



FOSTER MBA CAREER MANAGEMENT

Career Guide

2014 - 2015

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Foster
School of Business
UNIVERSITY of WASHINGTON

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Welcome to MBA Career Management!

Great graduates building great companies.

Foster MBA Career Management (MBACM) offers a razor edge focus on your career development. We welcome close collaboration and connectedness in your professional advancement. With our Center, you will develop skills using an active approach that includes promoting your personal brand, specialized coaching, workshops, speaker panels, career fairs, and road treks out-of-state for corporate visits. We want to provide students with a competitive edge that will help them land great jobs.

Foster students are competent, confident, and connected.

We are ranked #1 in the top 25 MBA Programs in the US for employment three months following graduation. Our goal is to ensure you have a competitive advantage in the marketplace and are prepared to get an offer from one of many companies seeking MBA graduates. We help you plan, and skillfully execute, career strategies that will optimize your success. With a focus on strengthening competencies, demonstrating confidence, building connections, we believe that you will achieve your career goals. It takes initiative to get a great position, but Foster MBAs are known for their initiative and getting things done well.



Our staff has corporate experience in diverse industries. We persistently explore domestic and global markets for opportunities by forging strong relationships with exceptional companies. We actively work with our network of alumni, employers, faculty and industry leaders to understand hiring trends and prepare you for recruiting on and off-campus.

We encourage you to embark on this partnership early in your student experience and stay engaged even after you graduate. Foster MBA Career Management is ready to provide you with the expertise, support and counsel needed to achieve your lifelong career goals. Feel free to stop by Dempsey 212L to make an advisor appointment. We look forward to getting to know you.

Wishing you success,

Naomi K. Sanchez, EdD, CMC
Assistant Dean
MBA Career Management
Michael G. Foster School of Business
University of Washington



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Foster MBA Career Management Consultants have a broad range of experience in areas such as entrepreneurship, marketing, finance, consulting, technology, health care, investment banking, nonprofit, and operations. Meet with them for individualized mentoring and guidance on career goals. Our functional Career Consultants, who are seasoned industry professionals, provide coaching to target your job search strategy for specific positions or companies.

In addition to expert advising, we offer courses, skill-building workshops, interview practice and networking activities to help you prepare for a lifetime of business career management.

ProDev

Created to teach you tools for lifelong career management, ProDev begins with self-assessment and clarification of career goals and continues with job search strategies and tactics, such as resume writing, interview preparation, self introduction and networking.

Peer Advisors

Offering an opportunity for 1st Year students to receive guidance from 2nd Year fellow MBAs. Peer Advisors are trained to provide 1st year students with mock interview practice and resume/cover letter reviews. Additionally they provide valuable perspective on the MBA program, internships, and work experience in specific functional areas, companies and industries.

Workshops and Seminars

Designed to give you an advantage in the marketplace, workshops and seminars are presented by topic experts and corporate partners to prepare you for success in your job search.



Employer Relations

Working closely with our network of alumni, employers and faculty, our employer relations team explores domestic and global markets for hiring trends and employment opportunities. We're continually cultivating our partnerships with exceptional companies – and building a reputation for interns and graduates who are ready for business, with tools and talent to create value for their organizations.

On-Campus Recruiting

Major corporations and organizations in growth recognize the talent at Foster and come to campus to recruit Foster MBAs throughout the year. Companies advertise full-time and internship positions through Foster MBA Jobs, collect and select candidates, and arrive on-campus to interview prospective team members. Students can view position and apply for opportunities through Foster MBA Jobs.

Meet-The-Firms

Companies host on-campus presentations to showcase their corporate objectives and career opportunities to Foster MBAs. Designed to enhance visibility, company representatives provide an overview of their organization, industry, career paths, and corporate culture; as well as preview Foster talent in advance of their on-campus recruiting schedules. Check Foster MBA Jobs for upcoming information sessions and to RSVP.

Mentor Program

Connecting MBA students with leaders in the business community. Under the guidance of top executives, students have the opportunity to learn about the way business is practiced today, explore career paths, obtain an inside view of industries, learn how executives meet difficult challenges, and gain insight into corporate strategy.

Networking Road Shows and Career Forums

MBACM coordinates several events throughout the year to provide networking opportunities for you. This includes group Road Shows & Treks to targeted regional markets and industry categories, as well as club-sponsored activities. Other networking opportunities include Career Forums, where employers meet Foster MBAs in a career fair format.

Foster MBA Jobs: Your Access to Job Opportunities

Foster MBA Jobs allows students to access internships, full-time positions, interview schedules, employer presentations and events.

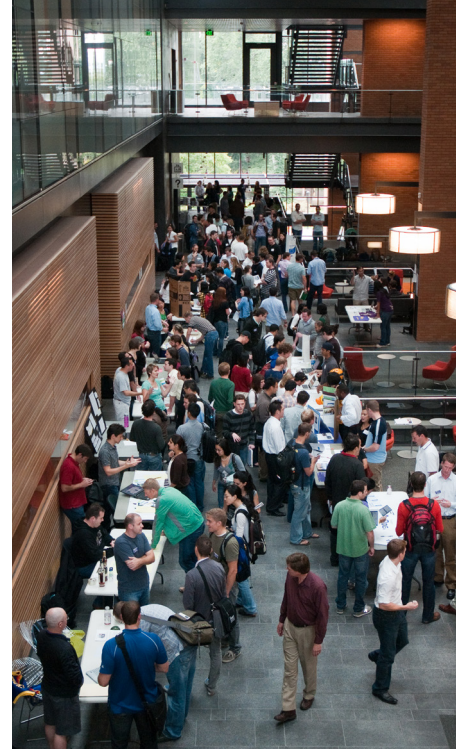
Job Postings

You can apply for opportunities by submitting your resume and other requested documents through Foster MBA Jobs. The process is simple, but is driven by timelines determined by the company's scheduled interview date or the requested application deadline.

When applying, read the application instructions completely and include all necessary documents.

On-Campus Interviews

The scheduling of interviews takes place through Foster MBA Jobs. If you are selected to interview on campus, you will receive notification through the Foster MBA Jobs system to go online and schedule an interview time. This can be done from a link on your homepage or from the Foster MBA Jobs interview tab. You can go to the "Interviews" section from your login page, view your interview requests and sign up for a time. Interviews take place in the MBACM interview suites in Dempsey Hall.



Foster MBA Jobs is an essential tool for students because it allows them to view a wide variety of jobs from employers that are interested in hiring Foster MBA students.

Things To Know About On-Campus Interviews

Information sessions and other company events/presentations are considered part of the interview process. You should attend them.

If you have interviews with more than one company on the same day, we recommend leaving at least one hour between interviews. You never know when an interviewer may be running behind schedule or your interview could run longer.

Interview details, can be viewed in Foster MBA Jobs under the "Interviews" section on your homepage.

Many companies require students to complete online applications on the company website in addition to applying via Foster MBA Jobs. Read and follow the application instructions completely to ensure you will be fully considered for the opportunities posted. A missed step may result in not being considered for the position.

- Website: <https://business-washington-csm.symplicity.com/students/>
- Username: your UW email address
- Password: After you receive your initial password, you may update it from within the system. Click on Forgot Password to generate a new one at any time.
- Note: Apply for jobs as soon as possible. Closing dates are subject to change.

Update Your Profile

- Select the **Profile** tab on the navigation bar
- Select the desired view: Personal Info, Academic Info, Privacy, Networking, Password/Preferences or Activity Summary
- Update your profile information
- Click **Save/Submit**

Manage Documents

- Convert documents to a PDF before uploading and check to make sure it is accurate. Do not rely on Foster Jobs to convert your documents
- Select **Add New** under the **Documents** tab on the navigation bar
- Title the document and choose the document type
- Click **Browse** to select your document, choose the correct document and click Open
- Click **Submit**

Search and Apply for Jobs & Internships

- Select **CSM Jobs** under the **Jobs** tab on the navigation bar
- Look over all the jobs with the short summary to find ones of interest
- Click the **Apply** button to read the completing posting and to learn how to apply. Some jobs will require you to apply externally while others will require you to apply via Foster Jobs using documents you've uploaded. Some require both. Follow all application instructions
- Apply as soon as possible. Applications for many jobs are reviewed as they come in, so waiting until the deadline may remove you from consideration

Researching Archived Jobs

- Select **CSM Jobs** under the **Jobs** tab on the navigation bar
- Select **Job Leads** to view any jobs previously posted on Foster Jobs
- Use the Professional Network and LinkedIn to find alumni who work at a specific company for informational interviews

Apply for a Job via On-Campus Recruiting (OCR)

- Under the **Shortcuts** section, select **Campus Interviews I Qualify For**
- Review position details by clicking **Apply**
- Submit a resume by highlighting the proper resume/required documents from the drop down menu(s)
- Click **Submit** from the Application Status on the right

Sign Up for an OCR Interview

- If selected to interview on campus, you can sign up for an interview time once the sign up period begins. You will be notified via email if you have been selected to interview
- Select **Interview Requests** from within the **Interviews** tab on the top nav bar
- The status of your active applications is displayed in the Options column
- Once you are invited to interview, click on **Schedule Interview** under the Options tab
- On the Schedule Interview page, find the date you would like to sign up for and select the time slot you desire
- Click **Submit** and your slot will be reserved
- Click on Scheduled Interviews to Review and/or Reschedule

Set Up a Search Agent

- Select **CSM Jobs** under **Jobs** from top navigation bar and then click on the **Advanced Search** tab
- Check the **Save As** box under the Search Agents field and give your search a name
- Narrow your search by selecting the search criteria below
- Click **Submit**
- Click on **Search Agents** in the top navigation bar
- Choose whether to receive email notifications of job matches by clicking **Schedule**
- Click **Submit** and then click **Run**
- Your Search Agent will begin the next day

Alumni Network

- View Alumni Network participants by clicking on **Alumni Network** in the top navigation bar
- View professional profile by clicking on a participant's name
- Use **Detailed Search** tab to search the professional network (*"keywords" box only pulls from limited fields*)

Other Helpful Sections

- **Shortcuts:** On the home page you will find a shortcuts section which will bring you directly to specific key pages like "Jobs I Qualify for"
- **Events:** Click on the events tab to view MBACM events and **RSVP**
- **Announcements:** Check daily for important announcements from MBACM

Questions?

- Click on the Play icon located at the top right of every page to view a **Video Tutorial**
- If you need more assistance, contact MBA Career Management at mbacm@uw.edu or 206-685-2410

You've found an posting for a position at XYZ Inc. With your skills and qualifications, you fit the bill perfectly. But XYZ requires an online application — and that means (you think) a cookie-cutter application that distills your skills so that it appears you're one of a million applicants, not one in a million. And then — when you click "send" — you fear your application swirls away into the black hole of electronic waste. Should you or shouldn't you apply to an online application?

