

Interactive Career Guide

Interactive guides that will
help you build your
portfolio



**CAREER
SERVICES**

YOUR PATH STARTS HERE

Resume Template

Bruin Bear

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Education

Salt Lake Community College

Associates in Science: Environmental Science

- Minors: _____ & _____
- Awarded Dean's List: 3 semesters

Note: no longer include High School information if graduated

May 2022
GPA: 3.57

Include month & year of graduation

Relevant Coursework (Optional):

- Course Name: A brief description of skills gained, or projects completed
- Course Name: A brief description of skills gained, or projects completed

Experience

Student Member

SLCC Ballroom Dance Club

- Use Accomplishment Statements: Action verb, details, outcome / impact when writing bullet points

Use tab settings in Microsoft Word to align dates & locations

Experiences in reverse chronological order (most recent first)

August 20__ - Present
Salt Lake City, UT

Cashier

Example Fast Food Co.

- Developed strong customer service skills by greeting customers and maintaining positivity.
- Handled daily cash and debit/credit transactions of \$500+, displaying elevated levels of response.
- Abided by strict health policies to maintain restaurant cleanliness & customer safety.
- Collaborated with a team of 5 per shift to deliver quick & efficient service.

August 20__ - Present
Salt Lake City, UT

Position / Title:

Organization:

August 20__ - Present
Salt Lake City, UT

Leadership Experience

Position / Title:

Organization:

-

Note: Do not limit "experience" only to formal jobs or work history. You might also include student clubs, volunteering & other involvements! If you want, you could include an entire section for a certain experience category.

Skills (Optional)

languages:

Focus on results rather Than responsibilities

Employers care more about what you did in a job. They care about what you accomplished through those responsibilities & how you could apply that in their work context. To best present your accomplishments, ask yourself:

GOOD

- What did I do?



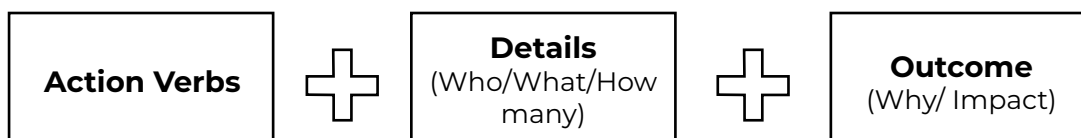
BETTER

- What did I change or impact?
- What was the value of my change or impact?
- How has the organization benefited from my performance?
- What about this experience makes you proud?

Now, you try

Name of Experience	What did you accomplish? how?

Create your bullet points:



Examples:

- Planned logistics for a week-long service trip to Seattle to educate students on issues of hunger & food justice.
- Developed strong intergroup communication skills by facilitating monthly meetings for the executive board of 6.
- Implemented a new process for group auditions, significantly increasing efficiency for decisions.

Cover Letters

Cover letters give you the opportunity to be your strongest advocate and make an argument to a future employer about how you're the best candidate for their position. Cover letters are less constrained than resumes in terms of space and formality, so they can help generate interest in your application. An ideal length for cover letters is 3/4 of a page - although your focus should be on strong content, not length.

All cover letters should include contact information - if possible, use the same header as your resume - as well as, the position you are applying for. When you focus on showing what you can do for the company, using words that convey the true impact of your work, and highlighting your accomplishments, your cover letter will serve as a strong argument for your candidacy.

Introduction Paragraph

In the first paragraph of your cover letter, stress your fit with the organization. Think about what interests you about the organization - such as their mission, values or culture. The projects they undertake? Their management or organizational structure? Use the first paragraph to specifically cite why you're interested.

Avoid generalities such as 'I'm interested in Company ABC because you're a global leader in the field.' Share how your interests reflect the skills, strengths, experiences, or passion you bring to the organization, and how your skills/ interests for the organization can be an asset to that organization. Make sure to use the job description to help you tailor your cover letter.

This section requires that you know the organization well enough to tailor your information to them. Below are some fields to consider as you do your employer research.

Organization	
Missions / Values	
Strategic Goals	
Projects	
Recent News	
Culture / Office environment	

Middle Paragraph (S)

The bulk of your cover letter will focus on showing the organization you are the best applicant. This is not the place to repeat your resume or list all of your accomplishments. Rather, you want to think of 2-3 key distinct themes - ideally reinforced in your resume - that make you a strong candidate. Think of a specific example or narrative you can share that highlights how you've applied the skills, strengths or experiences you want to emphasize. Cover letters give you the space to provide specifics and share a story that shows how your experiences made an impact. This provides the employer with a vision for how you might transfer or apply those same skill sets, strengths, or experiences to their organization. This section requires that you know what the employer is seeking and how you can show that you are a strong candidate.

Below are some questions to consider as you formulate your argument:

Position	
3 greatest skills needed/required for the position	
What experiences do you have to meet the needed skills?	
In what ways are you their ideal candidate?	

