Alumni e-Briefcase

Your Online Career Resource

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UNIVERSITY
OF MIAMI
TOPPEL CAREER CENTER

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The e-Briefcase has been created to serve your needs as you conduct your career search. You may be at the early stages of a job search as a recent graduate, contemplating a transition into a mid-level position, or making the decision to transition to the next step of your career.

This guide covers a variety of topics, including identifying and becoming aware of your skills, creating resumes, enhancing interviewing skills, and conducting salary negotiations. As you review this resource please keep in mind the Toppel Career Center is here to support you during this Time. Feel free to contact us with questions at toppel@miami.edu or schedule an appointment by calling 305-284-5451. We also recommend utilizing the services provided by the University of Miami Alumni Association. They have online resources that can be accessed by creating an alumni user account. For more information please visit their website or by calling 1866-UMALUMS.

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I. Developing Self-Awareness

Asking the Tough Questions
In *What Color is My Parachute* (2008), Richard Bolles identifies some key questions one should ask when considering a transition. This self-assessment activity is geared toward assisting you in finding the type of work most appropriate for your skills and values.

Geography
Where do you want to live? For some, this is not an important question to answer while for others it is vital to their well-being. The answer to this question can also change as life and professional endeavors change.

There are many valuable resources that you can use when determining new locations to move to as your career develops or interests change. City-Data.com is comprehensive by covering a variety of topics that should be considered when moving to a new location. Examples of some of the categories you can review are:

- Total population
- Demographics of population (i.e. males/females and median age)
- Median household income
- Median housing costs (i.e. rent, condos, homes)
- Crime statistics
- Common occupations
- Weather

Favorite Interests
When identifying your favorite interests, ask yourself: “what is it that I enjoy?” Do you enjoy working with computers, taking pictures, or learning languages? Ask yourself the question: “If I could talk about something with someone all day long, what would that subject or interest be?” What do you enjoy about the interest? What career opportunities can you identify that would go along with your interest? If you are unsure, conduct research on positions available in such a field or identify possible positions. You can always create a position where you see a need!

Preferred Environments
When considering what your preferred environment is, identify the setting in which your desired work would take place. Ask yourself: do you prefer working alone or in teams; in an office or in the field; in a large office setting or a part of a smaller team wearing a variety of hats?

Values, Purposes, Goals
Your values and goals are two of the most important categories to take time in to consider what you desire or need to be comfortable in your new setting and position. If your values, purposes, and goals do
not match, at some point you will experience burnout or dissatisfaction in the position. If you are currently in a position or are looking to transition into a new position, take the time to identify what truly matters to you and what areas of your life are non-negotiable. Here is one question you should consider: Is this position or opportunity in line with my life as a whole? This step is important to take time and figure out; this can also change as life changes and professional goals are attained. It may not provide all of the answers for you, but it will assist you with where you should focus your research and may assist you with making clear what you should not consider as a career path.

Favorite Working Conditions
When considering your preferred working conditions ask yourself these questions: do I have any physical capabilities? Does this position have many days with long hours? What about sick time to take family to the doctor? These are important things to consider that can affect your values.

Create Your Own Job
Do you prefer to be your own boss? Would you like to be in a position to create your own job? If you answered yes, then entrepreneurship may be the way to go! Entrepreneurship is a career choice that more and more people are making in order to take control of their lives. With that being said, where do you begin? It is important to understand the risks involved with starting your own venture, as well as finding the support to help you along your journey. So many people have great ideas and just need a little help and guidance to get them started. If creating your own job sounds appealing to you, take some time to read Section VIII on entrepreneurship and learn about how The Launch Pad at Toppel can assist you.

Salary Level and Level of Responsibility
Determine what type of responsibilities you desire in a professional setting. Do you want to manage others, manage your own projects, or serve on various boards? Also, how much money do you want to make in your new position? This is one area in which many people struggle. Many times the expectations are not realistic when comparing an individual’s experience with the compensation they are seeking. Make sure that the level of pay and the level of responsibilities match. Refer to online resources that are able to assist you in conducting research in identifying what is realistic and what is not. You can also get more details on salary negotiations in section VII of this guide.

Skills
So what should one do? The last thing you want to do is to begin identifying your key skills by creating a list of all of skills you possess. After creating a list, determine which skills are your best. Are there any that come more naturally than others?

Identifying Your Skills and Abilities
Once you have had time to identify your values and skills, the next step is to determine if you need any additional training or certifications for positions that you are interested in pursuing. Again, remember that identifying your skills is one of the most important steps when conducting a job search. If you find
yourself having difficulty in identifying your skills do not forget to ask for assistance! You can ask for help from your close friends, family, and co-workers. Ask them to share their observations of your strengths and weaknesses. Encourage them to be as honest and up front with you; it will only make you more aware of yourself and the skills you may or may not possess. Once you take the time to determine the skills you possess, you can create an action plan to polish up on or gain the necessary skills which will allow you to be a more competitive candidate and allowing you to pursue careers of interest. Skills can be divided into three categories:

- **Content Knowledge**: Employers look for the knowledge one possesses that is specific to the position. Every position or job requires a certain amount of content knowledge, meaning there are certain subjects or topics that one would need to have an in-depth understanding in order to perform successfully in the position.