Should you or shouldn't you use an online application? And if you do submit your resume online, how can you ensure it gets the attention it deserves?

If You Want the Job... Follow the Employer's Process

Employers say online applications won't go away. An increasing number of employers want candidates to find job openings on company websites or Internet job boards; they require online applications; they prefer to communicate with potential hires via email.

Hiring with the aid of technology is a time- and money-saving proposition for businesses. It has maximized efficiency in the candidate selection process.

Employers say they can advertise to a wider, more diverse candidate pool (which means you've got more competition than ever before), find matches for hard-to-fill positions, easily share resumes of qualified candidates with hiring managers, streamline the hiring process, and tighten the timeline between the need for a new employee and the date the employee starts on the job.

Employers say using the company's own online application system is the fastest way to get your resume into the right hands. Your focus should be on making your application unique; to avoid its being swallowed up in the technology abyss. Typically, applications submitted online

go directly into the employer's applicant database. Paper resumes are scanned or keyed into the database (where a scanner or data processor may add errors to your resume).

A hiring manager who needs to fill a position enters keywords to search the database and find the applications of the people who are the best fit for the job. Those results become the candidate pool.

Making a Big Splash in the Candidate Pool

What does it take to have your bits and bytes bob to the surface in a candidate search?

A recent survey by the National Association of Colleges and Employers (JobWeb's/Job Choices' publisher) asked employers for their advice on how to make an electronic application outstanding. Here's what they recommend:

- » Follow directions. Be careful to enter the correct data in the correct field.
- » Ask for advice on completing the application from a company recruiter or an alumnus who may work at the company.
- » Tailor your application information to the position. Don't copy and paste text from your generic resume.
- » Use keywords, buzz words and industry verbiage. Use the verbiage in the job ad as your model. Employers search on keywords when they're looking for people to fill specific positions.

- » Create a skills-inventory section, even if the application doesn't require it. You might put this in a comments section.
- » Include numbers and statistics where available. (Example: Counted five cash drawers daily; responsible for more than \$10,000 per eight-hour shift.)
- » Complete all fields – even those that aren't required.
- » If the company offers an optional assessment test online, take it. (One employer recently admitted that applicants who don't take the optional assessment test are automatically screened out.)
- » Make sure your resume can hold its own in a very simple format. Fancy bullets, text, italics and bold do not convert well in an electronic application.
- » Spell and grammar check your application before submitting it. Have an error-free application because this application serves as the employer's first impression of you.
- » Use the comment section to demonstrate that you've done research on the company and the industry.
- » Use quotes from letters of recommendation in your cover letter or resume.
- » Follow up your electronic application with a personal email to the recruiter. A follow-up phone call is acceptable if the ad does not say, "No phone calls."

A resume is a marketing tool for job seekers. More than a chronicle of work history and educational background, an effectively written resume will leave an impression of how your acquired experience and skills connects to their job opening and/or company.

STAR Method

When writing your resume, apply the STAR method for developing strong statements that describe your past and present experiences. Avoid listing only job duties. Instead, describe accomplishments and outcomes. Recruiters and hiring managers prefer to read success stories, not a list of tasks.

Situation – The situation or setting; the background for context

Task – Tasks or tactics used to approach or assess the challenge

Action – Activities or actions used to effect the change

Result – The outcome, a sense of scale, the quantifiable benefit

For example

A **weak** resume statement:

“A successful builder of high-performance teams that can address challenging client situations”

You have just “bragged” on yourself without context, an example or any sense of scale or success. Convert it into a STAR statement...

A **strong** (STAR) resume statement:

“Assigned as a new project leader to a client who was dissatisfied with the firm’s services, rebuilt the project team and rewrote the application to the customer’s satisfaction, resulting in an 3 year contract extension.”

Broken down into STAR components:

Situation: assigned to a dissatisfied customer

Task: to solve a technical issue (program) and a client issue

Action: pulled together a good team to solve the technical issue

Result: achieved customer satisfaction and got a contract extension

Keywords for Resumes

Use action words to describe your experience and accomplishments and to effectively demonstrate your level of responsibility. Here are some action words to use:

- » achieved
- » acquired
- » adapted
- » addressed
- » administered
- » analyzed
- » assembled
- » assisted
- » audited
- » budgeted
- » calculated
- » centralized
- » changed
- » collaborated
- » composed
- » condensed
- » conducted
- » constructed
- » converted
- » coordinated
- » created
- » cultivated
- » demonstrated
- » designed
- » developed
- » devised
- » discovered
- » doubled
- » drafted
- » edited
- » eliminated
- » ensured
- » established
- » evaluated
- » expanded
- » explained
- » forecasted
- » formed
- » founded
- » generated
- » guided
- » hired
- » identified
- » implemented
- » improved
- » informed
- » interpreted
- » interviewed
- » launched
- » led
- » maintained
- » managed
- » marketed
- » minimized
- » motivated
- » negotiated
- » obtained
- » operated
- » organized
- » originated
- » oversaw
- » performed
- » planned
- » prevented
- » produced
- » programmed
- » provided
- » publicized
- » published
- » reorganized
- » reported
- » researched
- » selected
- » simplified
- » supervised
- » trained

Use the Foster MBA resume template to easily develop your resume in a professional format. Below are key tips to help you develop your resume.

Contact Information

- » Formal name, centered at the top of the resume in bold letters and large font size
- » Email address (professional, preferably your UW account)
- » Use current mailing address
- » Phone number (with a professional voicemail greeting)

Education

- » Start with "Michael G. Foster School of Business" and anticipated graduation date (month and year).
- » Formal degree title on the next line – Bachelor of Science in Business Administration, not BSBA; explain international degrees that may be unfamiliar in the U.S.
- » Major/minors
- » GPA or GMAT, if noteworthy
- » Honors
- » Awards
- » Study abroad (include a general description of the program and any specific focus of study)

Experience

- » Begin with the company name and job title, followed by bullet point descriptions of your accomplishments and results.
- » Include as much professional work experience as possible, highlighting transferable skills related to the job you

are seeking. For example, customer service experience obtained from food service or retail is valuable training for the business world. Identify how the skills you acquired in previous roles (customer service, peer training, time management) can be transferred to your next career move.

- » Include part-time and full-time work.
- » Unpaid volunteer positions and project work can be listed if they resulted in substantive business skill development.

Activities

- » Include athletics, professional societies, student organizations
- » Highlight all leadership positions/roles.

Skills

- » Computer skills
- » Language skills
- » Specify permanent work authorization in the United States, if applicable.

Resume Style Guide

- » Abbreviate states (WA in place of Washington) except in your bullet points (e.g., "...sales responsibility for Illinois," not IL).
- » Spell out names of countries
- » Capitalize languages (Spanish, French)

Frequently Asked Questions

What if the resume won't fit on one page?

- » Minimize top and bottom margins to 0.5." Continue to use a single blank line between sections.
- » Remove phrases listed under your experiences that do not relate to the types of jobs you will be seeking.
- » Remove activities or honors that are older than four years or do not represent applicable skills or interests.

Where do I show my Applied Strategies Project on my resume?

- » List your projects as a section under either Experience or Education.
- » Evaluate your resume and the other experiences and activities you've had, as well as the position or industry to which you are applying, to determine the most appropriate placement.

Your resume should be:

- » One page
- » Concise, accurate and professional
- » Action and results oriented – see keywords (page 7)
- » Customized to the specific position you're seeking
- » Proofed carefully for grammar, spelling and conformance

Your resume should NOT:

- » Include a References section
- » Include personal information (e.g., age, height, weight, race, marital status).
- » Be written with personal pronouns (e.g. "I", "me", "we")

Amy Candidate

123 Husky Avenue, Seattle, WA 98101 | (206) 555-3000
 acandidate@uw.edu | www.linkedin.com/in/acandidate

EDUCATION

THE MICHAEL G. FOSTER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON, Seattle, WA June 2013

Candidate for Master of Business Administration, Marketing

- VP of Technology and Communications, Marketing Club; VP of Alumni Affairs, Women in Business Club
- Ernst Owens Fellowship recipient

BARTON COLLEGE, Atlanta, GA May 2007

Bachelor of Arts in English, Cum Laude

EXPERIENCE

MODERN PET FOOD COMPANY, Chicago, IL Summer 2012

Brand Management Intern.

- Developed new product marketing strategy for Turina5, a market leader in premium, nutrition-focused wet dog food. Conducted in-depth analysis of consumer research, AC Nielsen data, and competitive market. Identified key insights into target consumer segment that will be used in ongoing product planning.
- Partnered extensively with innovation, research, manufacturing, sales, finance, technical and supply chain teams to develop packaging, positioning, commercialization and product pricing. Projected annual incremental revenue of \$4M per year (5% brand growth)
- Led exploration of a new logo and visual identity for Turina5 that would incorporate renovated brand architecture. Leveraged insights from consumer research and brand portfolio performance to brief creative agency. Conducted primary qualitative review of proposed logos and packaging design, and delivered recommendations to brand team.

MICROSOFT, Redmond, WA Winter 2012

MBA Consultant – Foster School of Business Applied Strategy Project

- Created a business plan for the Flagfront division of Microsoft focusing on market opportunity, industry trend, and competitor analyses, as well as segmentation targeting and creation of a positioning statement.
- Developed and presented key recommendations to the Director of Server Infrastructure, influencing a strategy shift to develop Cloud Computing and Security as a Service functions, as well as pursue health care and public sector spaces.
- Performed analysis on the Microsoft Partner Ecosystem, providing recommendations on pricing and incentive structure which Microsoft subsequently put in place.