Conclusion

Use this final paragraph to reinforce/summarize the themes you want the employer to remember after reading your application materials in 1-2 sentences. Thank the employer for their time and consideration and reinforce your interest in the position. Be careful with assertive endings that let the employer know you will be following up with them; instead, focus on showing your interest rather than insisting on a time-line that may or may not be realistic for the employer.

Finalize

After you've finished, double-check your spelling and grammar. Ensure that every sentence is focused on the reader's interests and needs. Make sure you use the job description as a guide. Then, save your cover letter as a PDF if you're planning to attach or upload it to preserve formatting.

Checking in via email or phone inquiring about the timeline within a three-week period is appropriate.

Cover Letter Outline

Header (use the same header from your resume)

Full date (January 25, 2023)

First Name (keep this section genderless if you do not know the gender)

Name and address of the organization

Dear First Name and Last Name (or) Dear Search Committee,

Opening paragraph: Lead with a “hook” to attract the reader’s interest. This hook should focus on your passion for the field, interest in the company, and/or previous experience that influenced you to apply. At the end of your hook, make sure to include the position and why you are applying. If you didn’t mention the company in your hook, make sure to tell them something you know about the organization. For example, “I have been impressed with your contribution to the community during your seven years in business”. It is very important to let the employer know you have done your research about the organization. End this paragraph with one related skill or experience that will draw them into the next paragraph or with your excitement for the position for which you are applying.

Middle paragraph(s): For this paragraph, you will go into detail about each skill/strength/experience that you introduced above and/or are stated in the position description. This allows the employer to know why you are interested in the job and that you are the best applicant. Tell the employer the specific qualifications you have as outlined in their job description. Emphasize additional skills or abilities you have that relate directly to the job. Keep everything on a positive note. Avoid referring to qualifications the employer is seeking that you don’t have. Be careful not to just reiterate your resume. Be sure to do all of this in a confident manner. Also, remember that the reader will view your cover letter as an example of your writing skills. Spell check is our friend!

Closing paragraph: This section is used as a wrap-up, try not to introduce a new topic here. Thank the employer for their time and consideration. Use an appropriate closing to indicate your interest in being interviewed for the position, and to let them know how excited you are to work specifically for them. You do not have to repeat your contact information within this paragraph since your header already includes this information.

“Sincerely”, “Best”, or “With Gratitude” (whatever feels best for you)

Your Signature Your name typed

It is appropriate to follow up your cover letter and resume with a phone call in about 2-3 weeks if you do not hear back about the time-line. Make sure to tailor ALL of your cover letters.

Your Elevator Pitch: The foundation of Your Personal Brand

Here is a 3-step process for developing a strong and effective elevator pitch

1. Know yourself

The first step to introducing yourself effectively is knowing who you are and what makes you unique. Ask yourself the following questions and write down your answers:

Which of your previous jobs, even if they were part-time jobs, internships, or volunteer positions, provided you with experience relevant to what you hope to do now? If none, what about your college major or extracurricular activities?

What are your strongest skills?

What are your strengths and passions, career-wise?

What kind of jobs, companies, or industries are you pursuing now?

What can you say about yourself that will set you apart from other candidates? What makes you memorable and special?

2. Craft your pitch

Think of your pitch in three parts:

1. Who are you (**present**)

Remember that your primary goal is simply to introduce yourself. Share your name and place yourself in context by explaining what school you attend, what you're studying, or where you currently work.

2. What are your major accomplishments/passions /unique skills? (**past**)

Leverage the skills you listed earlier and frame them in a way that is meaningful to a potential employer or networking contact. What can you say that will make a recruiter remember you?

3. What do you want? Where are you going? (**future**) An elevator pitch is a brief (think 30 seconds!) way of introducing yourself, getting across a key point or two, and making a connection with someone. Your pitch should be interesting, memorable, and concise. Your pitch lets the other person know what you're looking for and the topic you're interested in talking about. Don't be pushy or aggressive but do be forthright about the fact that you're looking for a job. Be sure to tailor delivery to the circumstances of the moment. The goal is to maintain a conversational tone and not sound rehearsed to engage the other person.

Example:

"Hi, my name is Marcos Sanchez. I'm an English major at SLCC and I'm pursuing publishing internships. I'm really active with several organizations on campus, helping them design their websites. I'm also a big advocate of social media and have helped some nonprofit organizations create their Facebook fan pages. I saw that your magazine is doing a lot of great things in the social media space.."

Draft your elevator pitch here:

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Once you're satisfied with your elevator pitch's content and delivery, be sure to practice it enough to be comfortable and confident. If possible, try to video or audio tape yourself to see if you have any speech tics (like "um" or "you know") or if you have a nervous habit like putting your hands in your pockets or brushing your hair aside. Your goal should be a natural delivery that feels confident but not canned. Once you're happy with the way your intro sounds to your own eyes and ears, try it with friends, family members, advisors, or career services counselors. Remember that every time you use your introduction and get feedback, you're also getting more and more comfortable talking about yourself.

