Developed a reference list
- Written an elevator speech (answers “Tell me about yourself”)
- Researched the company and industry
- Developed 3–5 reasons-for-hire
- Developed your behavioral interview examples (see page 38)
- Written a prioritized list of questions to ask the interviewer
- Completed a practice interview

Preparing for the Interview

Two themes are vitally important for you to convey in your interviews. First, you want the interviewer to perceive you as a competent candidate — one ready to take on the challenges of the position. Competence is exuded when you give specific, accurate detail of your accomplishments, keeping in mind that you are trying to help the employer see how you can help the company. Second, you want to exhibit confidence that your skills and characteristics meet the employer’s needs.

Remember, non-verbal communication is just as important as verbal communication in an interview. Therefore, revisit page 9 of this guide if you need a refresher.

After you have researched the company and prepared your 3–5 reasons for hire, it’s time for a dress rehearsal. First, jot down responses to the commonly asked questions; then practice responding. Avoid being abrupt, but don’t ramble. Occasionally, tell a brief story to illustrate an accomplishment — watch your timing. Any response longer than two minutes is probably too long.

Eliminating nervous mannerisms and vocal habits that detract from your message can be pivotal in presenting the best image possible. When under pressure, do you find yourself playing with your rings or earrings, repeating vocalizations such as “like”, “you know”, “um”, “really”, “kind of” or “sort of”, speaking rapidly or tapping your foot? If so, it is important to become aware of these habits then practice your interviewing to eliminate such vocalizations in order to maximize your professional image.

For a more formal practice interview, you can do the following:
- Set up a mock interview with a member of the Lindner Career Services team
- Ask a friend to ask you questions and provide feedback
- Conduct and review a virtual interview with Interview Stream
  - To complete a from home virtual interview visit: uc.edu/career/students/interviewing/interview_stream.html
  - Click “Create an Account,” enter your information and click “Register”
  - Interview Stream will locate your webcam and microphone
  - Select “Tutorial” and watch the quick two minute video for instruction on the technical aspects of using the site (view this to ensure you get the best quality of video)
  - Select “Conduct Interview”
  - Select “General Interview”
  - Interview Stream will prompt you through the process
  - Once the interview is complete, a link will be sent to your email that will allow you to view your interview

Decide What You Will Wear to the Interview

Business professional dress is the most conservative type of business wear. Even if the position does not require professional clothing every day, it is important to dress professionally for the interview. To see what constitutes business professional clothing see page 10.

Do Your Research

Prior to each interview, find out as much as possible about the company and position for which you are interviewing. Most interviewers are impressed by candidates who are well informed about their companies, and you will “hit a home run” in the interview if you can demonstrate that you have the skills and experience to help the company meet or overcome their specific challenges.
Some questions you might want to ask the interviewer are:

**About the Company**
1. What are management’s major goals for the company?
2. What is the retention rate of new hires after one year? Three years?
3. Is there a commitment to promote from within? What percent of your top managers were promoted from inside the organization?
4. What changes are planned in regard to products or services?
5. What do you see as the major challenge(s) facing the company this year?
6. What is the company doing to ensure that it will be viable and/or profitable ten years from now?
7. If there was one thing about this organization you could change, what would it be?
8. How would you describe the corporate culture?

**About the Job**
1. Why is this position available?
2. What might be the potential career path within the company?
3. Describe the ideal candidate for this position.
4. What are some of the first major projects/assignments for this position?
5. With whom does this position closely interface?
6. How will my performance be evaluated? How and when is this done and by whom?
7. What do you see as key qualifications for success in this position?
8. Can you describe the corporate culture here?

**About the Manager**
1. What is your background?
2. What is your management style?
3. Describe the kind of people who thrive in your company? What are they key competencies of a successful employee?

**About Those You Might Supervise**
1. What are their responsibilities?
2. How many? Will that number remain the same? How long have they been with the company?
3. How did they relate to their former supervisor?
4. Have any of them expressed an interest in this position?