EMMER PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANTS, San Francisco, CA 2007 - 2011

Senior Account Executive & Marketing Communications Manager (2009-2011)

- Developed and implemented integrated marketing strategy for branded and commodity food clients, which included actively coaching a team of seven. Managed client partnerships; performed consumer research; executed public relations initiatives; web site and social media analytics; print and interactive advertising campaigns.
- Project lead for largest commodity food client. Played key role in tripling the account business from \$1.1M to \$3.5M in three years; managed accounting and forecasting for client budget equaling over \$3M annually
- Coordinated logistics and press outreach for Verve product launch, which yielded 251 million media impressions and contributed to \$3M in shampoo sales during its first year in stores; the most successful Abella hair care product launch to date
- Secured branded press coverage supporting up to 20 hair care product launches annually; leveraged 18 professional hair stylists to facilitate print and broadcast interviews in top 25 U.S. and Canadian markets.
- Collaborated with team of 10 to execute product promotions at high-profile events such as New York Fashion Week
- Received 11 national and local business communication industry awards for best-in-class marketing programs

Account Associate (2007-2009)

- Created first-ever consumer insight-driven marketing plans for teen and urban branded content and services distributed to telecommunications clients Sprint, AT&T, Verizon and T-Mobile; resulted in client's improved product portfolio and brand alignment
- Analyzed daily sales data to recommend improved promotional strategies to senior management; improved total service performance by 50% quarter over quarter

SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

- Fluent Spanish; conversational Mandarin Chinese
- Volunteer – Boys & Girls Club, Special Olympics, and Junior Achievement
- Distance running (Boston Marathon qualifier); SCUBA diving (PADI certified Rescue Diver)

When you are searching for a job, demonstrating strong communication skills is essential, yet most people only understand this concept superficially. To be a good communicator, you should:

Know your audience

Whether you are writing a letter, interviewing or presenting, the number one rule of business communication is to know the audience – the people who will be receiving your communication. Research the company. In addition to reading the company’s website, find out about the culture and learn about their specific business problems. They are hiring people who can solve business problems. What do you have to offer them? Also, do you fit with their culture?

Go beyond basic research and use a little psychology. That recruiter you’re talking with has been flying around the country talking with one person after another, day after day. Can you put yourself in that person’s shoes? He or she wants to talk with an interesting and confident person who’s ideal to work with and who stands out from the crowd. You’ve made his or her day if you turn out to be the right person to bring in for a second interview.

In the cover letter and interview, briefly convey your knowledge of the company and communicate information that demonstrates your fit with the company and the advertised position.

Know yourself

You can’t effectively communicate what you have to offer an organization if you don’t know your own talents, strengths and weaknesses. Know what makes you unique to effectively differentiate and sell yourself. In the cover letter and the interview, prove with examples and results that you have skills to help business professionals solve their business problems.

Prepare

Good presenters and writers prepare in advance. They rehearse presentations and tweak their writing until they feel their message is clear and compelling. Even if you are a charmer, no one will be impressed if you demonstrate little preparation for the interview. For interviews, predict the questions you could be asked, prepare for them and practice answering them. In letters, customize your message for that particular audience.

Be concise and organized

You’ve heard that time is money. That’s why business people won’t have patience for a disorganized and wordy paragraph or a rambling answer during an interview. Avoid wordiness. Consider whether or not headings, subheadings and bullets in your written correspondence will help the busy reader easily navigate your message. In general, make the first sentence of your paragraphs the main point and then support that point.

Be accurate and truthful

If someone discovers you’ve lied, you’ll lose your credibility. Proofread, or you’ll be perceived as someone who doesn’t pay attention to details.

Know when to listen and when to talk

Good communicators have different personalities. Some are outgoing and some are thoughtful listeners. The best communicators can listen to the other person and keep a conversation going. One strategy for keeping a conversation flowing is to demonstrate interest by asking good open-ended questions. Really listen, and you’ll learn a lot about the job and the company.

Frequently Asked Questions

To whom should I address my cover letter?

» Address your letter to a specific individual within the organization who has the responsibility for the hiring decision. Look for the contact name on the job description or on the Foster MBA Jobs posting.

If you do not have a contact name, it is acceptable to address the letter to “COMPANY NAME Recruiter” or “COMPANY NAME Hiring Manager”

How long should my cover letter be?

» Similar to a resume, cover letters should be no longer than one page in length.

When should I send my cover letter?

» Always send a cover letter with your resume when applying to an internship or job opening, even if not specifically requested by the employer. It’s another opportunity to market your experiences and fit for the position and a means to differentiate yourself from other candidates.

I’m submitting an application via email, how should I attach my cover letter and resume?

» If not specified by the employer, use the body of your cover letter as the body of your email and attach your resume to the email.

When you are using email for business correspondence, keep the following tips in mind:

Include an appropriate salutation.

Use titles for prospective employers and others whom you don't know well. Reserve informal salutations, such as "Hi" for people you know well.

Use **bullets** for information that can be presented in list form.

Use **correct spelling, grammar and punctuation**.

Keep your email **concise**.

Consider sending lengthy messages as an **attachment** – write a brief executive summary email to describe the attachment.

Avoid sending **negative or confidential information** by email.

Use an appropriate closing.

Informal closings, such as "later," should be reserved for nonprofessional correspondence and not used with hiring managers or business contacts.

Include **contact information in your signature**. This is another way for recipients to identify who you are and how you can be reached.

LinkedIn email is a good way to connect professionally with alumni and other contacts. Here are some tips for effectively using the LinkedIn email feature:

1. Keep your LinkedIn email short (1 paragraph or less). Tell:
 - » Who you are – I am a Foster MBA student.
 - » What you want to do/why you're contacting them
 - » Ask if they would be willing to set up a phone call to talk.
 - » Tell them you appreciate the help.
2. The email should be about asking for advice. Ideally, a meeting in person (if possible) is the next logical step (coffee, lunch, etc.). If not possible, arrange for a phone call when convenient for your contact.



A cover letter is one of the most important tools in your job search. Don't make the mistake of investing significant time developing your resume but preparing your cover letter in haste. Cover letters allow you to tell a story beyond your resume.

Your cover letter.

- » Serves as a mini-interview on paper to expound upon concepts highlighted in your resume and further market your strong fit for the position.
- » Represents an initial opportunity to communicate with a potential employer that allows you to make a favorable first impression, which can lead to a job interview.
- » Allows you to generate additional interest in your application by highlighting your suitability and making it easy for the reader to see how well matched your experiences and interests are for the role.
- » Allows you to showcase skills and accomplishments not included on your resume.
- » Provides evidence of your strong communication skills.

Step 1: Analyze the position and the company.

- » Underline key words or phrases in the job description that offer clues as to what the employer wants or requires.
- » Identify why you are interested in the position.
- » Identify the recruiter or hiring manager for the position.
- » Identify any contacts you have within the organization.

Step 2: Compare your credentials with the position.

- » List at least three key accomplishments or experiences relevant to the position.

- » Identify transferable skills that make you an ideal candidate, such as:
 - Communication skills
 - Teamwork and interpersonal skills
 - Leadership skills
 - Work ethic traits (self-motivation, initiative, ambition, reliability, drive, stamina)
 - Logic, intelligence, proficiency in study

Step 3: Write the letter.

- » Use cover letter examples as guidelines – do not duplicate exactly.
- » Use correct business format with the date and addresses at the top and a signature at the bottom.
- » The letter should answer the following questions:
 - Why are you interested in the position?
 - How are you qualified for the position?
 - Why should you be hired over other candidates?
- » Customize your cover letter. This is your opportunity to show you've done your research on the company. Keep in mind that recruiters find generic cover letters very discouraging.
- » Be concise. Limit your cover letter to one page.
- » Be honest. Don't exaggerate your accomplishments, skills or experiences.

Step 4: Proofread and review.

- » Complete the self-review using the cover letter guide.
- » Have a career advisor and a friend review your letter. One misspelled word can dramatically affect your candidacy.

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. Writing a professional and compelling cover letter helps create a memorable first impression.

An extraordinary cover letter that differentiates you from the ordinary ones might open the door to the interview.

February 4, 2011

John Smith, MBA Recruiter
Starbucks Coffee Company
2401 Utah Avenue South
Seattle, WA 98134

Dear Mr. Smith,

Opening paragraph: State why you are writing; how you learned of the organization or position, and basic information about yourself.

2nd paragraph: Tell why you are interested in the employer or type of work the employer does (Simply stating that you are interested does not tell why, and can sound like a form letter). Demonstrate that you know enough about the employer or position to relate your background to the employer or position. Mention specific qualifications which make you a good fit for the employer's needs. This is an opportunity to explain in more detail relevant items in your resume. Refer to the fact that your resume is enclosed. Mention other enclosures if such are required to apply for a position.

3rd paragraph: Indicate that you would like the opportunity to interview for a position or to talk with the employer to learn more about their opportunities or hiring plans. State what you will do to follow up, such as telephone the employer within two weeks. If you will be in the employer's location and could offer to schedule a visit, indicate when. State that you would be glad to provide the employer with any additional information needed. Thank the employer for her/his consideration.

Sincerely,

Karen Candidate
MBA Candidate, Class of 2012
Foster School of Business, University of Washington
candidatek@uw.edu | 206.555.1234



Sometimes one of the hardest things to do is strike up a conversation with the person beside you in the elevator, a cashier at your favorite coffee shop or the passenger next to you on the airplane. You think to yourself: will they want to talk to me? Will they respond to my questions? Where do I even begin? Or, what happens when someone says “Tell me about yourself.” This is networking, which is relationship building and making new friends.

The Elevator Pitch Self Introduction

Creating a 20-second introduction, (also known as an Elevator Pitch) about yourself can prove useful when meeting employers at recruiting events, such as job fairs and information sessions.

To get started, take inventory of your accomplishments and identify the common themes among them. Think about what you have been recognized for – those times when you’ve achieved your best and made meaningful contributions.

Be familiar with what makes someone successful in the job you want and come up with examples of work you’ve done in those areas. Be sure to provide information regarding what makes you unique compared to everyone else who does what you do.

What should your Elevator pitch include?

- » Name
- » Education (school and major)
- » Experience
- » Interests, talents, skills
- » Aspirations

An example of an effective pitch would be the following:

“Hi, my name is Susan Smith and I am currently a MBA at Foster Business School studying marketing and strategy. I have created successful marketing campaigns through an experience with General Mills promotions and look forward to continuing my studies and gaining experience in the consumer packaged goods field.”

Keep in mind also that your pitch will change along the way. Always think about your pitch and adjust it accordingly.

Tips on Networking

Be prepared. Be sure to have your Elevator pitch well rehearsed and ready to deliver. You never know where you’ll meet your next contact. Be sure also to build your contact list, which can include, but is not limited to, college and MBA classmates, professors, names in the rosters of organizations you belong to and people from your family telephone directory. It is also helpful to create an agenda before all meetings. This helps you stay focused while meeting with a new contact.

Be creative. Networking is all about marketing yourself. Be sure to include a specific interest in your Elevator pitch, or something that is so unique it will be hard to forget. It is those kinds of things that stick with people and make them remember you. Send a thank-you note with your initials or something that will stick out to the receiver so that you are not forgotten.

Be resourceful. When looking to network or to reach out to those in a field you wish to enter, be sure to do as much homework and research as you can. Be sure to use all of the resources Foster and MBACM has to offer. LinkedIn is an excellent place to do research on past Foster graduates and their current work experience and background. Networking is a way to get your foot in the door before a position is available.