Phone: 801-957-4014 **email:** careerservices@slcc.edu | make an appointment via **handshake!**

<https://slcc.joinhandshake.com/stu/appointments>



Informational Interviews

What is an informational interview?

- The gathering of information through a one-on-one conversation with a professional about a career, organization, or field that you are interested in and may want to break into.

Why conduct an informational interview?

- Make a great impression face-to-face, and on your own terms, with a professional in your field whom you may wish to approach in the future about a potential job, internship, or other opportunities.
- Learn the language, issues, job titles, and organizations related to your field of interest.
- Learn more about what the job/career is like along with the culture of the business the person is in.
- Demonstrate your initiative, good manners, curiosity, and passion for your field.

How to request an informational interview with a professional:

- Use social media (especially Linked), professional associations and directories, and ask people you already know to make a list of people who are in positions, careers, or organizations that interest you.
- Make an appointment to meet with each person in your network:
 - Introduce yourself.
 - Explain that you are conducting informational interviews to learn more about their field and that you would like to pick their brain.
 - Ask to meet with them for 15-20 minutes at their convenience.
- Research the person and field ahead of time to prepare a list of questions to ask them.

Sample Request for an Informational Interview:

Good afternoon,

My name is Jane Doe. I am currently at Salt Lake Community College pursuing my Associate's Degree in International Studies with an emphasis in Trade & Commerce. As part of my academic pursuits, I will be interning abroad in Uganda this summer. I found your name on LinkedIn, and I noticed you are working for the United Nations Development Program in Uganda. I was wondering if you would have any time to speak with me about your experiences living in Uganda and your career path as I am interested in working for the UN.

Thank you for your time, and I look forward to hearing from you,

Jane

How to Conduct an Informational Interview:

- Dress professionally and be respectful of everyone in the office.
- Bring a hard copy of your resume, but don't offer it unless it is requested.
- Ask open-ended questions in order to learn the most information. Avoid "Do you have any jobs? Sometimes the most effective way to get a job is not to ask.
- Take notes as the person speaks unless it will distract you or prevent you from being engaging.
- Thank the person for their time and ask if they can suggest any other contacts to keep learning more - be sure to ask if you can use your interviewee's name when you contact the person they recommend.

How to follow up after an Informational Interview:

- Send a thank you letter or e-mail to the person you interviewed within 24 hours.
- Contact referral contacts and arrange more informational interviews with them.
- Keep previous interviewees updated on your process (at least once a semester).
- Do any necessary follow-up research on what you learned in your informational interview so that you can go into your next informational interview feeling well-prepared and knowledgeable.

Contact Tracking Guide

Name	Title & Company	Email	Phone	Relationship Details	LinkedIn Connected	Contact Log: Ph, VM, Face to face



Simple Questions to Ask in an Informational Interview

Occupational Field

- How long have you worked for this organization?
- How did you prepare yourself for this work?
- Describe how you occupy your time during a typical workweek?
- What are your major responsibilities?
- What are the toughest problems and challenges you deal with?
- What are the most frequently recurring problems?
- Is your job better or worse than it was a few years ago?
- What job in the organization would you prefer above your own?
- What do you find most rewarding about the work itself, apart from external motivators? Such as salary, fringe benefits, travel, etc.
- If you were to leave this kind of work, what would drive you away from it?
- What advice would you give to someone who considers entering this field or occupation?
- What do you know now that you wished you knew when you were a student? What helpful information can you share with me?
- What credentials, educational degrees, licenses, etc. are required for entry into this kind of work?
- What kinds of prior experience/skills are absolutely essential to your field and/or your position?

Lifestyle

- How would you describe the lifestyle that your line of work values?
- What lifestyle do people in your line of work typically have? What kind of lifestyle(s) does your organization encourage its employees to have?
- What obligations does your workplace upon you outside of the ordinary work week? How do you manage these obligations?
- How much flexibility do you have in terms of dress, hours of work, vacation schedule, place of residence, etc?
- Why do people choose this type of work over others?
- What kinds of job-related values are sought in this type of work (e.g. security, high income, fringe benefits, and vacation time)?
- Do people in your line of work change jobs frequently? If so, about how often do they change jobs? Why do they usually change jobs?
- What are the most important forms of compensation in your work other than salary (e.g. bonuses, commissions, pensions, security, insurance, vacation time)?

Future Career/Alternative:

- How would you describe the future of your field? Is it growing? Is this a good time to pursue opportunities in your field?
- If things develop as you'd like, what sort of ideal career do you see for yourself in the future?
- How rapidly is your present career field growing?
- How would you describe or estimate future career prospects in your field?
- If the work you do were suddenly eliminated, what different kinds of work do you feel you could do?
- What types of employers hire people with your background?
- What are common or representative job titles in your field that I could research?
- Which related fields or industries are expanding at this time?