- **Transferable skills**: These are the versatile skills that you possess. For example, when managing others, you would need to utilize your interpersonal skills to lead effectively. These can include conflict resolution, an understanding of how to motivate and persuade others, working as part of a team to solve problems, and being an excellent communicator. These skills are considered your assets and can be applied to a new position and ultimately contribute to your success.

- **Self-management skills**: These are the skills that focus on time management, organization, and overall how you would conduct yourself as an employee. For example, how would you handle situations of conflict and prioritize deadlines?

**Utilizing UM Online Resources**

Did you know there are many online resources available to you through HireACane? Set up your account today to gain access to resources exclusive to UM alumni and current students. You will have access to resources that will assist you with researching employers, personal development and job postings.

**HireACane**

HireACane is our web-based career management system that allows you to do much more than review job postings! By creating, reactivating, or logging into your account:

- Upload resumes and be provided with a critique within 3 - 5 business days
- Review hundreds of job postings and internships
- RSVP for exclusive events open to alumni (i.e. Tuesdays with Toppel and Alumni Webinar Series)
- Review lists of employers attending Career Expo and other scheduled career fairs or events
- Keep track of employer information sessions and have opportunities to network with representatives from a variety of companies and industries

For additional assistance or questions please call the Toppel Career Center at (305) 284-5451. To create a HireACane account, please visit:

[http://www.sa.miami.edu/toppel/mainSite/alumni/requestForm.aspx](http://www.sa.miami.edu/toppel/mainSite/alumni/requestForm.aspx)
Vault Career Insider

Vault Career Insider is accessible through your HireACane account and within this resource you will find valuable information in a variety of forms. By creating an account you will have access to:

- **Career guides** section containing over 70 guides separated by Industry, Employer, and skill set specific categories
- **Company profiles** containing specific information about companies and organizations; this section provides you with a brief history, how to get hired by the company, and a section that surveys the employees of the company and provides you with their feedback
- **Industry overviews** providing trends within an industry
- **Profession profiles** made up of a brief overview of a position, from the experience needed to an overview of “A Day in the Life” of the position
- Career related articles can be found under the **Career Advice** section of the website

This resource can be invaluable to you as your prepare for upcoming interviews. The more preparation that you do now and the more you learn about the company, the position, and your skills, the more successful you will be as you move forward with your search.

Career Shift

Career Shift allows you to search every online job posting at once! This resource searches all employer websites and job posting boards to bring you the best search results in one place. You can:

- Identify available positions
- Research companies that you are interested in
- Identify key contacts
- Have the ability to manage your resumes and cover letters
- Reach out and make connections with potential employers
- Create a system of reminders

To have FREE access to Career Shift, login to HireACane and click on the Career Shift banner located on the homepage under announcements to get started.

University of Miami Alumni Association

The University of Miami Alumni Association is another great way to learn about possible career paths by reaching out to UM alumni. One resource that is available to alumni is **Cane Connections**, your online UM connection. This resource provides you with a way to locate and reach out to other Canes. You are able to filter searches by using zip code radius searches as well as industry specific filters. It is a great way to reach out and begin networking!

**UMAA also offers the Career Advancement and Networking Executive Series**, which is another great way to network with other alumni. This series is geared toward individuals in mid to higher level positions and covers a range of topics from entrepreneurship to government and non-profit sector careers.
The career section of the UMAA website also includes valuable resources found under the Career Tools section. There you will find a variety of resources from how to conduct your job search to local job market reports for over 30 U.S. markets. There are additional resources to assist you with creating your resume.

Resources

- City-data.com
- O*Net
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
II. Marketing Your Skills Through Cover Letters and Resumes

Getting Started
A wealth of information and resources exist to assist you in developing resumes and cover letters. Job seekers must consider differences in format, length, and content; as well as nuances among different industries. It is important to do the research on your specific industry in order to determine the appropriate format for your documents. For instance, a resume for a candidate seeking employment in finance is going to look significantly different than a resume for a teaching candidate. The following provides general guidelines when creating these career-related documents.

Types of Resumes

Chronological
This type of resume consists sections such as: a list of education, job experiences and accomplishments. List each section in reverse chronological order, starting with your current or most recent experience. This is the most common type of resume, and it is recommended for professionals staying in the same career field and for those working in a field where traditional job search methods are utilized.

Skills-Based or Functional
This type of resume highlights the professional skills you have gained throughout your career. The content is similar to a chronological resume but presented around skill clusters. This format is recommended for professionals with a variety of work experience, individuals interested in a career change who do not have direct job experience in the new career area, those who have changed employers frequently, and candidates who have been absent from the job market or have gaps in employment.

Combination
This type of resume combines the chronological and functional formats. The content can include a skills section that supports the type of position you are seeking combined with a summary of your work history. The goal of this type of resume is to highlight your skills and experience in a creative format.