Excellent sources of information on these and other points include:
- Your network of friends, colleagues
- Company website
- Chamber of Commerce Directory
- Harris Industrial or Service Directory
- Annual Reports
- Standard & Poor’s reports
- Company sales materials and product brochures
- Lexis/Nexis database or other computer databases
- News articles
- Company employees or public relations office
- BizJournals
- Interactive Book of Lists
- FindTheBest

**What Happens During the Interview?**
The interviewing process can be scary if you don’t know what to expect. All interviews fit a general pattern. While each interview will differ, all share three common characteristics: a beginning, middle and conclusion.

The typical interview will last 30 minutes, although some may be longer. A typical structure is as follows:
- Five minutes—small talk
- Fifteen minutes—a mutual discussion of your background and credentials as they relate to the needs of the employer
- Five minutes—asks you for questions
- Five minutes—conclusion of interview

As you can see, there is not a lot of time to state your case. The employer may try to do most of the talking. When you do respond to questions or ask your own, your statements should be concise and organized without being too brief.

**It Starts Before You Even Say Hello**
The typical interview starts before you even get into the inner sanctum. The recruiter begins to evaluate you the minute you are identified. You are expected to shake the recruiter’s hand upon being introduced. Don’t be afraid to extend your hand first. This shows assertiveness.

It’s a good idea to arrive 10 minutes early. You can use the time to relax.

**How’s Your Small Talk Vocabulary?**
Many recruiters will begin the interview with some small talk. Topics may range from the weather to sports and will rarely focus on anything that brings out your skills. Nonetheless, you are still being evaluated.

Recruiters are trained to evaluate candidates on many different points. They may be judging how well you communicate on an informal basis. This means you must do more than smile and nod.
The Recruiter Has the Floor
The main part of the interview starts when the recruiter begins discussing the organization. If the recruiter uses vague generalities about the position and you want more specific information, ask questions. Be sure you have a clear understanding of the job and the company.

As the interview turns to talk about your qualifications, be prepared to deal with aspects of your background that could be construed as negative, i.e., low grade point average, no participation in outside activities, no related work experience. It is up to you to convince the recruiter that although these points appear negative, positive attributes can be found in them. A low GPA could stem from having to fully support yourself through college; you might have no related work experience, but plenty of experience that shows you to be a loyal and valued employee.

Many times recruiters will ask why you chose the major you did or what your career goals are. These questions are designed to determine your goal direction. Employers seek people who have direction and motivation. This can be demonstrated by your answers to these innocent-sounding questions.

It’s Your Turn to Ask Questions
When the recruiter asks, “Now do you have any questions?” it’s important to have a few ready. Also, the questions should bring out your interest in and knowledge of the organization. By asking intelligent, well-thought-out questions, you show the employer you are serious about the organization and need more information. It also indicates to the recruiter that you have done your homework.

A Powerful Close to the Interview
Often it will be clear from the interviewer’s non-verbal behavior that the interview is just about complete. He/she may ask if you have any more questions, to which you might respond, “No, I think you have answered all the questions I have at this point. But I do want to say that based on our conversation today, I am very interested in this position, and I am confident I can make a significant contribution here. As we discussed, I have...” briefly listing your 3–5 top reasons-for-hire here. Follow that with “What are the next steps?” so you have an idea of their time frame for making a hiring decision.

Depart with a firm handshake, good eye contact and a smile, and request a business card from everyone with whom you interviewed. If you know they will be making a hiring decision within the next few days, email an individualized follow-up note to everyone with whom you met within 24 hours of the interview. If their timeframe is longer, send a letter via regular mail.