Be professional. When relationship building, use “please” and “thank you” and be sure to pay close attention to the person to whom you are speaking. Use their name often, give a firm handshake and be sure to have good posture. Make sure your dress is proper at all times and remember, you never know who you might meet or run into when you least expect it. Also, be sure to send a thank-you note within 24 hours of your meeting.

Informational interviews help you decide if a particular career is right for you, and, if it is, how you can prepare yourself to work in that field. If you've already made a tentative career choice, informational interviews can help you learn how to get a job in that field and find out about the responsibilities, rewards, problems and issues inherent in a specific career — possibly before making a long-term commitment of time or money to prepare for it. When you're conducting informational interviews, be clear about your motives. Scheduling an interview for information when you really want a job interview can sabotage the contact's trust in you.

Contact alumni; they are a great resource for expertise. Please be thoughtful and selective, and contact alumni for advice and insight only.

Identify people who are active and knowledgeable in the career field you are researching. Ask people you know if they have contacts in your field of interest who might be willing to talk to you and if you can use their name as a reference.

Research the field, the person you will be interviewing and the organization for which the person works. Prepare relevant questions about their industry and functional areas. Your questions should be those that are best answered by a person in the field or company. An informational interview is one of the few interviews in which you are in control of the questions asked. Request the interview.

Conduct the interview. Be conversational. Use your list of questions as an aid to help you keep the meeting focused.

Follow up. At the end of the interview, ask for other contacts who might give you different perspectives. Thank the person, then follow up with a thank-you note within 24 hours of your meeting. Don't forget to keep records of your discussions.

Informational Interview Request

Make your request clear and concise — state who you are, why you are making contact and what you are seeking. Asking for information, insight and advice are good starting points for the conversation.

Example

My name is Melissa Jones and I am a MBA student at Foster School of Business majoring in finance. I have been interested in investments since I started managing my own portfolio in high school. I continue my interest as a Consumer Sector Analyst for the University of Washington Student Investment Fund (UWSIF). I would love to learn more about your experience as an Equity Research Analyst at JP Morgan and any insight and advice you can share with someone interested in entering that field. I would welcome the opportunity to meet and talk to you.

Would you have 15 minutes one day next week for a brief visit to your office or a phone call? I will follow up in the next few days to schedule an appointment. You can reach me at (555) 555-5555 or jones@uw.edu. Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

*Best regards,
Melissa Jones*

Tips on listening:

- » One of the greatest compliments you can give another person is to let him or her know that you are listening to everything said.
- » More people have literally talked themselves out of a job or a sale by speaking instead of sitting back and actively listening. It takes real concentration to listen.
- » Good salespeople have learned to listen first, then tailor their sales presentation to their potential clients' needs as presented in the first few minutes of conversation. The same holds true for meeting new people. They'll know you are genuinely interested in them as a person if you can 'tailor' your comments to what they have just told you about themselves.
- » Listening is crucial because it will help you determine your next round of questions and stay engaged.

In today's highly competitive world, being a confident and effective networker sets you apart from the crowd. Most people dread this activity — they find it a chore and a challenge. However, networking is one of the most important skills you can utilize. In any job market, having relationships and using contacts is the most effective way to get a job or internship. It's important to practice and hone your networking skills.



Positive Self-Talk

When you walk into a room it's time to think:

- » "I'm a nice person who is going to be accepted into this room."
- » "I'm as good as anyone else here."
- » "Yes, I am a little nervous, but so are most other people."
- » "I'm going to be friendly, courteous and polite; that way people will like me quickly."
- » "I'm going to smile, give good eye contact, shake hands and aim to remember people's names. This will help me create a good first impression."
- » "It's a business event so everyone is here to meet new contacts — including me."
- » "When I pretend to act like a host, my confidence is going to build. For example, I'm going to talk to people who I see standing on their own and introduce them to others when it's time to move on."
- » "I'm going to spend more time being interested by asking questions rather than talking too much about myself."
- » "I'm going to look positively for potential opportunities and follow them up."
- » "If at the end of the day all else fails, I'm just going to have to fake it 'til I make it!"
- » "I'm going to have a good time!"

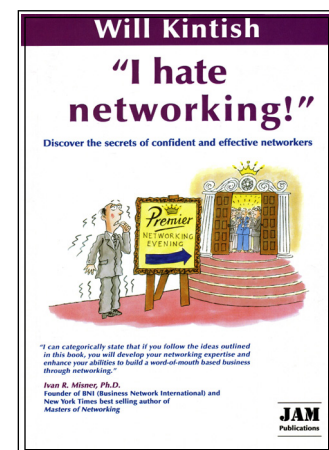
Seven Essential Skills and Traits of Effective Networkers

Traits:

1. Be friendly, personable, courteous, flexible and open.
2. Have good self-esteem; you're as good as everyone else in that room.
3. Be brave; you need to be when you walk into a room full of strangers.
4. Be generous; networking is about giving first and receiving second.
5. Be persistent and resilient. Why bother networking if you don't follow up?

Skills:

6. Ask the right questions in an open and interesting manner.
7. Listen actively.



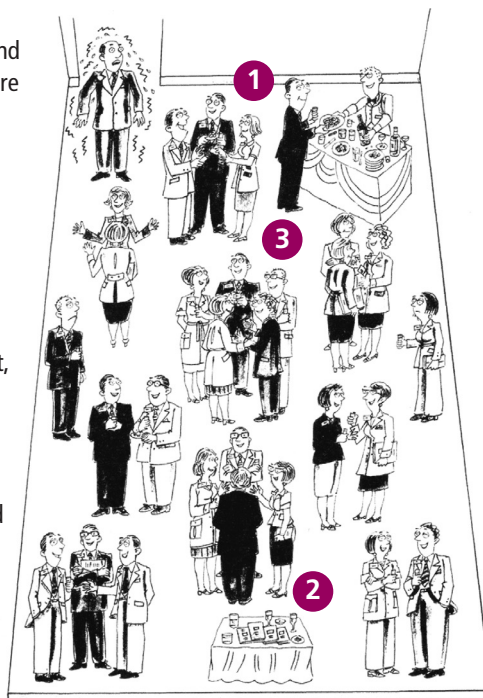
Will Kintish is the UK's leading authority in Business Networking Skills training. Kintish has presented to more than 80,000 people across Europe and has helped people become confident and effective networkers by offering practical business networking tips, techniques and training.

Working the Room

Surveying the room

» Individuals – they don't know anyone and don't know how to break the ice. They are praying for someone to talk to them!

1. Open couples and trios – feel free to go over and join them – they want to meet you like you want to meet them.
 2. Closed couples and trios – their body language is saying they're comfortable as they are for the moment, but come back later.
 3. Bigger groups – only enter when you know someone.
- » Rude people – don't give them a second thought, just move on.



Move on – with respect and courtesy

- » Don't just walk off.
- » Offer them an option.
- » Hunt in pairs as a last resort.
- » They want to move on as much as you do.

Introductions

- » Say nice things about each person to start their conversation.

In summary

- » Observe the groups before entering the room.
- » Every room has no more than 6 formats.
- » Most people are nervous.
- » Most people are polite and courteous.
- » Like everyone else, you have an important role to play.

Following Up After the Event

Business card etiquette

- » Ask for a card.
- » Comment on the card.
- » Ask to call and the best number to use.
- » Offer them an escape.
- » Write on the card.
- » Plan when to follow up.

Remember when to follow up

- » They are expecting your call.
- » They agreed to take the call.
- » Your reputation will be damaged if you don't call.
- » You're simply following up on the conversation at the event.

Plan for the call

- » Recap the original conversation.
- » Plan a voice mail message.
- » Do research on the company.
- » Set time aside to make the call.
- » Have diary available to arrange a meeting.
- » Involve others in your team.
- » Be prepared for someone else to answer the call.
- » Make the reason for the call clear.

Only 6 possible responses for the request to meet

1. Yes, let's get our diaries out.
 2. It's not me that deals with that, it's Mary.
 3. Let's talk about it now.
 4. Please send more information.
 5. Not at the moment.
 6. We'll call you if we're interested (the worst that is never going to happen).
- » Pest v. persistent – offer them a way out!
 - » Remember if they say no, they're not rejecting you; just your services.
 - » Never hear "no," only hear "not yet."



Social Media

Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn have redefined how people interact and network. Think of your online profiles, posts and tweets as a dynamic resume – an online presentation of your personal brand. They reveal your interests, personality and expertise. Spaces like Facebook and Twitter may seem more personal, while LinkedIn is clearly a venue for professional networking and job searching. But even with the strictest privacy settings, no social space is truly private, so heed our suggestions to protect your online reputation. On the other hand, don't be afraid to be yourself; you'll make your best impression if there's a real "human" behind your online identity.

Facebook

Even though Facebook is considered a social network, there are useful ways to leverage Facebook to grow your personal and professional network. Facebook offers a number of tools useful to job seekers.

Info Tab – think of this space as an "online resume" to highlight work experience, education and basic information.

Professional Profile – use this option to select friends to differentiate your personal friends from business contacts. Consider displaying your resume in this space, too.

Connections – be sure to invite people from companies you interned or worked with to be your friends. Don't be shy about making these connections since Facebook is all about connecting people.

"Like" companies – search for pages of your target companies and "Like" them. Interact on the page's wall to highlight your interest in the products and services. It is also a good way to stay up to date on industry and company trends.

Groups – create a group around a professional interest or join groups with like-minded individuals. There are plenty of groups on Facebook, find the ones that provide you with positive brand exposure.

Links – post links to your profile that will appear in friend's news feeds that will position you as an expert in a field and may attract the attention of recruiters and hiring managers. Remember to stay away from controversial topics, inappropriate content or photographs.

Events – consider creating or promoting an event and invite your connections. This is an excellent way to network with individuals out of your network since others can invite their friends to your posted event. If you are job seeking, search for and attend events hosted by your target companies to network with employees and hiring managers.

"Like" articles on the web – don't be afraid to hit the "Like" button on blogs, online news articles, websites, etc. When you "Like" interesting stuff, others may want to connect back with you as a resource and it begins another connection.

The Facebook logo, consisting of the word "facebook" in white lowercase letters on a dark blue rectangular background.The Twitter logo, featuring the word "twitter" in white lowercase letters on a light blue rectangular background, with a white bird icon to the right.The LinkedIn logo, with the word "Linked" in black and "in" in white lowercase letters inside a blue square, followed by a registered trademark symbol.

"83 percent of recruiters use search engines to learn about candidates and 43 percent of recruiters admit to eliminating candidates based on information they found online."

EXECUNET STUDY, 2007

Protect Your Reputation Online

Don't let social networking jeopardize your career opportunities. Protect your image by following these simple tips:

Be discreet. Don't post anything that you wouldn't want a prospective employer to see. Derogatory comments, revealing or risqué photos, foul language and lewd jokes all will be viewed as a reflection of your character. Carefully select your privacy settings. And since you can't control what others post, you may want to block or hide comments from friends who don't practice the same level of discretion.