Job Hunting

- What advice can you give me that would help me find a job in your field?
- How do people find out about jobs in your field (e.g. online, in print, by word-of-mouth, by a certain office or organization, or other methods)?
- How does one move from position to position? Do people normally move to another organization (company, division), or do they move up in the organization (company, division)?
- If you were to hire someone to work with you today, which of the following factors would be most important in your hiring decision and why?
 - o Educational Credentials
 - o Past work experiences
 - o Personality and personal attributes
 - o Specific skills and/or talents
 - o Knowledge of your organization, your department, or the position
 - o Relevant experience in the field or in this type of position
 - o Other: _____
- How well-suited is my background (e.g. knowledge, skills, experience, education) for your field?
- What would make me a more competitive/desirable candidate in your field? For example, what job, internship, research, volunteer, or other opportunities do you recommend I pursue that would better prepare me to find a job and work in your field?
- What do you think would make me stand out as a candidate in your field?



Networking

The What, When, Why, Who and How?

What is networking?

You may not know it, but you network every time you meet a new person or strike up a conversation. Networking sounds intimidating, but if you have ever made a friend or talked to another person while you are in line for Starbucks - you have networked!

*Introverts: if this still sounds scary, check out our Networking for Introverts section

Networking Is...	Networking Is Not...
Making professional friendships	Using other people
Sharing experience, expertise, insight, and opportunities	Asking for a job
Mutually beneficial	A one-way relationship
Starting a conversation	Always a lifelong relationship

When do I network?

All the time! There are certain events that specifically promote networking like career fairs or conferences. However, networking can happen anywhere and at any time! Check out the list below for ideas on where you can network:

- Traveling on an airplane, on the bus, or in an Uber/Lyft
- Waiting in line
- In-class group projects, study groups, your seat neighbor, etc.
- At work
- Backyard BBQs
- And more! - If there is a person there it's a networking opportunity!

Why should I network?

There are a variety of benefits to networking including...

- Information Gathering: learning about a career, company, or industry.
- Gaining Advice and Insight: utilize the expertise of industry professionals.
- Job/Internship Search Support: relying on your connections to help you identify opportunities, recommend you for opportunities, and give advice on how to secure opportunities
- Mentoring: communicating regularly with a seasoned professional in your industry who gives advice, pushes you to be better, and listens to frustrations

Whom should I network with?

Everyone! While you should be strategic about whom you connect with, it never hurts to connect with as many people as possible.

Start by identifying who you already have in your network with this guide.

Family				
Parent (s) / Guardian (s)				
Working Sibling (s)				
Grandparent (s)				
Aunt (s) / Uncle (s)				
Cousin (s)				
Other				

Former Employers				
Jobs				
Internships / Co - ops				
Volunteer				
Other				

Classmates				
High School				
College				
Other				

Friends				
Close Friends				
Acquaintances				

Other				
Career Coach				
Athletic Coach (es)				
Neighbors/ Community Members				
Religious Leaders				
High School Teachers				
Professors				
Club / Organization Members				
Dentist / Doctor				
More				

Who should I network with? (cont.)

Based on your inventory, begin to match each person with one or more of the benefits under the “why” section listed below.

Information Gathering: learning about a career, company, or Industry		
Gaining Advice/ Insight: Utilizing the expertise of industry professionals		
Job/ Internship Search Support: Relying on your connections to help you identify opportunities, recommend you for opportunities, and give advice on how to secure opportunities		
Mentoring: Communicating regularly with a seasoned professional in your industry who gives advice, pushes you to be better, and listens to frustrations		

Do you see any gaps? Begin brainstorming how you might fill in the gaps. Some ideas are below:

- Career Fairs
- Professional Associations and Organizations
- LinkedIn (refer to LinkedIn handout)
- Use your existing network to find new people
- Ask yourself where you want to be and find them people



How do I network?

Networking Is just a conversation between you and someone else. Some steps for how to start that conversation and keep it going are below.

*Introverts: check out our Networking for Introverts section for more tips

Step 1: “Tell me about yourself”

Present	Past	Future
<p>“My name is _____ and I am currently studying / working _____. Recently I created / developed / completed _____, which has been my favorite project / accomplishment during my studies / work.</p>	<p>“Previously, I studied / worked at _____ in _____ major / position.”</p>	<p>“From these experiences I’ve developed an interest in _____, which is what I hope to do in the future”</p>

Step 2: Create conversation

Peer

How about you?

What prompted your interest in?

What are you hoping to do after graduation?

Professor/Employer

I was intrigued by _____ point in your talk, and I’d like to ask _____.

What prompted your interest in your field?

What makes your work the most interesting?

What do you find the most challenging?

Who else should I connect with?