This follow up letter gives you the opportunity to reiterate your interest in the position and restate your primary reasons for hire. Do not underestimate the power of sending a thank you letter! If you are one of two or three final candidates, this follow-up can tip the scales in you winning the offer.
Sample Thank You email

To: joan.smith@company.com
Subject: Thank You - Assistant Account Executive Interview

Dear Ms. Smith,

It was very enjoyable to speak with you today about the assistant account executive position at the Smith Agency. The job seems to be an excellent match for my skills and interests. The creative approach to account management that you described confirmed my desire to work with you.

In addition to my enthusiasm, I will bring to the position strong writing skills, assertiveness, and the ability to encourage others to work cooperatively with the department.

I appreciate the time you took to interview me. I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you regarding this position.

Sincerely,

Jane Jones
janejones@gmail.com
(555) 555-5555
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/janejones

Sample Job Interview Thank You Letter

Bearcat Student
22111 Bearcat Way • Cincinnati, OH 45221 • 513.222.3333 • bearcatstudent@gmail.com

August 1, 2012

Mr. John Doe
Manager
ABC Company
100 Successful Street, Suite 1000
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mr. Doe:

It was very enjoyable to speak with you about the assistant account executive position at the Smith Agency. The job, as you presented it, seems to be a good match for my skills and interests. The creative approach to account management that you described confirmed my desire to work with you.

In addition to my enthusiasm, I will bring to the position strong writing skills, assertiveness, and the ability to encourage others to work cooperatively with the department. My artistic background will help me to work with artists on staff and provide me with an understanding of the visual aspects of our work.

I understand your need for administrative support. My detail orientation and organizational skills will help to free you to deal with larger issues. I neglected to mention during my interview that I had worked for two summers as a temporary office worker. This experience helped me to develop my secretarial and clerical skills.

I appreciate the time you took to interview me. I am very interested in working for you and look forward to hearing from you about this position.

Sincerely,

Bearcat Student
The Art of Negotiating

An area of the job search that often receives little attention is the art of negotiating. Once you have been offered a job, you have the opportunity to discuss the terms of your employment. Negotiations may be uncomfortable or unsatisfying because we tend to approach them with a winner-take-all attitude that is counterproductive to the concept of negotiations.

Negotiating with your potential employer can make your job one that best meets your own needs as well as those of your employer. To ensure successful negotiations, it is important to understand the basic components. The definition of negotiation as it relates to employment is: a series of communications (either oral or in writing) that reach a satisfying conclusion for all concerned parties, most often between the new employee and the hiring organization.

Negotiation is a planned series of events that requires strategy, presentation and patience. Preparation is probably the single most important part of successful negotiations. Any good trial attorney will tell you the key to presenting a good case in the courtroom is the hours of preparation that happen beforehand. The same is true for negotiating. A good case will literally present itself. What follows are some suggestions that will help you prepare for successful negotiating.

Research
Gather as much factual information as you can to back up the case you want to make. For example, if most entering employees cannot negotiate salary, you may be jeopardizing the offer by focusing on that aspect of the package. Turn your attention to other parts of the offer such as their health plan, dental plan, retirement package, the type of schedule you prefer, etc.

Psychological Preparation
Chances are that you will not know the person with whom you will be negotiating. If you are lucky enough to be acquainted, spend some time reviewing what you know about this person’s communication style and decision-making behavior.

In most cases, however, this person will be a stranger. Since most people find the unknown a bit scary, you’ll want to ask yourself what approach to negotiating you find most comfortable. How will you psyche yourself up to feel confident enough to ask for what you want? How will you respond to counteroffers? What are your alternatives? What’s your bottom line? In short, plan your strategy.

Be sure you know exactly what you want. This does not mean you will get exactly that, but having the information clear in your head will help you determine what you are willing to concede. Unless you know what you want, you won’t be able to tell somebody else. Clarity improves communication, which is the conduit for effective negotiations.

Practice
Rehearse the presentation in advance using another person as the employer. If you make mistakes in the rehearsal, chances are that you will not repeat them during the actual negotiations. A friend can critique your reasoning and help you prepare for questions. If this all seems like a lot of work, remember that if something is worth negotiating for, it is worth preparing for.

