

Ask the Career Coach: Top 10 Tips for Grads Starting Their Career Search

Ask the Career Coach: Top 10 tips for a grad when starting their career search...

By [Lisa Chenofsky Singer](#)

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Dear Career Coach Lisa,

As a recent graduate with my bachelors, what are the top 10 tips you would suggest for me starting out in my job search?

P.J.
Millburn

1. Be yourself...polished up!
2. Learn to tell "[your story](#)" well. Share why you are the best candidate. What value will you bring to the organization? Think from the recruiter's/hiring manager's perspective.
3. Have your "elevator or marketing pitch" ready for the "Tell me about yourself" question, which is used for informational interviews as well. Be prepared to identify what sets you apart from the rest. Share what you are looking for (be focused and have specific areas).
4. A resume is a "living document" in a constant state of revision. Be prepared to give examples from your resume that can address your ability to deliver on expectations/projects.
5. Get business cards! Put your name, email and cellular phone number and a title or category if you have identified one. You can print them off the computer until you decide who you want to be, order them on line or from the office supplies/printing stores.
6. First impressions: Make sure your cell phone message sounds professional. Remember this one way to begin "branding" yourself!
7. Organize your networking plans: List "who you know, who they know and who else would you like to know." Join social networking groups, list 3-5 associations to join. Joining associations (preferably in your desired profession) and becoming active in them can produce outstanding results and in a shorter timeframe. Create a LinkedIn account. This allows you to build an image, or brand. Connect with your college or university alumni, companies you interned for, mentors, and others in "groups" with common interests. Identify three to five of your mentors --individuals you respect and admire--and arrange informational interviews. You must prepare for these the same way you would prepare for an interview. Come prepared with targeted questions.
8. Get your references ready. Contact former employers, internships, professors and ask for written or electronic references. Ask for a LinkedIn recommendation.

9. Prepare to make and track phone calls. Sell yourself, not the resume. Set hourly, daily, weekly plans with goals, get your space organized, have a system to track activity and follow-up.

10. Get mentally prepared for the "process." Finding the job you want and getting offers is a numbers game. The sooner you realize this, the less likely you are to become dejected. You will fail more than you succeed--but you only need to succeed once (getting and accepting an offer).

Consider joining a job search circle led by a certified career coach to learn job search methodology, expand your network and gain maximum value from the group experience.

"Ask the Career Coach" is a column dedicated to those who may be in transition or wrestling with a career dilemma by providing a forum for advice. We welcome your questions. Please send them to CareerCoachLisa@gmail.com.

Lisa Chenofsky Singer is a Millburn-Short Hills resident and the founder of Chenofsky Singer & Associates LLC. She offers Executive and Career Management Coaching and Human Resources Consulting, writes and speaks on job search and career-related topics. Her web site is www.ChenofskySinger.com.