Curriculum Vitae
A CV is a detailed synopsis of what you have done and can be several pages long. In the United States, a CV is typically used by graduate students to apply for faculty, research, scientific, or clinical positions. For samples of CV layouts for different disciplines please visit the career section of the Chronicle of Higher
Education: CV Doctors. Also, another great resource for country specific expectations for CVs is Going Global, which is accessible through your HireACane account.

Contact Information
Your most current contact information should be included at the top of your document. It is important to provide accurate information so that potential employers can easily reach you.
- Use full name (larger font size than the rest of the document), address with zip code, telephone with area code, and e-mail

Objective Statement
The objective statement is a simple one sentence summary of the type of position you are seeking.
- State the objective in the third-person, and avoid using personal pronouns
- Objective should correspond to the position for which you are applying

Sample:
- To obtain a full-time position in educational administration with a long-term goal of becoming a principal.

Summary of Qualifications
Some experienced professionals prefer to include a summary of qualifications in lieu of an objective. This can include highlights of experience, computer, language, or management skills and additional relevant training and education.

Sample:
- Corporate recruiter with 5 years experience in human resources
- Fluent in Spanish and Italian
- Advanced computer skills in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Access

Professional Experience
The resume is your marketing document, and it is critical that it is accurate, error-free, and focuses on your skills. Recruiters review experiences and skills to determine the top candidate for the position they are looking to fill.

- List professional experience in reverse chronological order (most recent first)
- Develop bulleted accomplishment statements that focus on three areas: what you did, the skills you have developed, and any results or positive outcomes
- Start each bullet with an action verb (such as: supervise, research, assess, assist, monitor, mentor, allocate, improve, institute, and synthesize)

Samples:
Fairview Hospital, Miami, FL
Critical Care Coordinator, Emergency Services, June 2000 to present
- Coordinate patient care and collaborate with emergency physicians, inpatient physicians, and nurses for most appropriate and cost effective medical management
- Communicate clinical data to necessary insurance agencies for the purposes of reimbursement

Granada Elementary School, Atlanta, GA
3rd Grade Teacher, August 1998 to June 2006
- Provided research-based interventions for students working below grade level, which resulted in significant improvements of standardized test scores
- Conducted parent/teacher conferences to review academic performance and set goals for student improvement

Education
Academic credentials are very important to an employer, particularly if you are pursuing a job that requires specific training. Only list institutions from which you have received a degree. Also, write out institution name, city and state, full degree title and graduation date.

Sample:
University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
Bachelor of Science in Communication, May 2005
Majors in Broadcast Journalism and English

Computer Skills
In today’s workforce, technology is an important part of the skill sets employers seek. Be specific by listing the computer software you know, and indicate your level of proficiency.

Sample:
- Highly proficient in Adobe Illustrator, Microsoft Word, PowerPoint, and Excel
- Working knowledge of Microsoft Access

Optional Components

Languages
In the global marketplace, many organizations are interested in hiring professionals who speak additional languages. Indicate the proficiency you have in that specific language; for example, fluent in Spanish or conversational French.

Professional Affiliations
In this section, indicate if you are a member or have a leadership position in a professional organization. These opportunities are an outstanding way to network and discover job opportunities before they are posted.

Community/Leadership Involvement
Many recruiters are interested in professional involvement outside of the workplace. For example, if you participated in Leadership Miami or spent a significant amount of time volunteering for Habitat for Humanity, both are valuable to include on the resume.
Licenses or Certifications
If you currently hold a license relevant to your field, it is important to list this on the resume. For example, financial planners, accountants, and architects are some positions that require licensing.

Source:
SAMPLE FUNCTIONAL RESUME

Susan Shores
555 Manor Drive
Miami, FL 33150
c.monroe@gmail.com
305.222.0000

OBJECTIVE
To obtain a full-time position as a special events coordinator that utilizes skills developed from prior work and internship experience.

RELEVANT SKILLS
Management
- Hired, trained, supervised, and evaluated a staff of five full time employees and interns
- Managed and organized a fundraiser that raised over $10,000 for charity
- Served as a co-chair on a committee that organized a 5K run for the Red Cross involving over 200 participants
- Maintained excel database of over 1,000 organization members

Marketing
- Assisted with the launch of “Kids in Sports” day which involved creating press releases and marketing materials distributed at local businesses
- Researched target markets and created marketing plans to attract donors
- Contacted potential sponsors in person and through print material resulting in over $5,000 in donations

Communication
- Developed and maintained relationships with donors for non-profit organization
- Trained new staff and interns on overall operations
- Created and edited monthly newsletter distributed to over 500 readers
- Established relationships with local employers, athletes, and children to ensure successful “Kids in Sports” event

WORK HISTORY
Assistant Director, Hope for Children Agency, Miami, FL, July 2004 - Present
Marketing Intern, Miami Heat, Miami, FL, May 2003 - June 2004
Office Assistant, Ocean Drive Magazine, North Miami Beach, FL, August 2000 - August 2001

EDUCATION
University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL, May 2004
Bachelor of Arts, Major in English, Minor in Journalism, cum laude