Dollars and Sense
Always begin by expressing genuine interest in the position and the organization, emphasizing the areas of agreement but allowing “wiggle room” to compromise on other areas. Be prepared to support your points of disagreement, outlining the parts you would like to alter, your suggestions on how this can be done and why it would serve the company’s best interests to accommodate your request.

Be prepared to defend your proposal. Back up your reasons for wanting to change the offer with meaningful, work-related skills and positive benefits to the employer. Requesting a salary increase because you are a fast learner or have a high GPA are usually not justifiable reasons in the eyes of the employer. Meaningful work experience or internships that have demonstrated or tested your professional skills are things that will make an employer stop and take notice.

It is sometimes more comfortable for job-seekers to make this initial request in writing and plan to meet later to hash out the differences. You will need to be fairly direct and assertive at this point even though you may feel extremely vulnerable. Keep in mind that the employer has chosen you from a pool of qualified applicants, so you are not as powerless as you think.

Sometimes the employer will bristle at the suggestion that there is room to negotiate. Stand firm, but encourage the employer to think about it for a day or two at which time you will discuss the details of your proposal with him/her. Do not rush the process because you are uncomfortable. The employer may be counting on this discomfort and use it to derail the negotiations. Remember, this is a series of volleys and lobs, trade-offs and compromises that occur over a period of time. It is a process — not a singular event!
Once you have reached a conclusion with which you are both relatively comfortable, present in writing your interpretation of the agreement so that if there is any question, it will be addressed immediately. Negotiation, by definition, implies that each side will give. Do not perceive it as an ultimatum.

If the employer chooses not to grant any of your requests — and realistically, he or she can do that — you will still have the option of accepting the original offer provided you have maintained a positive, productive and friendly atmosphere during your exchanges. You can always re-enter negotiations after you have demonstrated your worth to the organization.

**Money Isn’t Everything**

There are many things you can negotiate besides salary. For example, benefits can add thousands of dollars to the compensation package. Benefits can range from paid personal leave to discounts on the company’s products and services. They constitute more than just icing on the cake; they may be better than the cake itself. Traditional benefits packages include health insurance, paid vacation and personal/sick days.

Companies may offer such benefits as child care, elder care or use of the company jet for family emergencies. Other lucrative benefits could include disability and life insurance and a variety of retirement plans. Some organizations offer investment and stock options as well as relocation reimbursement and tuition credits for continued education.

Written by Lily Maestas, Counseling and Career Services, University of California, Santa Barbara.

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**Choosing Between Job Offers**

The first question many of your friends will ask when you receive a job offer is “What does it pay?” For many college graduates this consideration is near the top of the list, which is not surprising. Most students have invested thousands of dollars in their education, often racking up high student loan balances. Most graduates are looking forward to paying off that debt. Also, the value of a salary is easy to understand; the more zeroes after the first digit, the better.

In order to evaluate a salary offer you need to know what the average pay scale is for your degree and industry. The National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) is a good source of salary information for entry-level college graduates. Make sure you factor cost-of-living differences when considering salary offers. For example, you may need an offer of $76,000 in San Francisco to equal an offer of $40,000 in Huntsville, Alabama.

Bonuses and commissions are considered part of your salary, so take them into consideration when evaluating an offer. It’s also important to have a good understanding of an employer’s policies concerning raises. Be sure to never make your decision on salary alone. Students tend to overemphasize salary when considering job offers. Money is important, but it’s more important that you like your job. If you like your job, chances are you’ll be good at it. And if you’re good at your job, eventually you will be financially rewarded.

