

## 4 TIPS FOR COLLEGE STUDENTS TO FIND JOBS DURING THE HOLIDAYS



For college students, the winter holidays are great: turkey, presents, snowmen and no school. But if you're serious about getting a job this summer, you're going to need to use this holiday season to get a jump-start on your job search.

Here are four tips to help you begin as you head into this year's holidays:

### 1. Network Like Crazy

Various job-search experts estimate that more than 60% of jobs are found via networking, while fewer than 2% are found on the Internet. That means you should be spending 30 times more effort on networking than searching for jobs online. Yet college students often avoid networking at all costs, perhaps because they're shy or lack confidence.

Networking isn't about asking for a job, wasting somebody's time, or being a nuisance -- rather, it's learning about careers, letting people know that you're in the job market, and making great connections.

Fortunately, the holidays offer a perfect, low-stress way to get into the networking groove.

When you're at home, start talking with as many people as you can about what you're thinking about doing this summer. A great place to start is with your friends' parents, your parents' friends, former teachers, alumni and even relatives. It can be as basic as saying, "Hey, I'm thinking about getting into (INSERT CAREER HERE) when I graduate. Do you know of anyone I can talk with to get some more information about the field?"

If they give you the names of some industry folks to talk with, then simply contact them to see if you can have 15 minutes of their time to learn about what they do. Business activities typically slow down during the holidays, so chances are good that many professionals will have plenty of time to pencil you in. Since you'll be away from school, your schedule should be pretty flexible.

If you're worried about bothering people, think about it this way: If a high-school student you knew through a friend asked if she could spend 15 minutes talking with you about how you ended up at your college, wouldn't you be more than happy to do it? Importantly, if you liked them, you'd probably give them some tips on the best way to apply and get in.

That's networking.

### 2. Be Professional

Since you'll be talking to people in the "real world," it's time to make sure you can play the part of a professional.

Recruiters don't want to send an e-mail to [kittycatmeow@yahoo.com](mailto:kittycatmeow@yahoo.com), or [bigman23@hotmail.com](mailto:bigman23@hotmail.com). Beware of your voice-mail message as well. It's time to erase, "*Jason, Stinky and the D-ster are chillin' at the present, so leave those pretty 7 numbers and we'll catch you on the flip side.*"

You may also want to think about removing the tongue stud and learn how to cover the neck tattoo. It's not that you can't keep your body art; they just run the risk of turning some people off. Finally, pick up a nice business suit for interviews during a holiday sale.

### 3. Do Your Job-Search Homework

The school year is hectic with classes, homework, extracurricular activities and even campus jobs. Now is the time to take advantage of your free time and dive into the job hunt.

If you know what profession or industry you'd like to work in, the first thing to do is to start reading trade magazines. Every industry has publications specifically targeted to professionals in that field. Usually they have online versions, too. In addition to learning more about the industry itself, you typically can also find job openings.

Then, start researching companies in the field of your interest. Find out about the jobs they offer, the state of their business, and how they hire. Often companies start taking applications for full-time or summer-internship positions in the winter.

### 4. Make Your Resume Great

For better or worse, this one piece of paper determines more than anything else your ability to get the job you want. Use the holidays to spend time making it shine.

The single biggest change you can make to your resume is to focus on accomplishments instead of job descriptions. Recruiters will tell you that a majority of resumes don't sell a student hard enough because they simply list the activities that *anyone* holding that position has ever done.

If what is written on your resume can be written by the person who held the job or position before you, after you, or next to you, you haven't done yourself justice.

Here's an example:

**Great and Better**, Account Management Intern, New York, N.Y., Summer 2014

- Assisted account executive with new product launch
- Prepared competitive analysis
- Database entry
- Attended brainstorming meetings and agency seminars

The problem with this entry is that this simply describes what *any* intern, at *any* advertising agency has *ever* done. And the recruiter reading your resume already knows what an intern does.

Let's look at a better way to write it:

**Great and Better**, Account Management Intern, New York, N.Y., Summer 2014

- Assisted account executive with new product launch exceeding in-market goals by 15%
- Prepared 12-agency competitive analysis presented to client's upper management
- Entered more than 500 numbers into new business database helping generate seven potential new clients
- Selected as one of two interns from a pool of 150

Sounds a lot better, doesn't it?

Come January, you should be sending your resume to dozens of potential employers. If it's not as good as it can be, you're wasting your time. And the sad truth is that most resumes can be much better.

It's not easy to turn your "job-description" resume into an "accomplishment" resume, but if you work hard, the benefits will be more than worth it.

You can enjoy the pumpkin pie and holiday parades this holiday season, but make sure you carve out a bit of time for your job search.

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