*See the Informational Interview handout for more ideas.

Step 3: Develop options for follow-ups

During the conversation ask for suggestions on articles to read, podcasts to listen to, events to attend, etc. (this creates the opportunity for continual follow-ups)

Ask for a card, exchange emails or possible social media outlets

Follow-up within one week with an email highlighting what you discussed

Follow-up once you have completed what they suggested with take-aways to stay connected

[illegible]

Networking for Introverts: Additional Tips

Research prepared

- Identify a goal for the event (ex. Connect with 3 new people)
- Research people ahead of time, if possible
 - Use event information to identify whom you want to talk to
 - Use LinkedIn and social media to learn a little about the people you identify
 - Create a list of information you'd like to gather or questions you'd like to ask

Bring on an extroverted friend

- Use your current network to find a buddy who is comfortable meeting new people

Challenge yourself

- Try sitting at a table of people you don't know or being the first to introduce yourself to someone standing alone
- Remember that most people feel uncomfortable networking. Use your discomfort as an opening talking point "Have you ever done this before?"

Put on your best self

- Smile and look inviting
- Wear an outfit that makes you feel confident and bold
- Use your listening skills to keep the conversation going, rather than focusing on your nerves or what people are thinking about you

Take time to re-charge

- "If you're at an event, take time to be by yourself (take a walk, go to the restroom, or spend some time in your hotel room in between sessions)

Salary Negotiations: Some Principles And Tips

Before Discussing Salary Numbers:

- **Approach negotiation as a collaborative discussion around a common goal:** to reach a mutually acceptable agreement for you to hire on. During the interview(s), remember that you are considering “hiring” them as well.
- **Weigh the cost of not negotiating:** a significant earnings gap over time, missed opportunity to demonstrate valuable skills, loss of standing (“We probably could have hired him/her for less...”)
- **Do not accept an offer immediately.** Take time to review a written statement of the terms and the total compensation package (not just salary). Regard it as a first offer, which you can counter.
- **Avoid being the first to bring up salary, or to name a figure:** I need to better understand the job responsibilities, as well as the total compensation package. I look forward to reaching a fair agreement with you on salary.”
“What salary range do you have in mind?”, “I’m glad to respond to a specific offer.”
Remember if they’re making an offer, they want you. Just be professional about negotiating; frame arguments as mutually beneficial, and be calm, persistent, confident, and respectful.
- **Manage your nonverbals:** Top into your confidence in your strengths, and use body language to convey these assumptions:
You both are evaluating the value of this match. Take your time.
You and the employer share the goal of reaching an acceptable agreement.
Negotiating is a professionally important skill, and this is a collaborative discussion.
- **Make Your Case:** Advocate for yourself. Frame it in terms of how you both benefit.
Examples:
“My advanced degree brings creative problem - solving and analytical skills that are valuable even beyond my field. For instance...”
“I bring a core combination of skills the technical competencies you’re looking for, and the ability to communicate with different audiences. Here’s an example of how I’ve successfully persuaded mixed audiences to...”
“I’ve taught myself complex new topics and skills [+ one or two examples]; I will learn fast in your organization.”
“My negotiating now shows what I can do for you once I’m hired. I’ll work well with your vendors and customers and negotiate effectively with internal teams competing for resources.”
“I naturally look forward to being paid fairly for what I bring to this job and how it benefits the organization.”

(Do not argue based on your needs: student loan payments, children to support, alimony, etc. They consider those your responsibility, and such arguments don’t add value to your candidacy.)

WHEN YOU AND THEY GET TO NUMBERS

- **Know your value!** Have your research ready by running multiple salary calculators.
- **Always respond graciously to their offer, but do not say Yes or No right off.** Repeat your enthusiasm for the position AND (not “but”) that you look forward to talking more once you’ve reviewed the terms and the total compensation.
- **When you meet to negotiate, present your research and other arguments on why you qualify for a higher offer:** Respond to counter-arguments with “Yes, and...,” not “Yes, but...”

- **Were you an intern with this company?** If so, you are saving them a great deal in training costs. Negotiate the salary upward from that basis.
- **Reiterate the results of your salary research**, and why you believe you belong on the high end of the range.
- **Ask for whatever you have agreed on to be reflected in a written final offer.**

WHEN YOU HAVE REACHED THEIR LAST OFFER, AND IT'S LESS THAN YOU BELIEVE YOU'RE WORTH

- **Evaluate the total compensation they are offering** (some things are worth more than money and compare if you have other offers).
- **Negotiate other aspects:** more time off, childcare, moving expenses, flextime, tuition, a laptop, job title, etc. If you are truly interested in the job, those may be more valuable than money.