Miami Dade College, Miami, FL, May 2002
Associate of Arts, English, cum laude

SKILLS
Proficient in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook
Working knowledge of Microsoft PowerPoint, Publisher, and Access
SAMPLE CHRONOLOGICAL RESUME

JUAN C. GARCIA
2149 Florida Lane Miami, FL 33456
jgarcia@yahoo.com 305-555-1212

OBJECTIVE
To obtain a position as a Patient Placement Coordinator that will allow for continued professional growth.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE
Riverside Hospital, Miami, FL
Clinical Care Coordinator, Emergency Services, June 2005 – Present
- Act as advocate for Riverside Health Systems and support organizational financial goals
- Review admitted patients’ clinical status and dispositions on an ongoing basis
- Communicate clinical data to necessary insurance agencies for the purpose of reimbursement
- Assist and facilitate transfers for non-residents to appropriate healthcare facilities in counties of origin
- Provide follow up resources and arrange for primary care for patients discharged from the emergency room
- Educate patients, families and staff with regard to community resources

County Hospital, Tampa, FL
Assistant Nurse Manager, Emergency Care Center (ECC), July 2003 – June 2005
- Managed the emergency room treatment area daily and delegated tasks to appropriate ancillary staff
- Coordinated nursing assignments according to competency of staff, area census, and patient acuity
- Collaborated on the care of patients with doctors and support staff
- Responded to emergent and changing situations accordingly
- Acted as liaison and care coordinator between nurses, doctors, and support staff including social workers, clergy, and security
- Facilitated the movement of patients through the ECC system by coordinating the process from triage and into the treatment areas
- Acted as link between upper management and staff at patients’ bedsides by passing along pertinent information and promoting the standards and ideals of the County system
- Encouraged ongoing, open communication with staff by promoting sharing of ideas and concerns
- Developed staff by creating, implementing, and monitoring performance improvement plans

County Hospital, Tampa, FL
Registered Nurse, Emergency Care Center (ECC), July 2001 – July 2003
- Administered injections, delivered and coordinated daily doses of oral medications for patients
- Provided total patient care including range of motion, tube feeding, and cauterization
- Demonstrated active listening skills to assess patient needs and provide appropriate treatment
- Documented patient progress, kept track of records, and presented cases to physicians

EDUCATION
University of Miami, Coral Gables, FL
Bachelor of Science in Nursing, May 2001

HONORS/COMMUNITY SERVICE
“Educator of the Year”, Emergency Care Center, County Hospital
Habitat for Humanity Volunteer

SKILLS
Fluent in Spanish, Basic Knowledge of Creole
Microsoft Word, Microsoft Excel, Internet Research
Cover Letters

Purpose of the Cover Letter
The cover letter is used to persuade the reader to review your resume, and highlights why you are the best candidate for the job. It should complement the resume, and not just repeat the same information. Tailor your cover letter for a specific position and take the time to do your research on the organization and position. A strong document highlights your strengths and skills, and matches those up with the job description. This enables you to prove to the reader how you can meet their needs and why you are a good fit for the position. Keep in mind that many companies ask candidates to submit cover letters because they want to assess attention to detail and your ability to communicate in writing.

Structure of the Cover Letter
The cover letter should follow professional business style. Typically it is three to four paragraphs long, and should not exceed one page. As with your resume, all letters should be proofread for spelling, grammar, and clarity.

- Align letters to the left justification setting
- Use correct spacing between contact information, salutation, body and signature (see template)
- Research the company to personalize the contact information in the letter (do not address the letter to Human Resources Representative)
- Use transitional phrases, including “in addition to” and “however”, to help the letter flow

Here are some additional tips:
- Never mention salary in a cover letter
- Draw upon your professional experiences, and focus letters on what you can offer the company to help them achieve their goals
- If you are submitting your resume via email, you can include the cover letter in the body of the email
COVER LETTER TEMPLATE

Your Street Address
City, State and Zip Code
>
Date
>
> (4 spaces)
>
Name of Contact
Title
Company/Organization Name
Address
City, State and Zip Code
>
Dear Mr., Ms., or Dr. (Contact’s Name):
>
State something interesting you learned from your research about the company or make reference to a mutual contact, if you have one. Next, write a statement that defines the purpose of your letter. This can include which position you are seeking and where you learned about it. Demonstrating that you have researched the company helps to sell you as a candidate.
>
In the second paragraph, highlight specific skills or qualifications that will be useful to the employer. Elaborate on professional experiences that are relevant to the position you are seeking, and connect the points you make with the position requirements. If you have specialized training, be sure to indicate that. Show how you would benefit the company and what you have to offer.
>
To conclude the cover letter, indicate that you are interested in action. Make every effort to maintain control of the process by indicating that you will follow up to ensure correspondence was received or set an interview date. Refer to your enclosed resume and thank the reader for his/her time and consideration.
>
Sincerely,
>
>Your signature here (4 spaces)
>
> Your name
COVER LETTER SAMPLE

1234 Lake Osceola Drive
Coral Gables, FL 33146

September 12, 2010

Ms. Jackie Jones
Human Resources Director
Total Communications
100 First Street
New York, NY  10019

Dear Ms. Jones:

I am writing to apply for the Manager of Corporate Communications position advertised on the University of Miami’s HireACane career management system. As an experienced communications professional, I am confident that my background in marketing and public relations will be an asset to Total Communications. The company’s commitment to outstanding customer service and focus on mentoring employees is very impressive.