**Factor in Benefits**

Of course, salary is only one way in which employers financially compensate their employees. Ask anybody with a long work history and they’ll tell you how important benefits are. When most people think of employer benefits, they think of things like health insurance, vacation time and retirement savings. But employers are continually coming up with more and more creative ways to compensate their workers, from health club memberships to flextime. The value of a benefits plan depends on your own plans and needs. A company gym or membership at a health club won’t be of much value to you if you don’t like to sweat.
Who's the Boss?
Who you work for can have as much bearing on your overall job satisfaction as how much you earn and what you do. First, analyze how stable the potential employer is. If the company is for-profit, what were its earnings last year? What are its projections for growth? If the job is with a government agency or a nonprofit, what type of funding does it have? How long has the employer been around? You could receive the best job offer in the world, but if the job is cut in six months, it won’t do you much good.

Corporate Culture
There are three aspects to a work environment: 1) the physical workspace, 2) the “corporate culture” of the employer, and 3) fellow co-workers. Don’t underestimate the importance of a good workspace. If you are a private person, you probably will not be able to do your best work in a cluster of cubicles. If you are an extrovert, you won’t be happy shut in an office for hours on end.

Corporate culture comprises the attitudes, experiences, beliefs and values of an organization. What’s the hierarchy of the organization? Is there a dress code? Is overtime expected? Do they value creativity or is it more important that you follow protocol? Whenever possible, you should talk to current or previous employees to get a sense of the corporate culture. You may also be able to get a sense of the environment during the interview or by meeting your potential boss and co-workers during the interview process. Ask yourself if the corporate culture is compatible with your own attitudes, beliefs and values.

Your boss and fellow co-workers make up the last part of the work environment. Hopefully, you will like the people you work with, but you must, at least, be able to work well with them professionally. You may not be able to get a good sense of your potential co-workers or boss during the interview process. But if you do develop strong feelings one way or the other, be sure to take them into consideration when making your final decision.

Like What You Do
Recent college graduates are seldom able to land their dream jobs right out of school, but it’s still important that you at least like what you do. Before accepting a job offer, make sure you have a very good sense of what your day-to-day duties will be. What are your responsibilities? Will you be primarily working in teams or alone? Will your job tasks be repetitive or varied? Will your work be challenging?

What level of stress can you expect with the position?

Location, Location, Location
Climate, proximity to friends and family and local population (i.e., urban vs. rural) should all be evaluated against your desires and preferences. If you are considering a job far away from your current address, will the employer pay for part or all of your moving expenses? Even if you are looking at a local job, location can be important — especially as it relates to travel time. A long commute will cost you time, money and probably more than a little frustration. Make sure the tradeoff is worth it.

Time is on Your Side
It’s acceptable to request two or three days to consider a job offer. Depending on the employer and the position, even a week of consideration time can be acceptable. If you’ve already received another offer or expect to hear back from another employer soon, make sure you have time to consider both offers. But don’t ask for too much time to consider.

Like all of us, employers don’t like uncertainty. Make sure you give them an answer one way or another as soon as you can.

It’s Your Call
Once you make a decision, act quickly. If you are accepting a position, notify the hiring manager by phone followed by a confirmation letter or an email. Keep the letter short and state the agreed upon salary and the start date. When rejecting an offer, make sure to thank the employer for their time and interest. It always pays to be polite in your correspondence. You never know where your career path will take you and it might just take you back to an employer you initially rejected.

Written by Chris Enstrom, freelance writer, Nashville, Ind.
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Job Offer Etiquette

The overall spirit of job offer etiquette is to treat an employer the way you would want be treated. This includes general business practices such as honesty, integrity, honoring your word, amongst others. However, there are a few items that tend to be overlooked:

- **Interview in good faith**  Only apply for a job and accept an interview if you’re genuinely interested in the opportunity. Employers invest a tremendous amount of time and resources in the recruiting, interviewing, hiring and on-boarding processes. Therefore, using a real opportunity as a chance to “practice” is misleading and costly.