Sample Chart of Items to Negotiate

Priority	Total Compensation Considerations Prioritize the items below based on your needs. Include your minimum requirements for any Items that you have identified them for, e.g., salary.	Value Offered
	Base salary	
	Sign-on bonus (amount & when paid).	
	Early performance & salary review	
	More, or different, responsibilities	
	Flex Time	
	Teleworking	
	Tuition reimbursement (amount, reimbursement timing, grades required)	
	Car (provided or value of allowance)	
	Cell phone (partially or fully covered)	
	Subsidy or reimbursement for gym membership, transportation costs, childcare	
	Vacation days (# of days, when starts, accrual rate, when can use)	
	Sick days (# of days, when starts, accrual, rollover year to year?)	
	Personal days (#)	
	Variable compensation (potential bonus \$/%, stock options, etc.)	
	401 k (or similar) match (% , timing, date & Wis when match is vested)	
	Retirement/pension (when starts & is vested)	
	Profit-sharing (% / annual range, when eligible, when vested)	
	Pre-employment options or equity stake	
	Personal accident insurance (while on company business)	
	List other items verbally committed to but not in offer letter (6-month review, vocation before accrued, etc.)- get into revised offer letter in writing!	

- **Ask when they can schedule a salary review once you are on the job.**
- **Evaluate your BATNA** (best alternative to a negotiated agreement): What are your options? Do you have better ones? If this doesn't feel right, are you willing to wait for a better match? It's a competitive market, but if you received this offer, you may receive more.
- **Decide if it's worth it to you to accept:** good experience for your future, a company you want to work for, good colleagues, good manager, good location and benefits, etc.
- **If so, get the final offer in writing! Negotiations are over when you accept an offer.**
- **If not, don't say "No", say "Not now".** Value the prospect of future opportunities and end on good terms. Say how much you have appreciated their offer and your discussions with them.

Salary Negotiations Tips

Most people wouldn't put salary negotiation high on their lists of desirable activities. Even though you may prefer getting a root canal to negotiating your salary. If you want to get paid what you're worth, you better learn how to do it right. These do's and don'ts of salary negotiation can help you get the salary you deserve, whether you're entertaining a job offer or asking for a raise.

Don't Look at How Much Money Your Friends in Other Fields Are Making: You may be envious of your friends who are earning more money than you are. If they aren't working in the same field, you shouldn't make those comparisons.

Do Research Salaries in Your Field: Look at recent salary surveys, talk to others working in your field, and contact your trade or professional association to find out what other people are paid for doing the same work.

Remember that salaries differ by geographic region.

Do Consider How Much Experience You Have: Those with more experience can hope to earn more money.

Remember to talk about the amount of experience you have if it will help you negotiate a higher salary. If you don't have a lot of experience, be realistic about the salary for which you can ask.

Don't Talk About How Much Money You Need: When you are going through salary negotiations, don't tell your boss (or future boss) that you need to make more money because your bills are high, your house was expensive, or your child is starting college.

Do Talk About the Salary You Deserve: When presenting your case during a salary negotiation, talk about how you will earn the salary you are requesting. Highlight what you have done, or will do, for the company. Also discuss the salaries in your field (based on your research).

Do Be Flexible: When going through a salary negotiation you aren't likely to get the exact amount of money you want. You will probably have to compromise. The trick is to figure out how much you are willing to compromise and what you will do if your boss doesn't offer you a salary you find acceptable. You can also consider other things to negotiate (i.e. more vacation time, professional development, technology, etc.).

MISTAKES. These 10 mistakes could easily have been avoided by following the advice in this article.

- 1. Settling/Not Negotiating.** Probably the biggest mistake you can make is simply deciding to settle and accept whatever offer you receive. Research shows that younger jobseekers and female jobseekers often make this mistake - either from not completely understanding the negotiation process or from a dislike or discomfort with the idea of negotiating. Settling for a lower salary than you are worth has some major negative financial consequences - you'll earn less, receive smaller raises (because most raises are based as a percentage of your salary), and have a smaller pension (since pension contributions are usually a percentage of your salary). But settling for an offer that you feel in your heart is too low. Will not only set you back financially, but also eat at you until you finally begin to seriously dislike your job and/or employer. Of course, in certain professions (like sales), it is expected you'll negotiate your salary.
- 2. Revealing How Much You Would Accept.** Information is the key to any kind of negotiation and a common mistake job-seekers make is telling the employer what you'll accept. Sometimes it is hard not to offer this information, especially if the employer asks for a salary history or salary requirement. Some employers will also ask, in a preliminary interview, what salary you're looking for. In all these situations, you need to carefully decide how you'll handle the situation. The earlier you give up this kind of information, the less room, if any, you'll have for negotiating a better offer when the time arrives. Always try to remain as noncommittal as possible when asked about your salary requirements too early in the interview process.
- 3. Focusing on Need/Greed Rather Than Value.** A very common salary negotiation error is focusing on what you feel you need or deserve rather than on your value and the value you bring to the prospective employer. Employers don't care that your salary won't cover your mortgage or student loan payments or even your living expenses. If you plan to negotiate a job offer, do it based on solid research (see next mistake) and a clear demonstration of your value to the organization. Don't ever tell the employer that you need a certain salary.
- 4. Weak Research or Negotiation Preparation.** With the number and variety of salary resources available online from salary.com and salaryexpert.com to professional associations, there is no excuse for you as the jobseeker to not know your market value. Of course, you should also attempt to conduct research on your prospective employer, their historical salary levels, negotiation policies, and performance appraisals. Even if you decide you don't want to negotiate salary, you'll have a better understanding of the market for your services, and your value in that market.
- 5. Making a Salary Pitch Too Early.** The longer you wait, the more power you have. Yet, there are many jobseekers who jump in too early in the process and ask about salaries and compensation. The ideal time for talking salary is when you are the final candidate standing, and you get the job offer. It's at that point when you can ask more specifics about salary, bonuses, commissions, health insurance, and other perks. Asking at any point earlier in the process can be perceived as being too focused on money and can also lead to you having to reveal what you would be willing to accept.