My work history includes experience in the advertising, healthcare, and marketing sectors while working with all levels of management. Specifically, I have worked directly with leaders in a variety of organizations to develop their communication skills. By focusing on writing and presentation skills, these leaders are able to effectively represent their companies both internally and externally. In addition, I have overseen a wide range of creative services, and have produced marketing, print communications, and online and video projects. Finally, my experience with cross-cultural communication strategies will help Total Communication achieve its vision to become a globally recognized company.

Thank you for considering me for the Manager of Corporate Communications position. I look forward to discussing my qualifications and how I can contribute to Total Communications. I will follow up shortly to ensure receipt of my application materials. You may reach me at 305-321-1254 or email at j.ryder@gmail.com.

Sincerely,

Jamie Ryder

Jamie Ryder
Resources Available at the Toppel Career Center

HireACane

Our online career management system allows you to upload up to ten resumes and cover letters. In addition, your resume will automatically be critiqued by an advisor when you upload it to the system for the first time.

Walk-in Advising

The Toppel Career Center offers free walk-in advising for UM alumni. Visit us Monday through Thursday, 10:00 am to 4:30 pm to have your resume or cover letter critiqued by a staff member.

The Career Insider by Vault

Access this resource by logging onto your HireACane account. Find sample resumes based on industry and view a variety of cover letters. You can also download the Vault Guide to Resumes, Cover Letters, and Interviews.

Optimal Resume

This resource enables you to use resume building software to create your document. Access Optimal Resume through HireACane or by going to our website www.hireacane.com/alumni.

III. Conduct Industry and Employer Research
How to Research Industries and Employers
Research is a very important step in your job search. Researching industries and companies/organizations helps you find where you want to work and provides valuable information about the employer that you can use to set yourself apart from other applicants. The information you discover can be used to tailor your resume and cover letter to the employer and in the interview process. There are many excellent online resources to help you in your search. Some sites are free and others are available through the Toppel Career Center’s HireACane site (www.HireACane.com).

Resources available on HireACane
The Toppel Career Center subscribes to various services to help job seekers. Please note that Toppel has prepaid for these services and you may need to create a personal account, but you should not be asked to provide personal billing information. If you have any problems using these resources or need a HireACane account, please contact Toppel at 305-284-5451 or Toppel@miami.edu.

Resources for Industry and Employer Research

Bureau of Labor Statistics
The Bureau of Labor Statistics provides statistics and information that can help every job seeker. For example, you can find unemployment rates and salary information for different geographic areas and industries. Under the section “Resources For,” is a tab called Job seekers that includes links to their publications like the Occupational Outlook Handbook (see below), the Career Guide to Industries, and Occupational Employment and Wages by Area.

Career Insider, Powered by Vault
The Vault Career Insider is a resource that is available on HireACane (www.HireACane.com), on the Home page under Announcements. The Career Insider provides many valuable resources, ranging from short articles to 100+ page guides on specific industries and top employers within industries. The Career Guides are divided into categories including Interview and Resume Guides, Career Topic Guides, Industry Guides, Employer Guides, and International Guides. This site is very comprehensive and has insider information for almost every field. Check it out today!

Company and Organization Websites
After you have researched the industry or field of interest and identified potential employers, the next step is to go to the employer’s website. Familiarize yourself with the vision statement, mission, products, services, constituents, and competitive advantages. Look for financial and annual reports, press releases, and honors or awards. Understand what makes the employer’s product, service, and/or mission unique and how the open position impacts the organization’s goals. Many organizations primarily use their websites to communicate with their customers, and it can be difficult to find job opportunities. Try a keyword search for jobs, careers, employment, or human resources or scroll down and look for links at the bottom of the page. If you still cannot find the jobs, do a Google search for the employer’s name and the word careers or jobs. Another tip for researching specific employers is to Google the employer name and look for it in popular news publications and websites. For example, if you are looking at a financial organization or applying for financial positions, it is vital to know the organization’s stock value and look for articles that have appeared in the Wall Street Journal.
**Hoovers**
Hoovers contains information on 40,000+ companies and you can search by name, letter, industry, or geographic area. You can also access industry information and read articles called “Expert Advice”.

**Occupational Outlook Handbook**
This resource is provided by the BLS and provides the following categories of information for hundreds of occupations:
- Nature of the work
- Training, Other Qualifications, and Advancement
- Employment
- Job Outlook
- Projections
- Earnings
- Wages
- Related Occupations
- Sources of Additional Information (includes professional organizations)

**O*NET OnLine**
O*Net is a database with information on hundreds of occupations. You can browse occupations by career cluster or skill set.