Be prepared. Check your profile regularly to see what comments have been posted. Remember that other people can tag you; so check regularly, and if a post is not appropriate – un-tag yourself. Use a search engine to look for online records of yourself to see what is out there about you. If you find information you feel could be detrimental to your candidacy or career, remove it – and make sure you have an answer ready to counter or explain "digital dirt."

LinkedIn

A LinkedIn profile can be a window to potential employers, and the first place where recruiters will look when seeking talent. Here are useful tips to make sure your LinkedIn profile is ready for primetime viewing:

Consider your job-seeking objectives – you cannot effectively brand your LinkedIn profile without a clear understanding of what position or role you are seeking.

No typos, misspellings or grammatical errors – first impressions online are as important as face-to-face first impressions. Your profile should be error-free, succinct and articulate. Spend as much time working on your LinkedIn profile as you would your resume.

Who do you want to be seen as? – every time you appear on LinkedIn your headline or personal tag line goes with you. Make sure you brand your headline in a way you want to be seen, especially by potential recruiters. It is better to brand yourself for the job you want rather than the job you have. Recruiters will often search for a specific job title when looking for potential candidates.

Write your elevator pitch – use the summary box in your profile to be your personal elevator pitch but targeted at recruiters. Include some keywords in which recruiters are likely to search. This is how you can distinguish yourself and stand out from the pack.

Add specialties – be sure to highlight your specialties, as this is another good opportunity to add in keywords recruiters will use to search on this section.

Public profile and URLs – have your personal name in your LinkedIn URL, i.e., “<http://linkedin.com/in/yourfullname>.” If you maintain additional social media sites, include links to these profiles, too.



Connect up your social networking presence – LinkedIn can be used to connect up all of your social networking platforms, including RSS and Twitter feeds, blogs, etc.

Recommendations – ask your internship or work supervisors or colleagues for a reference. Having positive recommendations can often be the deciding factor between candidates.

Consistency matters – just like integrity and reliability, consistency is very important in the online world. Make sure the messages on your website, Twitter, Facebook or any other online sites are all consistent. Recruiters will do online searches for you, before they decide whether to call you.

Keywords – search engine optimization is very important on LinkedIn. Your LinkedIn profile is about to become your electronic resume, so scatter keywords recruiters are seeking throughout your profile. Add an industry in your professional summary

because recruiters often use that field to search for candidates.

Update your status regularly – LinkedIn can be your very own PR machine. Regularly tell potential employers and recruiters what you have achieved or what you are doing. Recruiters are looking for evidence that you are keeping your LinkedIn profile active and up to date. You are more likely to show up in the LinkedIn updates if you regularly update your status and general profile.

Add more content – you will achieve more with LinkedIn the more content rich you make it. Use the experience section to explain and highlight each company in which you worked. Remember to include any board, civic or voluntary positions.

Make sure you are open for business – if you are searching for a job, make sure your contact settings are set to include career opportunities, consulting offers, new ventures, job inquiries and reference requests.



A career fair is an event in which recruiters and representatives from many organizations get the opportunity to identify talent. Recruiters typically set up tables or booths that display their company information. They speak to interested people throughout the length of the event with the goal of attracting students to their companies and to identify potential new employees.

Career fairs are great opportunities to meet employers from a wide range of industries and potentially to obtain interviews with them. If you make a favorable impression, you have the best chance of being invited to interview. Time spent at career fairs can pay off – it's your chance to see many career opportunities that are open to you and you may connect with potential employers

who can offer you a job. They also provide an opportunity to practice your interview skills in a less formal environment.

Career fairs are usually large events and can be overwhelming if you are not properly prepared. To be successful at a career fair, it's important to prepare ahead of the event.

Find out what companies will be there by checking the hosting organization's website or looking for printed publications a few days before the fair. Usually a list of companies and a map of their locations will be provided at fairs.

If possible, find someone you know who works at a company you're interested in; alumni are good resources. At the fair, you can mention the name of your contact to the recruiter, which can help separate you from the rest of the students.

Employers expect you to know something about their companies before you talk to them. In addition to visiting company websites, you can use annual reports, press releases and newspaper coverage that can be found on the Internet.

Maximize the brief time you have with recruiters, by knowing how your skills and interests match their needs.

Become familiar with types of career opportunities available at the companies of greatest interest to you (most company websites have this information) and prepare to sell yourself accordingly. You are the product and employers are the customer.

Prepare your self introduction (Elevator Pitch) that includes your name, education and your career interests as they relate to the company.

Always come prepared with an example of your skills and experiences.

Schedule a mock interview with an advisor to practice your introduction and to discuss your marketing strategy. Practicing will make you more relaxed and confident during the fair.

If possible, arrive at a career fair early. Recruiters may have to leave early and they can be tired and less attentive at the end of a long day.

If you're nervous when you get there, consider approaching a recruiter with a company that is not one of your top choices as practice.

It's important to plan which company booths you want to target and focus on no more than three to five that are of special interest to you. You can visit more companies if you like, but make sure that your efforts are focused on your top companies first.

It is a good idea to have more than one targeted resume with different career objectives if you are looking at several career options (resume should be on resume-quality paper and you should bring at least one copy for each company you plan to visit).

Sometimes recruiters won't accept paper resumes; this doesn't mean they're not interested in you but are instead adhering to compliance policies and online recruiting procedures. Ask for a business card and follow up with recruiters after the fair to let them know that you have applied, or plan to apply, online.

As with all employment-related interactions, first impressions are very important.

At career fairs, employers are not trying to figure out how to screen you in.

Recruiters are looking for things that will screen you out. Your energy level, handshake, dress and resume can make you a success or failure in seconds.

Think of talking to the recruiter as an audition – what can you say and do in the first minute of conversation that will make them want to grant you an interview? Make sure to smile, have a firm handshake and look recruiters in the eye.

Keep your energy high, be assertive and ask engaging questions; especially ones that demonstrate your knowledge of the company.

Do not ask what the company does, what kinds of jobs they have or what they can do for you. The recruiter will expect you to have done your research and to know these basic facts.

You should be dressed as if you were going to an interview. A common mistake at career fairs is to dress too casually. Both men and women should wear a suit. If you have questions about professional attire, speak with a career advisor.

And last but not least, don't eat, chew gum, use heavy fragrance or smoke during a career fair.



“As a recruiter, I expect students to know two things when they approach me at a career fair:

- 1. Information on my company, and**
- 2. The type of opportunities we have available.”**

MELISSA AZAR, EDWARD JONES

Collect business cards from recruiters and jot notes about them and the company on the back of the card. Use these cards to send a thank-you note.

Write a thank-you note to every recruiter you speak to at the fair and save contact information for future networking opportunities and to develop a target list of employers.

If you're not looking for full-time employment at the time of the career fair, let the recruiter know. Career fairs are valuable even for students who are not pursuing full-time jobs or internships. They're a good way to meet recruiters and make early networking contacts. The job search begins in your first year – students who start early to build networks and identify potential employers are the most successful at getting internship and job offers later.



The Business Meal

Some of the following tips are from the book *Panache That Pays* written by Maria Everding, President and Founder of the Etiquette Institute, St. Louis, MO, www.TheEtiquetteInstitute.com.

There will be times when interviews occur over a meal. The following tips will help you avoid uncomfortable situations that can detract from your interview appearance and performance. Do not underestimate the importance of good manners at a business meal; they truly can be a deciding factor in a hiring situation.

- » Don't order an alcoholic beverage. Even if the people you are with do so, avoid it in an interview setting.
- » Don't order the most expensive item on the menu.
- » Avoid ordering foods that are difficult to eat (spaghetti, nachos, noodle soup, etc.).
- » Turn off your cell phone.
- » Put your napkin in your lap while eating and leave it on the table, not your chair, if you need to leave the table momentarily. When you're finished with your meal, place your napkin to the right or left side of your plate on the table.
- » Wait for your interviewer/host to begin eating before you start eating.
- » Wait for everyone to arrive before beginning any portion of the meal.
- » Rest your forearms and elbow on the table only in between courses.
- » When everyone is seated, unfold your napkin and place it on your lap. The napkin should be folded in half with the fold toward your waist.
- » Pass both the salt and pepper shaker when someone asks for just one.
- » Bread is to the left of the plate, drinks are to the right. You can remember this by forming the letter "b" for bread with your thumb and forefinger on your left hand and a "d" for drinks on your right hand.
- » When eating bread, break off a small piece over the bread plate. Butter the broken portion and eat just that much at a time. For the butter, take an amount as it's passed around the table and put it on your plate to use.
- » Remove a seed, pit, piece of bone or gristle from your mouth with cupped fingers and place it under something on your plate, not on the table.
- » Don't discuss diets or the healthiness/unhealthiness of your or other people's food; it can make someone angry or uncomfortable.
- » Don't place bags, purses, phones, sunglasses or keys on the table.
- » Do not apply makeup or brush your hair at the table.
- » Don't order a to-go container for leftover food.
- » Typically, the host will pay the bill.

"Each interview offers you only one chance to make a good first impression. Good advice for interview dressing is to take it to the next level, even in business casual environments. The key is to look polished and professional."

ANNE VOLLER, MACY'S

First impressions are based on instinct, emotion and biases; stereotypes lie at the foundation of first impressions.

Within 30 seconds, people judge your economic level, your educational level, your social position, your level of sophistication and your level of success. Within four minutes, they've made decisions about your trustworthiness, compassion, reliability, intelligence, capability, humility, friendliness and confidence. Like it or not, it is often that first impression that determines your future – more than your professional achievements or educational credentials.

Make your first impression positive. First impressions are made with the motional side of our brain, not the rational, and experience has taught us that our first impressions are usually correct. The process of labeling others helps the world make sense to us and, once we apply a stereotype to someone, our rational brain seeks to validate it. Because we don't want to admit we made a mistake, we cling to our opinions rather than revise them, which means it's crucial that the first impression you make upon someone is positive.

How can you make a positive first impression? Determine your audience, identify their expectations and dress in a way that reflects those expectations.

Four Levels of Dress

Every company varies in its interpretation of workplace dress. Be sure to use these explanations as a guideline and always ask for clarification.

Traditional Business – For men: Suit, shirt and tie. For women: Matching skirt or pants suit.

Executive Business Casual – For men and women: Defined by the presence of a jacket.

Standard Business Casual – For men and women: Defined by a third piece, such as a sweater vest, twin set, tie, scarf or tasteful jewelry.

Basic Business Casual – For men and women: Defined as two pieces: top and bottom; a shirt or blouse and pants or skirt. This should be reserved for when there is no interaction with clients or important events. Business casual does not include jeans.