6. **Accepting Job Offer Too Quickly.** Job-search these days drag on longer and longer, and when you finally obtain that offer after weeks and weeks (and in some cases, months), it's not unusual to want to accept it right on the spot. But even the best offers should be reviewed when you have a clear head, and without the pressure of your future boss or HR director staring at you. Most employers are willing to give you some time to contemplate the job offer - typically several days to a week. It's when you get the job offer that you have the most power because the employer has chosen you, so use that power to be certain it's the job and job offer for you and consider negotiating for a better offer if you feel that it should be better. Just remember that whatever amount of time you ask for is the amount of time you must make your decision.
7. **Declining Job Offer Too Quickly.** Many job seekers reject job offers very quickly when the employer offers a salary much lower than expected, and while in many cases you would be correct in rejecting the offer, it's still best to ask for time to consider it before rejecting it outright. If the money is simply far below the average, you may have no choice but to reject the offer. However, if the money is good, but just not as good as you would like, take a closer look at the benefits. A big mistake is declining a job offer too quickly without looking at the entire compensation package. For example, some firms that have lower salaries offer larger bonuses or stock options or pay the full expense of health insurance. Remember, too, that you should be able to negotiate one or two elements of the offer to make it even stronger.
8. **Asking For Too Many Changes in Counteroffer.** If you have a strong interest in the job and the employer is a good fit, but the offer is not what you expected, you can consider making a counteroffer proposal. If you decide to make a counterproposal, remember that you should only pick one or two most important elements; you can't negotiate every aspect of the offer. If the salary is too low, focus on that aspect in a counteroffer. If you know the firm will not negotiate on salary, then focus on modifying a few of the other terms of the offer (such as additional vacation time, earlier performance reviews, signing bonus, relocation expenses). Just remember that you cannot attempt to negotiate the entire offer; you need to choose your one or two battles carefully, conduct your research, and write a short counterproposal.
9. **Taking Salary Negotiations Personally.** Whatever you do in this process, always stay professional in handling the negotiations. If the employer has made you an offer, then you are their choice, the finalist for the position, so even if negotiations go nowhere, or worse, keep in mind that you did receive an offer, even if it is not what you expected or deserved. And if negotiations break down between you and the employer, move on graciously, thanking the employer again for the opportunity because you never want to burn any bridges.
10. **Not Asking for Final Offer in Writing.** Once everything is said and done, and you have received a job offer that you find acceptable, the last thing you should do is ask for the final offer in writing. No legitimate employer will have issues with putting the offer in writing, so if the employer denies your request and accuses you of not having any trust and tries to bully you to accept the verbal agreement, take it as a MAJOR red flag that there is something seriously wrong.

7 Steps to Creating a Complete LinkedIn Profile

1. Create an original headline

- Think of your headline as your tagline or 5-second bumper sticker.
- Be original. You don't want to simply say, "job seeker." You want the employer to know who you are, and why you would be a great addition to their company.
- Be specific. It's better to say, "Marketing Major at the Salt Lake Community College" than simply "Student at Salt Lake Community College".

2. Use a professional photo in your profile

- Using a professional photo gives you credibility.
- Do not use a photo of you and your friends, or of you and your significant other. Do not take a selfie.
- If you don't have one, have someone take one for you with a nice backdrop.

3. Write a powerful summary

- When employers conduct searches, they look for keywords, and if you don't have a summary, your profile has a lower chance of coming up in search results.
- Include keywords that are related to the job you want. Don't copy and paste from your resume.
- Consider telling a story using PAR (problem, action, result) statements. For example, what is a problem you have experienced? What was the action you took? What was the result?
- Use the 2000 character space you have in this summary to engage employers, share what you're passionate about, and communicate what you bring to the table.