**Partnership for Public Service**
The Partnership for Public Service is a non-profit organization that provides excellent information for job seekers looking to work in the US Federal Government. Recent graduates will find their site particularly valuable (www.makingthedisfference.org), and more experienced alumni should start at the Partnership’s main page and look at the Quick Links in the bottom right hand corner.

**PR Newswire**
Search through a database of press releases to catch up on the latest industry and company news.

**Toppel Career Links**
The Toppel Career Center maintains lists of career links related to various fields/industries. There is a General section that provides additional links to conduct industry research and search for jobs.

**USA JOBS**
USA JOBS is the official job site of the U.S. Federal Government, and it provides information about federal jobs and employment information.
U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission EDGAR Database
Search companies' registration statements, periodic reports, and other forms through the SEC’s database called EDGAR.

WetFeet
WetFeet provides information on Employers and Careers & Industries. Vault’s Career Insider provides similar information, so check out the Vault’s Career Insider on HireACane before paying for premium WetFeet access.

IV. The Job Search and Application Process
Job Boards
There are many job boards available to the public at no charge. Some are general job boards, and you will want to try many of these and see what results best match your interests. Some popular general job boards are:

- Career Builder
- Idealist (NGO and non-profit opportunities)
- Indeed
- Monster.com
- Simply Hired

More industry and field specific job postings can be found on professional organization websites. Weddle’s Association Directory is an excellent site to find professional organizations by field.

Career Shift
Career Shift is available on HireACane (www.HireACane.com) and it allows job seekers to search jobs on all employer websites and job boards. Additionally, it has a contact system where you can search for contact information within organizations. Each user creates their own Career Shift account, and you can store personal documents, save job searches, contact information, and email your documents to contacts within the system. All of the information is available publicly on the internet, but Career Search provides the technology to quickly and easily find the information. Once you have an account, there is an Overview Tutorial Video that will teach you how to use the site.

Going Global
Going Global is available on HireACane (www.HireACane.com) and it is a great resource for alumni searching for jobs outside of the United States or for alumni who are looking to work in the U.S. but need an employer sponsorship for a H1 visa.

The Job Search
Detailed organization, following directions, and follow-through are essential to a successful job search.

Organization
It is vital to stay organized during your job search. When you are conducting your research you will likely find postings that interest you, and it is important to save this information in an organized way. You may prefer to save it electronically, create a paper filing system, or some combination. Keep the general industry research together, and then have separate sections on each employer you find appealing. You will need this research when you write a cover letter and when you are preparing for an interview. Once you begin applying to open positions, track the following information in an Excel spreadsheet or other format:

- Position applied to and when
- Closing date of the position
- Contact person or office
• Any contacts you have within the organization
• Date you plan to follow-up on the application
• Interview requests and dates
• Thank you letter
• Any other correspondence you have with the employer, including when you followed up on an application

Save all correspondence you send to an employer, including your resume, cover letter, thank you letter, emails, and application numbers and account names and passwords.

Applying for Jobs
Finding and applying for jobs will vary by industry, and you will learn how your industry recruits through the research described above. The number one way that people across all fields and with various levels of experience find jobs is through networking! Make sure you follow the tips outlined in the next section.

Even if you find out about a position through an inside contact or talk with a recruiter at a career fair, many employers require that you apply online through their website and this can be a lengthy process. Many sites require applicants to create a username and password, and you should save all of this information in case you want to apply for other positions in the future.

The U.S. Federal Government requires applicants to apply through USAJOBS and this process requires the applicant to answer Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) statements. We recommend that you save your KSA statements so you can use them in future job applications. For more detailed information on the federal job application process, please visit www.HireACane.com, Alumni, Webinar Series and look for the upcoming or an archived webinar on Government Careers.

When applying for a job, make sure you follow all directions, submit everything requested, and note in your records that you applied for that job. These may seem like obvious suggestions, but occasionally a job posting might ask for transcripts and a job seeker may request them from a University, but never follow-up to ensure the employer received them. For example, a job seeker may apply and may not hear back for weeks, and then receive a phone call and not recall submitting the application.

Following Up
Many job hunters get frustrated because they apply, apply, and apply and never hear back from an employer. Unfortunately, this is very common. When you submit an application, make a deadline with two weeks to follow up with the employer. Call or email and ask if they received your application and if any additional information is needed, reaffirm your interest in the position and thank them for their time. Try to directly contact the person responsible for making the hiring decision. Avoid making multiple phone calls or sending multiple emails unless you receive a reply. Show that you are persistent and interested in the opportunity, but avoid over saturating your potential employer with too many inquiries.
There is one exception to the two week follow up rule. The U.S. Federal Government and some other employers post closing dates next to open positions. If you apply for a position with a closing date, wait until a few days after the closing date to follow up as the employer may not look at applications until after the closing date.

**Job Search Resources**

Some jobseekers find it helpful to read books related to job searching. These can help you deal with anxiety and help organize your search. Below are some books the Toppel Career Center recommends:

**Books:**


V. Utilizing and Expanding Your Network

Why Networking?
According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 70 percent of all jobs are found through networking and 80% of jobs are never posted (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics). Therefore, it is imperative to master the art of networking. What exactly is networking?