Wardrobe Principles

These tips will help guide you when you shop for appropriate clothes for interviews and work.

Wear neutral colors and styles – Examples are navy blue, gray, brown, black and tan.

Never underdress – it's better to be overdressed than underdressed and it's better to exceed expectations than to disappoint.

Make sure your clothing is a good fit – Avoid jackets and pants that are too large or small.

Grooming Tips

Hair – For business, hairstyles should be neat and appropriate; nothing extreme or overdone.

Hands/Nails – Well-groomed hands and nails are an important part of your professional image. Nail polish shades should be soft and polish should never be chipped.

Fragrance – The safest advice for fragrance is not to wear any at all for business. If you do, go very light.

Body – Make sure to be freshly showered/bathed. Wear clothing that covers tattoos.

Breath – Brush your teeth before the interview. If you use mints or chew gum, make sure they are out of your mouth before you interact with the interviewer.



Additional Tips

Shoes – Closed-toe shoes are the most appropriate to wear on an interview and when meeting with clients. Shoes should be clean and shined.

Skirts – Should be knee length and cover your thighs when you are seated.

Socks – Wear them and make sure they're in good shape and dark in color.

Shirt – White or light colors are the most appropriate choices.

Tie – Your tie should contrast appropriately with your shirt.

Jewelry – Wear minimal jewelry. Avoid noisy bracelets that can distract the interviewer or client. Be cognizant of body piercings at all professional interactions.

The key to effective interviewing is thorough preparation and consistent practice. Well before any anticipated interviews, you should begin practicing your interview skills through regular mock interviews with MBACM Career Consultants.



Preparation

The candidate who gets the job is not necessarily the one most qualified. Rather, companies often hire the best-prepared person. If you prepare well by knowing yourself, the company and the position, you will give yourself a strong advantage.

Know yourself

- » Use CareerLeader assessment or other assessment tools to help you speak to your strengths and abilities.
- » Understand your strengths as they relate to the job for which you're interviewing, so you can articulate them with confidence.
- » Examine your weaknesses and how you have or will be able to improve upon them.

Know the company and position

- » Researching the company and position thoroughly is a necessity as employers expect you to be familiar with such details. Begin this process early as it is obvious when interviewees have little knowledge about the company and position for which they are interviewing.
- » Search the company's website, the Wall Street Journal, Google and other tools,

such as Hoover's or Datamonitor, to find recent news about the company.

- » Research the type of position. Reach out to alumni and contacts within the company to find out what the company is seeking. The alumni/contacts you meet might also be able to share some good feedback about your abilities, strengths and passion.

Obtain references

- » Ask your potential references if they would be willing to give you a positive recommendation.
- » Explain the position so they can speak to your abilities clearly and give your references a copy of your resume, the job description and a summary of key points stating why you want the job.
- » Remember to follow up and thank your references. Foster that relationship in case you need to ask them for another reference.

Ask questions

- » Have well-informed, inquisitive and articulate questions prepared in writing to ask during and at the end of the interview. Asking questions during the interview can make the interview more dynamic.

- » Ask questions that you really want answers to, such as questions about the job, the people and the culture. Make the questions appropriate for the person interviewing you (e.g., don't ask a high-tech question of someone from Human Resources).

For example:

- » "Based on your experience with previous employees in this role, what's the difference between someone who was good at the job and someone that was really great?" – this question shows that you are visualizing yourself in the job and gets the interviewer's perspective on critical success factors for the position.
- » "How has your recent merger with <Company x> affected your product portfolio/culture/management approach?" – this question shows you've done your homework to obtain insight into the hiring company's strategy and challenges.
- » "What's your timeline for hiring for this position?" Or "What are the next steps in the interview process?" – end the interview by asking about the hiring process and timeline, so you'll know when it's appropriate to follow up.

Be prepared for phone calls

When you are involved in a job search, a prospective employer could contact you at any time.

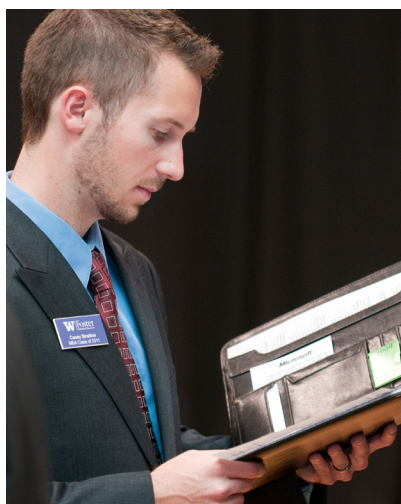
- » Create professional voice mail messages.
- » Remind others in your household to use phone etiquette and take clear messages.
- » Let the call go to your voice mail if you are driving, in class, if your household is noisy or if you are not ready for any reason to talk to an employer. Call back during a time when you are less distracted/more prepared.
- » Keep barking dogs in another room.

If you get a surprise on-the-spot request to interview and are not prepared to talk, indicate how happy you are to hear from the company and immediately try to reschedule a time when you are ready to interview.

Many companies use several types of interviews to get a holistic sense of who you are as a potential employee. Ultimately, both parties are looking for the best fit, and the hiring process should be a two-way street. Learning about the company and its culture prior to the interview and preparing for the various types of interviews and questions will allow you to shine

Behavioral Interviews

- » This type of interview, the most common, is based on the premise that an individual's past performance is the best predictor of future behavior.
- » A behavioral interview assesses your job-related technical skills, past performance compared to future needs of the company and work habits or personal characteristics.
- » One of the easiest ways to prepare for a behavioral interview is to review the job description and think about your past experiences. Then think of specific examples where you have demonstrated the skills identified in the job description. Then come in to the MBACSM for a customized practice interview.



STAR Method

During a behavioral interview, always listen carefully to the question and make sure you answer it completely. Prepare for your interview by identifying situations from your past experience where you have demonstrated the behaviors a given company seeks. Use examples from past internships, class activities, team projects, community service and work experience that prove your competence with the desired behaviors.

In response to behavioral questions use the STAR Method and convey specific situations, actions and outcomes/results. The STAR answer validates what you are saying about yourself.

Situation: assigned to a dissatisfied customer
Task: to solve a technical issue (program) and a client issue

Action: pulled together a good team to solve the technical issue

Result: achieved customer satisfaction and secured a contract extension

Before the interview process, identify two or three of your top selling points and determine how you will convey these points (with demonstrated STAR stories) during the interview.

Whenever you can, quantify your results. Numbers illustrate your level of authority and responsibility. For example: "I was a shift supervisor" could be "As shift supervisor, I trained and evaluated four employees."

Case Interviews

- » Case interviews focus on your ability to solve a business problem, which might even be a problem that the company has faced before. Your job is to identify the important issues, develop a logical approach to the problem and offer a solution.
- » Case interviews are not just limited to consulting interviews. Other career fields, such as finance and retail, also use them. Everyone should be prepared to be effective at case problems.
- » Prepare for a case interview by working with Career Advisors, Peer Advisors, and by attending case workshop presentations hosted by consulting firms, throughout the year.
- » The best advice is to practice, practice, practice.

Recommended Resources

[Vault Guide to case interviews](#)

This guide provides sample cases, insights and answers to commonly asked questions.

[Crack the Case book by David Ohrvall](#)

This resource provides multiple cases with tools and details to support tackling and working through each of the business cases.

[Case in Point book\(s\) by Marc Cosentino](#)

This resource provides confidence-building insights and valuable preparation material to succeed through a variety of business problems and build critical skills.

Technical Interviews

- » Technical interviews are an assessment of your specialized knowledge.
- » Finance firms often use technical questions to determine your ability to read financial statements and apply formulas to value companies and predict industry growth.
- » Read the job description to discern the skills required to do the job successfully. In preparing for the interview, focus your study on questions related to those skills.
- » Problem-solving is more important than memorizing information, and your ability to explain your thought process is just as important as arriving at the correct answer.

Phone Interviews

The Foster MBA Career Management Center has dedicated interview rooms available for students conducting phone interviews. Contact the MBACM front desk to reserve a room.

- » Phone interviews are often used to screen potential candidates, making the phone interview an important aspect of the process.
- » Recruiters often use the phone interview to ask in-depth questions that have previously been reserved for final interviews.

Arrange a phone interview at a time when you can be focused and free from distractions.

- » Eliminate noise: no televisions or noise from family, friends, pets and roommates.
- » Use a landline phone instead of a cell phone whenever possible – the quality of the connection is stronger with a landline.
- » Turn off call-waiting to avoid interruption.

Prepare, dress and behave as if you are in a face-to-face interview.

- » Wear professional attire.
 - » Sit up straight at a desk or table to remain alert and focused.
 - » Don't chew gum or eat during the call.
- Have your resume, research notes, selling points and questions ready for reference.**
- » Avoid rattling paper or making noises that indicate you are flipping through data to search for answers.
 - » Plan to take notes with a paper and pen. For example, if you are being interviewed by a team, write down names as people introduce themselves.
 - » Know your schedule, in case you are offered an in-person interview.

Compensate for the lack of visual cues by observing these conversational tips.

- » Smile in order to maintain a pleasant tone of voice.
- » Speak slowly and with enthusiasm. Enunciate.

- » Repeat names when people introduce themselves. "Mr. Jones, good to hear from you." "Ms. Smith, thank you for talking with me today."
- » Switch to first names only when you are invited to do so or when you are sure first names are appropriate.
- » Avoid interrupting. Listen and rephrase information you hear to demonstrate that you are listening.
- » Give verbal cues when you need time to think. "I'm going to take a moment to reflect on that question..."
- » Keep your answers concise and to the point. As a rule, answers should be shorter than what you'd typically deliver during a face-to-face interview.

Thank the interviewer and follow up.

- » Thank the interviewer, restate your interest in the company and request the opportunity for a face-to-face interview. "Thanks for talking with me. I'm intrigued by what you've shared and would like to meet with you and others in the company."
- » Follow up with thank-you notes.



Video Conference/Skype Interviews

The Foster MBA Career Management Center has Skype capabilities for interviewing. Contact the MBACM front desk at 206-685-2410 to make arrangements.

- » Treat these interviews just as you would treat formal, in-person interviews.
- » Begin setting up the technology well before your interview to avoid delays or frustrations.
- » If you experience difficulty with the technology, stay calm. If you have sound, make small talk. If you have video, let them see you stay professional through it all.
- » Allow a second or two before speaking as often there is a slight sound delay.
- » Maintain eye contact with the camera and speak clearly, just as if the interviewer were sitting in the room with you.

On-Site Company Interviews

If your interview is at the company's office or campus interview, take the opportunity to get a firsthand look at the culture of a company.