4. Get recommendations

- You should have at least 3 recommendations.
- Make sure they are credible recommendations, and not generic recommendations that could be written for anyone.
- For the individuals you ask to write you a recommendation, ask them to please be specific (see handout on Requesting a Recommendation).

5. Create a unique URL

- Personalize your LinkedIn URL to be your name to make it easier for employers to find you.
- To customize your URL, choose "Edit your public profile" to the right of your picture. This will open a new window with your public profile settings. From there, you can select "Edit public profile URL" on the right-hand side. After you customize your URL, you can use it on your business cards, resume, and even as a signature in your emails.

6. Check and re-check for spelling

- LinkedIn doesn't have a built-in spell checker. Be sure to double-check and triple-check.

7. Complete your profile as much as possible

- Include information in projects, courses, volunteer experience, causes, honors and awards.

Asking For Recommendations On LinkedIn

1. **Get at least 3 people to recommend you.** Get a variety of recommenders, such as professors, supervisors, co-workers, classmates, mentors, and academic advisors who can speak to the diversity of your skills, knowledge, and experiences.
2. **Ask for Recommendations as soon as possible after leaving a position.** That way your experience with that person is fresh, and they can remember specifics about the role you played.
3. **Make your request for a recommendation unique.** Don't use LinkedIn's template recommendation request. Instead, personalize your message to the person you're requesting it from.
4. **Request Specifics.** If you don't ask your recommenders for specifics, you will likely get a vague and generalized recommendation that no one will want to read, like "Tim played a key role and helped drive the company to new heights ..." Instead, ask your recommenders to speak to at least one example of a key accomplishment statement on your resume or a particular quality you exhibited.
5. **Ask for a re-write.** If you don't like the recommendation you get, ask for a rewrite or a tweak. For example, ask to make it more about your work vs. your work at XYZ company. Small changes are easy to make, and recommenders will usually be happy to make them for you.
6. **You don't have to publish every recommendation.** If you get one out of the blue and don't want others to see it don't publish it. You can either leave it hidden on your profile or ask for some adjustments to make it worth a public spot.
7. **Offer swap recommendations.** We all need them, so as you leave a company, pick two or three people and offer to write them a recommendation. As a favor in return, ask that they write one for you. This increases odds that someone will deliver.
8. **Share them via e-mail first.** This allows a more open discussion about the actual content before you actually involve LinkedIn. Sometimes people get nervous or anxious writing an online form, this allows a well-thought-out approach.
9. **Your recommendations should ideally reinforce your personal brand.** Ask your recommenders to reinforce the skill, values, interests, education, knowledge, experiences, etc. that you demonstrate on your LinkedIn profile. Your recommendations should support and reinforce your own content.
10. **Offer to write it yourself or suggest a theme.** Of course, this is somewhat relationship-dependent. Some will love that you write it for them, so they just need to approve, cut, and paste it. Others will see it differently. Ask what they prefer. As long as it's accurate, it is okay.
11. **Be persistent.** Not everyone checks LinkedIn every day. Many who are employed check it "occasionally" at best, therefore if you have not heard back from a contact, try them again via LinkedIn. If that does not work, call, or e-mail them. If they do not respond, ask another person.

How to Make the Most of Your LinkedIn Account

Get Involved with Linked Groups

- Join groups that are relevant to your interests and your major.
- Start a discussion in these groups - get your name out there.
- Comment on discussions that others have started and people will start to realize you have something interesting to contribute.
- Add a “promotion” if you have a special event or upcoming class that you want to promote and share.
- Connect with people that you’ve interacted with in the groups you are a part of.
- Start a group so you can connect with like-minded people and come off as a passionate expert in your field.
- Post a question in LinkedIn to grow your network and connect with people interested in the same topic.
- Read the popular discussions in groups to learn what people in your field want to talk about.

Connecting with your Connections

- Update your status regularly with relevant information that shows you’re a thought-leader in your industry.
- Comment on the status of your connections.
- Write a recommendation for one of your close professional contacts.
- Request a recommendation from a business contact that you have a good relationship with.
- Request a “LinkedIn introduction” to someone you think you could collaborate with.
- Send messages to those in your network -holiday greetings, birthday wishes, articles they would find interesting, etc.
- Search for people who would be good to have in your network.
- Always respond to messages in your inbox promptly and enthusiastically.

Grow Your Connections

- Look at the LinkedIn “people you may know” recommendations every time you log-on.
- Upload your email address book and add your email connections to your network.
- Think about all the people you have met at Career Fairs, all the different campus events, or even in classes, and invite them into your network.
- Connect with leaders and influencers from the groups you participate in.
- LinkedIn allows you to browse people who are in college with you or have the same former workplace use this to add long-lost connections.
- Personalize your LinkedIn connection request. If you connect to someone, do not use the generic message generated for you by LinkedIn. Write something personalized that shares how you met them, and request if it is okay to connect with them. This will increase your chances that this person will accept your connection request.