

How to Win Jobs and Influence Employers

Rachel Ross can't sleep through the night. The U. of Arizona senior clutches her pillow while she imagines advertising executives wiping their wingtips with her résumé. Ross, who started her job search in September, is one of 1.3 million college graduates about to enter the already crowded work force in May.

Although she thinks she did all of the right things — interning at an ad agency, earning a 3.8 grade point average, and sending 200 résumés — Ross has received only one call for an interview and a pile of letters for her "wall of rejection." She and others like her wonder: Is there anything you can do to recession-proof yourself, or is the job market hopeless?

While experts agree that the job market is tough, they say there is hope — especially for savvy students who know the tricks of the trade.

Unfortunately, many students are clueless about finding a job, according to Charley Swayne, a lecturer in the U. of Wisconsin's marketing department and author of *What a College Senior Should Know When the Barrel is Empty and the Party is Over*. First of all, he says, don't expect your résumé to do all your work for you.

"Students are so surprised at how few people read résumés and cover letters," Swayne says. "Employers get so much of that stuff that it's like junk mail coming through their doors. They'll sift through it, but it's impossible for them to read it all. Less than 10 percent of job offers are generated by résumés. Today, the most prevalent way of getting a job is through networking."

So to get an edge at a coveted corporation, Swayne advises shameless schmoozing. When a prospective employer is visiting a nearby campus, plan a road trip and subtly corner him or her during the reception. Go to conventions and job fairs and put your Dale Carnegie dollars to work.

At the same time, Swayne cautions against obvi-

job hunting...résumés...cover letters...interviews...GPAs...internships...co-op...wall of rejection...empty barrel...shameless schmoozing...jumping qualifications...bulletin boards...punctual postmarks...Plan B: grad school...clueless...trade tricks...career centers...Networking...gimmicks...David Yandell...Portland State U...triple major...giant classified ad...theater marquee...large helium balloons...publicity...eccentricity...8 to 4...connections...avoided that route on purpose...own merits...methods failed...Swayne isn't...gimmicks can work...certain type of executive...fits your personality...Swayne

ous gimmicks.

David Yandell, a senior at Portland State U., thought going to extremes would get him noticed. He went for a triple major, placed a giant classified ad on a theater marquee in downtown Portland and attempted to hoist himself with large helium balloons to garner publicity. Yandell's antics received media attention, but few employers responded.

"I hit a certain segment with my eccentricity," he says, "but it wasn't anything 8 to 4, it wasn't anything secure.... I don't have connections, but I think I avoided that route on purpose. I'd like to think I could get a job on my own merits."

Yandell was surprised that his methods failed, but Swayne isn't.

"Gimmicks can work with a certain type of executive, but only do it if it fits your personality," Swayne

says. "Really though, the majority of students are going to get a job through networking."

Selicia Thigpen, a recruiter for Intel Corp., a California computer chip manufacturer, says experience is crucial.

"In today's economy having just a B.S. won't do it," Thigpen says. "Internships and co-ops will make students much more likely to be employed."

Campus career centers, department bulletin boards, professors and academic advisers are good resources for finding internships, co-ops and summer jobs. Being in the right place at the right time doesn't hurt, either. Thigpen says Intel recruits from "a strategic list of schools," which includes Purdue U., Stanford U., U. of Wisconsin and U. of Michigan. Although not everyone can afford the big name schools, the National Student Exchange Program, operating at 107 campuses, allows students to pay tuition to their home schools while actually going somewhere else.

"If you're in New Mexico and you go to school in California, Oregon or Maine and work an internship there, your résumé is going to show that you've got some seasoning," says Ned O'Malia, director of the exchange program at UNM. "It will tell employers that you know more about the world than your own little corner."

Of course, even when you do everything right, sometimes things still fall through. Just ask Ross. "At first I was optimistic, but now I'm just scared," she says. "I'm really qualified and I thought these companies, especially the one I interned for, would jump all over me."

Ross does have a back-up plan, however — she's scrambling to get graduate school applications postmarked on time.

"This is a just-in-case kind of thing," she says. "I haven't given up complete hope, but I'm being cautious. After all of this disappointment, graduate school is looking really good."

By Laura Bendix, *The Daily Lobo*, U. of New Mexico

The Official Job-Hunt Timeline, or what to do and when to do it.

Freshman year

- Take a self-assessment test to help you choose a career.
- Talk to professionals in that field.
- Get good grades and enjoy college.
- Start a notebook to help you keep track of future résumé material (extracurricular activities, etc.).
- Get a summer job.
- Do volunteer work.

Sophomore year

- Learn something different to make your résumé stand out.
- Join clubs and teams.
- Get letters of recommendation from professors and bosses.
- Start your résumé.
- Consider part-time work.
- Take an unpaid internship, or at least a professionally oriented job.

Junior year

- Participate in career workshops.
- Visit your career development center.
- Contact a professional society in your field for more ideas.
- Practice interviewing, maybe on video.

Senior year

- Plan ahead — set reasonable goals for yourself.
- Attend a career day.
- Arrange informal interviews.
- Update letters of recommendation.
- Pass your résumé and cover letters around for critiques from professors, advisers and former bosses.
- Research the geographic areas where you're considering moving.
- Send out résumés.

Source: Mastering (& succeeding with) The Job Hunt

FOR DAILY THE BREEZE JAMES MALDONADO