- » The Recruiting Department typically makes the arrangements for you and appoints a liaison to be your primary point of contact. This person can answer general questions that you may have.
- » You will typically have several interviews.
- » Be prepared for a long interview process. Be sure to stay strong until the end. Your liaison may meet with you at the end of the day to gather your impressions.

Second-Round Interviews

- » The company is interested in you and sees potential in your joining the organization; it is also an opportunity for both you and the company to get to know each other better and directly evaluate each other's fit.
- » If you receive an invitation for additional interviews, respond immediately by either accepting, or, if you have already decided not to proceed, declining the interview.
- » The second-round interview is different from the first round in that the interview usually takes place at the company workplace and may include a meal (see page 22). This interview may be more technically or functionally focused, and you may interview with people from the team that you may be joining.



Mind Your Manners

First impressions are critical in networking and landing the right job. It is important to always present your best manners in every situation, and follow best practices set by fellow students and potential colleagues.

- » **Interviews** – Be sure to arrive at least 15 minutes early to all interviews and company functions. Make sure you have all of the necessary documents needed for the interview (e.g., copy of resume, application materials).
- » **Eye contact** – Make sure you look people in the eye and maintain eye contact consistently. It lets them know you are interested in what they have to say and contribute.
- » **Bad habits** – Don't chew gum or mints while in a conversation with a potential employer. Sit up straight instead of slouching or leaning. Smile frequently and express interest by maintaining eye contact, asking questions and using voice inflection.
- » **Dress for success** – Dress for the job you want, or aspire to have; don't dress for your current role.
- » **Company relationships** – If you are selected for an interview, be sure to choose a time slot sooner rather than later – don't wait! Slots fill up quickly and you want to have a time that works best for you. Also, if the company is hosting a pre-night or information session, be sure to attend – they will be looking for your participation.
- » **Thank-you letters** – Send a thank-you letter after each company meeting and stay in touch. (See page 29 for guidelines on writing and sending a thank-you note.)

The following is a list of questions that are commonly asked during the interview process. Use these questions to help you prepare for upcoming interviews.

- » How would you describe yourself?
- » Walk me through your background. Tell me about yourself.
- » What led you to choose your major or field of study?
- » Describe your decision-making process related to the issue of getting your MBA?
- » How has your education prepared you for a career?
- » Why did you decide to seek a position with our company?
- » What do you know about our company?
- » In what kind of work environment are you most comfortable?
- » Give me an example of how well you work under pressure.
- » How would you describe your ideal job following graduation?
- » Why did you choose the career for which you are preparing?
- » What are the two or three most important things to you in your job?
- » What are the most important rewards you expect in your career?
- » What are your salary expectations upon graduation?
- » What are your long- and short-range goals and objectives?
- » When and why did you establish these goals and how are you preparing to achieve them?
- » What specific goals, other than those related to your occupation, have you established for yourself in the next 10 years?
- » Which is more important to you: the salary or the job?
- » Tell me about a time when you had to persuade a group of people to follow your idea.
- » How would a co-worker and your manager describe you? Would they differ in their responses?
- » How would you describe your leadership style?
- » What value would you bring to my team?
- » What do you consider to be your greatest strengths and weaknesses? Give an example of an incident when you demonstrated that strength/weakness.
- » Tell me about a time that you learned something from participation in extracurricular activities.
- » What two or three accomplishments have given you the most satisfaction and why?
- » Tell me about a time that you were motivated to put forth a great effort.
- » Tell me about a mistake you made on a job and what you learned from it.
- » How do you determine or evaluate success?
- » What do you think it takes to be successful in a company like ours?
- » What's your personal mission statement?

Practice Interviews

The MBACM requires mock interviews before you engage in OCR; and has the technology available to record and review a practice interview.

Working with a Career Consultant to record your interviews provides you an opportunity to self-critique yourself. You will be able to see and isolate any issues such as mannerisms, posture, eye contact or answer structure. You and the Career Consultant will discuss key points and suggestions to improve your interview. Studies show that recording practice interviews and reviewing the tape can relieve fears and help students become more confident.



Thank-you letters are a must.

Why? In addition to being a polite way to acknowledge the time that was spent with you, thank-you letters are another opportunity to sell yourself. By writing a thank-you note, you not only have the opportunity to stay at the top of the interviewer's mind, but it allows you to continue to market yourself favorably. Further, it's a differentiator from other candidates.

Thank-You Letters

Thank-you notes can be in the form of formal letters, or thank-you cards sent through the mail or via email. Each type of thank-you acknowledgement sets a specific tone, so evaluate your situation carefully before opting to use a specific type of thank you. The rule of thumb: If you and the employer have communicated by email as part of your interview process, an email thank-you note is acceptable. However, it should be professional and contain the same information as a written note.

Thank-You Letter Guidelines

- » Start off by reminding the individual of when the interview took place and for what position you interviewed.
- » In the first paragraph, remember to thank the employer for his/her time in meeting with you.
- » The second paragraph should reiterate your interest in the position and specific details about the job that may have been mentioned by the employer. Tie your qualifications to that particular position and mention anything you feel will set you apart from the next candidate.
- » Reiterate your interest in future communication or follow-up. Express confidence by using, for example, the phrase – "I look forward to hearing from you soon" rather than "I hope to hear from you soon."

Thank-You Letter Tips

- » Timeliness is everything. Strive to send thank-you letters within 24 hours of the interview.
- » Always send a thank-you letter to individuals with whom you have interviewed. Also send to individuals who have provided you with information about careers, referrals or other assistance in your career search. Acknowledge your appreciation and gratitude for their efforts – it will leave a favorable impression in their minds and facilitate continued growth and development of those relationships.
- » If more than one person interviewed you, send an individual thank-you letter to all individuals with whom you interviewed. All letters may be added to your candidate file, so ensure you personalize each letter.
- » Personalize your letters by drawing on highlights of points discussed with that individual. Not only does it refresh the interviewer's memory of you and the interview, but it also demonstrates your listening skills.
- » Keep it brief – no more than one page and two to three paragraphs.
- » If you are handwriting your thank-you letter, make sure to use appropriate professional stationery.

Thank-You Letter Examples

Example

Subject: Thank you for opportunity to interview

My name is Mark Goldstein and I interviewed with you for the Internal Audit position two weeks ago. Per our conversations at the end of the interview, I was expecting to hear about employment decisions last Friday and wanted to follow up with you to learn if there were any updates on the timeframe. I am very excited about this opportunity and feel my accounting course work and experience as an Audit Intern with KPMG and as Treasurer of the University Accounting Association would allow me to be an asset to Motorola. Thank you again for your time and consideration and I look forward to hearing from you soon!

Sincerely,
Mark Goldstein

Example
Dear Mr. Flanton,

I want to thank you for the time you spent with me this past Thursday discussing the Investment Banking position. My interest in the position has grown after our in-depth conversation regarding the structure of the Public Finance team and the continued professional development employees receive. I am confident that my internship experiences with Holbrook and Company and Citigroup have prepared me well for a full-time position with Wells Fargo.

I look forward to the next steps in the interview process and to hearing from you in the near future.

Sincerely,
Jerome Janson

Employers are seeking culturally diverse employees who work effectively in an increasingly global workplace. Develop your global perspective by taking advantage of international business course work and study/internship programs abroad.

International Study Abroad

Study abroad does more than promote personal, professional and academic growth. An overseas experience builds economic and geographical knowledge, cross-cultural communication skills, analytical skills, flexibility, understanding of local customs, adaptability and often proficiency in a new language. Distinguish yourself from other applicants by highlighting these transferable skills on your resume and in your interview.

Build on your experience

Your overseas experience may lead you to consider an international career. Understanding the immigration rules and regulations for working abroad is very important. While you are abroad, build a network of contacts in the area that interests you. Once back home, follow up and let them know that you are interested in returning abroad to work after you graduate.

You can also engage in cross-cultural experiences on campus. Take advanced language classes or join a language club. Tutor, or get tutoring from, an international student. Join an international or multicultural student club.

Expand your resume

Featuring a study abroad experience on your resume demonstrates your ability to succeed in a new environment and your willingness to seek out new experiences. List your study abroad experience separately under the Education section. If you completed an international internship, list this under the Experience section.

If you participated in volunteer work, you can put this under Experience or Activities depending on how extensive the volunteer work was during your time abroad.



Incorporate your international experience in the cover letter

Briefly describe the skills and experiences you gained (e.g., enhanced cultural awareness and sensitivity to cultural differences of customers; foreign language proficiency; awareness of global economic, political issues and realities). Identify how that learning is transferable to the position for which you are applying. Typically, this information is presented in the second or third paragraph of the cover letter.

Prepare for the interview

Practice telling relevant stories about your global experience that articulate how your skills, experiences and personality fit the needs of the organization. During the interview, be prepared to show how the experience will help you add value to the employer and improve your job performance. Here are some examples of questions you might be asked:

You studied in Sydney. Why did you decide to go there? How was your experience the same or different from your expectations?

» Answer Strategy: Think back to why you decided to go. It may help to refer back to the personal statement you wrote with your study abroad application. Think about

the things that surprised you while you were overseas. For example, you may have realized that Australia is more diverse than you believed it to be.

What accomplishment at school or during your study abroad experience are you most proud of?

» Answer Strategy: Discuss the goal you had for traveling abroad; describe how this goal was accomplished; share what you learned along the way.

What did you learn overseas that will help you do this job successfully?

» Answer Strategy: Think about the ways in which you have grown. You might have learned to be more flexible, adaptable, tolerant, open-minded or patient. You may have gained specialized skills or knowledge from your classes, an internship or volunteer opportunities. Explain how some of these changes and skills might be useful on the job.

Interviewers may ask behavioral questions to assess how you will respond in certain situations. You may be asked to describe your leadership style or how you deal with conflict. Remember the STAR approach to formulating an answer to interviewer questions. (See page 25.)



Job Search Planning and Preparation

Be informed and plan ahead. As an international student enrolled at Foster Business School, it is likely that you can legally be employed in the United States of America during and after the course of your study. However, the immigration rules and regulations allowing you to do so have specific requirements and restrictions. It is essential that you know the laws and regulations and can explain them in a positive and professional manner to prospective employers. If you wish to work in the U.S., Employer Relations team and MBACM Consultants are familiar with the special situations you face and are ready to help. You should also work closely with the Office for International Students and Scholars (OISS) on issues pertaining to visa, work authorization and immigration.

Work authorization does matter. Many employers, including those in the U.S., want you to already have work authorization in the country where you will be working,

without their sponsorship. Not having permanent work authorization generally adds to the difficulty of the job search. This is especially true in a depressed economic environment, though there are variations by industry, function and individual company.