Networking is:
- A process of cultivating and maintaining relationships in which a mutual exchange of information, advice, and support facilitates the growth, success, and happiness of all involved
- A two-way process, and it’s important to provide support and feedback in return

Networking is not:
- Bothering, pestering or using people
- A contest to see who can collect the most contacts
- A one-sided, one-shot deal

Networking is an essential skill of building alliances with others that serious professionals cannot be without in the 21st century.

How can networking help you?
- Obtain knowledge about different careers and specific industries
- Gain a sense of belonging within a field, company, or occupation
- Get your name out and open new doors with contacts
- Discover a mentor
- Increase confidence in your professional abilities
- Tap you into the hidden job market

Identifying your network
Most people do not know where to start when they think of who is in their network. However, most people already have at least 250 contacts. At first, start simple – people you know. Make a list of family members, friends, co-workers, business peers, neighbors, ex-classmates (University of Miami or high school), past professors, current and former supervisors, and anyone else you know who may be able to help you. It is important not to discount someone simply because you think s/he does not know anyone. Remember that a purpose of developing a network is to gain access to other people’s networks.

Expanding your network
There are many ways to expand your network!
- Contact the University of Miami Alumni Association. There are thousands of UM alumni throughout the world that are eager to meet and lend a helping hand to their fellow Canes. Just
think, one major reason the association exists is for the purpose of networking, so contacting a Cane alumnus should not feel awkward since they too joined for the same purpose. To access the University of Miami Alumni Association please visit www.miami.edu/alumni.

- Get involved with the local Chamber of Commerce. Almost every city has a Chamber of Commerce and they usually have events that are great opportunities to network with others. If you are having trouble breaking into the Chamber – Join a Committee! For help finding a Chamber near you visit www.chamberofcommerce.com.

- LinkedIn – join group memberships by profession, college, shared interest, or location
  - Sample introduction – “I would greatly appreciate having an opportunity to talk to you about your work. I am currently investigating new career paths and would like to learn more about your industry. Please let me know if you would be willing to help out a fellow Cane. Look forward to hearing from you! Melissa ‘05”

- Utilize other social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter to reconnect with old friends and make new contacts through common interests

- Conferences provide opportunities to expand your network, knowledge of the field, learn of other career paths and options in organizations

- Professional associations are another great way to expand your network. For a complete list of professional associations please visit http://www.weddles.com/associations/index.cfm

As you develop a network, a helpful hint would be to create spreadsheet to keep your network contacts organized. How many times have you searched your desk or office looking for someone’s business card? By creating a simple spreadsheet you can keep your contacts organized, easily update new contacts, and even include follow-up dates for contact or notes about your conversations.

**Tips for Networking**

- Dress appropriately and get to events early
- Wear your name tag on the right side to provide an easy sight-line to your name when shaking hands
- When attending a function, make a goal to meet a certain number of people
- Enter and exit group conversations politely – utilize your “elevator” pitch to describe who you are and what you do (Refer to Interviewing Strategies and Tips: Tell Me About Yourself for more details)
- Never start a conversation by talking about yourself
  - People enjoy talking about themselves – ask them open ended questions
- Listen to others when they are talking and comment appropriately
- Keep conversations short and focused
- Avoid sitting with a friend at an event
Networking Letter/Email
Another way to make initial contact is by sending a networking letter or email to a contact. The purpose of the networking letter is to generate networking meetings or informational interviews.

Your Street Address
City, State and Zip Code

Date

(4 spaces)

Name of Contact
His/Her Title
Company/Organization Name
Address
City, State and Zip Code

Dear [Contact’s Name]:

Use the opening paragraph to make a clear connection between you and the recipient of your letter. Highlight a similarity you share with your reader. For example, you may both be alumni of the same school or share specific interests, careers, and mutual acquaintances (I am a fellow University of Miami Alumnus or I also currently work in the finance industry – can provide detail about year of graduation, degree, and major).

Because this letter is not a cover letter, your tone may be more relaxed. You are seeking an informational meeting instead of an interview with this type of letter. Rather than pressure your reader, simply state your desire to learn more about a specific career, industry or opportunity. Indicate where you are in the decision-making process so that the person knows what information he/she can provide. Also, be sure to share your goals and what you hope to gain from the meeting. It is critical that the recipient understand that you are not seeking a job but looking for advice, opinions, and information.

Close the letter with a statement of your intent to call and make arrangements for a brief meeting. Thank the person for his/her willingness to assist you.