- **Keep the lines of communication open**  Once you have come to a decision whether to accept or refuse an offer, communicate it promptly. Other candidates remain in the pipeline that can be offered the position. If you have questions regarding the offer — ask! It’s in the best interest of each party that all details are fully understood.

- **Be a person of your word**  Again, a lot is invested in the recruiting, interviewing and hiring processes. Therefore, once an offer is accepted, it should be your full intention to honor the commitment. Accepting an offer as a “back-up plan” until a first choice or another opportunity comes along is misleading and may jeopardize the opportunity for others that were genuinely interested.

- **Formally pull yourself out of the recruiting process**  Once you’ve accepted an offer, be sure to withdraw yourself from other interview processes immediately. While being gracious, cancel any pending interview appointments. If possible, update any electronic applications by withdrawing them, and notify members of your network that were supporting you in your job search, including the Career Services Team.

**Sample Job Acceptance Letter**

Bearcat Student  
22111 Bearcat Way • Cincinnati, OH 45221 • 513.222.3333 • bearcatstudent@gmail.com  
August 1, 2012  
Mr. John Doe  
Manager  
ABC Company  
100 Successful Street, Suite 1000  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202  

Dear Mr. Doe:  

As we discussed on the phone, I am very pleased to accept the position of Account Manager with ABC Company. Thank you for the opportunity. I am eager to make a positive contribution to the company and to work with everyone on the team.  

As we discussed, my starting salary will be $35,000 and health and life insurance benefits will be provided after 90 days of employment.  

I look forward to starting employment on December 1, 2012. If there is any additional information or paperwork you need prior to then, please let me know.  

Sincerely,  

Bearcat Student
Sample email request for extension of deadline to accept or decline job offer

To: joan.smith@company.com

Subject: Thank You - Assistant Account Executive Interview

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for your telephone call and letter that I received yesterday offering me the position of Finance Manager at ABC Company. I am excited about the opportunity this position offers both in terms of job duties and location, and I very much appreciate your confidence in offering me the job.

You asked that I make a decision by next week on February 25. This is an important decision, and unfortunately I do not have all the information I need in order to make this decision by that date. To confirm our phone conversation of this afternoon, I am asking you to consider whether it would be possible for me to supply you with my decision by March 10. I would very much appreciate such an extension, and assure you that I will be able to make a firm decision by that date.

Thank you very much for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,

Jane Jones
janejones@gmail.com
(555) 555-5555
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/janejones

Sample Job-Seeker Follow-Up email after job interview and rejection

To: joan.smith@company.com

Subject: Thank You - Assistant Account Executive Interview

Dear Ms. Smith,

Thank you for letting me know you had decided to hire someone else for the position I interviewed for. I was disappointed that I did not get the position, but I very much appreciate the time and concern you and your staff took to talk with me and show me around your headquarters.

I hope you’ll keep my materials on file and consider me for future vacancies. I know yours is a growing company, so I’m convinced a position will turn up before long for which I am a perfect fit. If any other departments or regional offices have openings, I would appreciate hearing about them.

Again, I thank you so much for all the time and thought you put into considering me for this position.

Sincerely,

Jane Jones
janejones@gmail.com
(555) 555-5555
LinkedIn: linkedin.com/in/janejones

Sample Job Decline Letter

Bearcat Student
22111 Bearcat Way • Cincinnati, OH 45221 • 513.222.3333 • bearcatstudent@gmail.com

August 1, 2012

Mr. John Doe
Manager
ABC Company
100 Successful Street, Suite 1000
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Dear Mr. Doe:

Thank you very much for offering me the accountant position. After careful consideration, I regret that I must decline your offer. Although you were most encouraging in outlining future advancement possibilities within ABC Company, I have accepted another opportunity that is more in line with my skills and career goals.

I enjoyed meeting you and the rest of your team. You have been most kind and gracious throughout the interview process, and I only wish that circumstances allowed me to accept your offer.

Best wishes for your continued success.

Sincerely,

Bearcat Student

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