Cultural differences in the job search. Most of your search for an internship or full-time position in the U.S. will be through direct applications to employers. Third-party intermediaries are less important than they may have been in your home country. This is why you have to take control of your job search and be very proactive. In the U.S., your employment offer will not be entirely based on your academic performance. You have to be able to communicate and "sell" your skills to a hiring organization through your application documents, your networking abilities and your interviews. In all these circumstances you need to demonstrate self-confidence, maturity, interest, enthusiasm and the ability to listen and make a point. These "soft" skills are at least as important as "hard" academic skills to your success.

Target carefully and know your value for the targeted employers. Given that you have to overcome more difficulties in the job search, you must exercise added care in targeting the right function/industry and organization, one where you can offer a higher degree of qualification than the employer can find in a U.S. citizen or permanent resident. Do not overlook the possibility of working in your home country or in a third region, at least as back-up targets. Once you have established your targets, make sure you can articulate in a succinct and powerful manner the value you can bring to each organization on your list. MBACM advisors are able to help you assess what targets may be good fits for you and how to position yourself for them.

Network your way to an offer. Many Foster MBAs and other job seekers in the U.S. find jobs through their network. Being new to the U.S. means you have to work doubly hard to establish a network here. Start with your MBA student colleagues, Foster faculty and staff, as well as your existing business contacts. Take advantage of all opportunities to meet Foster alumni or other company representatives at Foster sponsored events. Attend career fairs. Reach out to alumni working in your targeted fields/industries/companies. Join online professional networks. Establish relationships and then grow them in a targeted manner.

Practice, practice, practice! Success in a U.S. job search rewards not the qualified candidates, but the qualified candidates who can communicate their credentials. Communication skills are essential, and they can be honed through preparation and repeated practice. Your job search documents must be impeccable and customized, your delivery in recruiter interactions, including interviews, must be credible. You must demonstrate self-confidence and social skills. This entails hard work and long hours.

Congratulations! You just received an internship or job offer. Now, ask yourself, “Did I do the right things when talking to the recruiter?” Getting a phone call — especially one you have been eagerly awaiting — from a recruiter is exciting and gratifying. However, it must be handled properly, with careful thought and consideration. Here are some pointers to follow:

Receiving a Job Offer

- » Be prepared – know what you are going to say to the recruiter so that when the offer is made, you are in command of your response. Don’t let the excitement of the moment allow you to prematurely accept the offer before you have had time to weigh its many elements and implications.
- » Be gracious. Thank the recruiter and express your excitement and pleasure at receiving an offer.
- » Unless you are 100% sure you are going to accept the job on the spot, avoid language that implies that you accept. A verbal acceptance will be considered by the recruiter as an indication that you will be joining their company in the job offered to you.
- » Ask for details about next steps: When will the offer paperwork be sent to you? Is there a deadline for accepting or declining the offer? Are there other requirements that you must fulfill?
- » Tell the recruiter that you are eager to review the offer package. Ask about the best times to contact him/her with any questions about the offer material.
- » Be ready with other questions you have for the recruiter.
- » Wrap up the call by reiterating your pleasure at receiving the offer and confirm that you will review the offer materials and respond within the agreed upon time frame.
- » Be sure to report your offer to the Foster MBACM so that the data can be aggregated with other offer information to develop the yearly employment statistics report.

Responding to a Job Offer

Accepting an Offer

- » Once you have decided to accept an offer, it is best to communicate that decision as soon as possible to the employer. This allows them to move forward with the next phase in bringing you on board. This could include firming up your start date or signing you up for pre-employment training.
- » Calling the offering manager is usually the preferred way to communicate your acceptance. However, if all communication has been through email, it can be an acceptable method of confirming your offer acceptance.
- » Sound enthusiastic to emphasize confidence in your decision, thank the hiring manager again and express your pleasure at starting your career with them.
- » Be ready with questions and preferences your employer may be waiting to confirm with you, such as start date and relocation plans.
- » Clarify next steps in the process.
- » Follow up with others in the company who were instrumental in your interviewing process to let them know you have accepted the position and thank them for their help.
- » Contact any other employers with whom you were still in the interview process to inform them of your acceptance, and let them know you will not be moving forward with them. Do this as soon as possible so they can move on to other candidates. Make sure to thank them for their interest in you.

Reneging Policy

- » Acceptance of an offer, whether verbal

or in writing, is considered binding. It is never permissible to accept a job offer and later decline. This is considered a renege.

- » Once an offer has been accepted, either verbal or written, interviews should cease.
- » If an offer is reneged upon by the student, the MBACM reserves the right to take appropriate action.

Declining an Offer

- » Sometimes an offer is not a good fit or you plan to accept another, more suitable internship or job. Declining an offer should be done as soon as you have made the decision not to accept the job. This allows the employer to move on to their next steps for filling the position.
- » Calling the employer to communicate your decision is preferred. However, if your conversations throughout the offer process have been via email, you can use this method to share your decision.
- » Be sure to thank the recruiter for his or her time, hard work and interest in you; and share a brief explanation about the reasons for your decision, focusing on your interest on the best fit for both of you. Leave the employer with a desire to continue professional interactions with you in the future.



Job and internship offers come in a variety of forms. You may receive an offer over the phone, in writing or sometimes even in person. If you are completely sure you are going to take the job, you can accept immediately. More often, when you receive an offer you must decide whether to accept it. Work one-on-one with a Foster MBACM Career Consultant to evaluate your offer, and to prepare your negotiation approach

Look Before You Leap

There are many factors to consider, such as location, salary and benefits. Avoid making a hasty decision. Research and evaluate these factors to determine whether or not the job possibility is a good match for your career goals. Respond to your offer professionally and with enthusiasm, and arrange the next steps with the person making the offer.

Most companies will give you a deadline and lead time to allow you to consider the offer. Some employers expect you to negotiate and do not make their best offer first. Other employers have rigid pay systems with little

flexibility. Determine before hand the type of organization with which you are dealing. Once a company makes an offer, the ball is in your court. Ask for the offer in writing in order to have solid information on which to base your decisions.

Determine Important Factors

Before you can know how closely an offer matches your goals, interests and values, you must know what they are. When considering a job at a particular company, prioritize these factors.

- » Professional growth & development potential
- » Work/life balance

- » Personal values
- » Salary/signing bonus
- » Level of responsibility, challenge and intensity
- » Team versus independent work environment
- » Opportunities to use your skills, expertise and interests
- » Learning, helping and decision-making opportunities
- » Whether or not you like and fit into the culture
- » Geographic location
- » Physical environment and working conditions in the workplace

Before You Negotiate, Gather Information

Collect information to establish a salary range for the job and other benchmarks for each element of your offer package.

- » Visit salary websites.
- » Network with current and past employees in the company and in the career field. Foster alumni are excellent sources. Also, ask about benefits, bonuses, commissions, perks, moving expenses and compensation structure.
- » Check salary statistics provided on the MBACM website. Data is available by job function/field and geographic location.

Compile information about cost of living.

- » Review websites that offer cost-of-living comparisons.
- » Speak to contacts that live in the area.

Determine how much income you need.

- » Establish the minimum income to "get by" and the maximum you could be making under ideal circumstances.
- » Estimate monthly expenses.

Assess the demand for your skills and experience in the marketplace.

- » Talk to alumni and the MBACM career advisors to learn how strong your negotiating position is in the current market.

Consider All Factors

Give yourself time to consider all factors. Make arrangements to call the person back to ask additional questions. Next, evaluate how well the position matches your career goals. Finally, prepare questions about other position details that have not been addressed. Consider the following factors:

- » Does the company clearly define your responsibilities in the job description?
- » Do you understand the reporting

relationship and organizational structure?

- » With whom will you be working? Have you met your team members?
- » What else might you need to know to evaluate if the culture is a good fit for you?
- » Given the company's financial performance, are you taking any short or long-term risks in accepting the position?
- » What formal, informal, on-the-job training does the company provide?

- » When and how does the company evaluate and reward performance?
- » When are the typical raises and bonuses for employees at your level?
- » When is the starting date?
- » If this requires a move, does the company provide relocation assistance?
- » Do you understand the benefits package? Benefits can add another 30 to 40 percent to your compensation.

Beginning a job can be a difficult adjustment, but understanding and expecting the challenges can help you make a successful transition. It's important to realize that your new colleagues and bosses will be watching your performance, especially early on. Therefore, think about how you can add value to the workplace every day. See the following tips on what to avoid and how to succeed at the workplace.

Transitioning to your Career Workplace

To Be Successful...

Go above and beyond. If you want to advance in a company and receive above-average performance reviews, go beyond what's expected. If you can give more to an assigned project and add value to the organization, do so.

Make sure correspondence is professional. Reread all emails at least twice when you receive them and when you're about to send them out. Don't write anything that would embarrass you if your boss happened to read it. (This goes for voice mails and instant messages as well.)

Take on all assignments enthusiastically. It's not unusual to think that early work assignments are very basic. However, it's important to take on the projects with enthusiasm and professionalism. A good attitude and successful product will show the boss that you're capable of completing basic projects and you'll soon get more complex ones.

Timeliness. Always arrive on time and do not leave early. Traffic and oversleeping are not good excuses.

Dress for success. Observe how your coworkers dress to understand the culture of the office. Don't buy a lot of clothes until you are familiar with your office standard.

How to Make the Most Out of Your Internship

- » Schedule meetings with your manager as a way to maintain positive progress, develop a relationship, better understand expectations and make sure that the manager is aware of your progress.
- » Company/coworker happy hours, breakfasts, lunches – Take advantage of these experiences to get to know the leadership and culture of your organization.
- » Take initiative. Develop goals for things you would like to accomplish over the summer and skills you would like to learn and grow. Volunteer for projects. Shape your internship experience. Hold yourself responsible and accountable for your projects and quality of work.
- » Ask for feedback. An internship is a learning process; use feedback to better evaluate and address your strengths and areas of opportunity.
- » Ask a lot of questions! Get to know as much about the organization as possible. Internships are your chance to develop an accurate assessment of a particular job, so gather as much data as you need to truly understand the role and responsibilities.
- » Don't forget to evaluate the company; the internship is a two-way assessment. Think about whether or not it's a good fit for you.

More Tips for Success

Be flexible. Expect and embrace changes to your position.

Get to know your boss. Observe his/her personality and work style and tailor your interactions accordingly.

Clarify expectations. Make sure you and your boss are on the same page.

Take initiative. Ask for more work when you've completed a project and be proactive during downtime.

Don't make major changes. Proceed slowly and carefully in a new work environment. Listen 80 percent of the time and talk 20 percent.

Keep a journal. Update it regularly so you remember the tasks/projects that you've accomplished.



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