Sincerely,

Your name
Tips for Success

- Follow up with recipient 1-2 weeks after sending the letter
- Be prepared for the meeting – do your research and prepare questions in advance
- Send a thank you letter if the recipient takes the time to meet with you or assist you in anyway
- Reach out to several contacts - when networking with alumni or other contacts do not email 3 contacts and expect all 3 of them to return your email

Following Up with a Contact

One of the most important aspects of networking is following up with a contact. If you do not follow up with a contact then all you are doing is collecting business cards. Follow up with an e-mail or phone call within 24 to 48 hours of meeting the person. Thank the contact for the time spent with you at the event and that you enjoyed the conversation or getting to know them. Next, inform them that you would like to stay in contact. The following step(s) depends on your situation. If you are looking to make new contacts for the purpose of expanding your network or to create business you could ask them to meet you for lunch one day, set a more formal business meeting, or ask them what the next event is they are attending. If the contact you meet is someone you would consider speaking or meeting with about general career advice or for more information about a particular company/industry, ask them if they would conduct an informational interview with you. An informational interview is a brief meeting of about 20-30 minutes centered around learning more about one’s occupation, industry, and suggestions on how to pursue the occupation or break into the industry.

Sample Questions to Ask during an Informational Interview

1. How did you enter this field?
2. How did you prepare yourself for this position?
3. What has been your career path?
4. What do you do on a typical day (or week) in your current position?
5. What kinds of prior experience are absolutely essential?
6. What do you find most satisfying about your job?
7. What are some of the frustrating aspects of your job?
8. What type of background or training is necessary for a position similar to yours?
9. What personality traits are helpful for this type of work?
10. What skills or talents are most essential for effective job performance in this job?
11. What opportunities for advancement are there in this field?
12. Who are the company’s competitors and how are their actions predicted or handled?
13. If things develop as you would like, what does the future hold for your career?
14. How do you see this field changing in the future? What is the future outlook for people in this field? What skills will be needed in the future?
15. Would you recommend that I talk to anyone else about your industry or who do you know that might be willing to speak with me as well? May I use your name when contacting him/her?
VI. Successful Interviewing Strategies and Tips

Purpose of the Interview
The interview is used to determine if a candidate is a good fit for a position and organization. An interviewer is evaluating your abilities, skills, personality, strengths and weaknesses to determine if you would be the best candidate for the position. Keep in mind as you begin interviewing, a successful candidate needs to possess the necessary skills and personality attributes the organization is seeking.

Interviewing DOs and DON'Ts

**DO**
- Arrive 15 minutes early
- Dress professionally
- Be prepared to illustrate content knowledge, skills and abilities
- Conduct proper research on organization, graduate program, and/or position
- Prepare relevant questions to engage interviewers during interview
- Follow directions outlined by organization when applying for position
- Be honest about your background and experience
- Display your interest and excitement for the position
- Follow up within 24-hours of the interview to reiterate your interest in position and organization

**DON'T**
- Become extremely nervous before the interview (PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE)
- Arrive late for interview
- Become negative during the interview about past experiences
- Begin to ramble when answering interview questions
- Ask about pay, vacation time, or benefits (Wait for an offer)

Types of Interviews
There are two types of interviews that you can expect from your upcoming job search. They are traditional and informational interviews. There are many interviewing formats to be aware of within traditional interviewing. Also, the traditional interview is what most individuals think of when speaking about interviewing. The following are examples of traditional interviews:

Screening Interviews
The primary focus of these interviews is to dwindle down the candidate pool. During this type of interview the employer/interviewer is verifying the skills you possess compared to what the position requires. The question they are trying to answer is, “Are you the ideal candidate for this position?” You want to ensure your answers are direct and to the point. Stay positive!
Two examples of screening interviews would be preliminary/testing and telephone screening. Many organizations utilize these methods to create an ideal pool of candidates to move onto the next step within the interviewing process. Within the preliminary/testing screening, you can expect probing questions to measure a candidate’s content knowledge and personality or self-management skills. These interviews are often conducted in a testing format.

The telephone screening is a cost effective way for companies to evaluate if a candidate is worthy to move on in the process. This method is used by companies who may not have a representative available to interview you within the area you reside. However, this method is also utilized by companies with local candidates as well. Tips for phone interviews are:

- Prepare for the interview and take it seriously
- Prepare a list of your accomplishments to highlight during interview
- Place call from an area with good reception, limited noise, and no distractions
- Have your resume and application on hand
- Allow your personality to shine through the phone
- Remember to smile

Hiring Interviews

Once you get past the initial screening interviews you could be invited back for a second and even at times a third interview session. Remember, each time you are invited back to interview, the further you may be moving into the interviewing process! The following are types of hiring interviews to be aware of when preparing for your upcoming interviews.

Group or Panel Interview

These interviews consist of meeting with two or more interviewers at a time for your interview. Each interviewer will have a set of questions they can ask. Some items to keep in mind when you find yourself in this type of interviewing situation:

- Make eye contact with each interviewer
- Do not focus on just one interviewer when answering a question

Series Interviews

During this type of interview be aware that you will meet individually for a number of consecutive interviews. The reason companies employ this method is to test an interviewee’s consistency and stamina.

Structured Interview

Many organizations are moving toward providing a more structured environment for interviewing candidates. Employment laws have influenced this trend, specifically in larger organizations. In this type of interview, the interviewers are provided with a script of questions they are expected to ask each candidate. As you participate in this type of interview:

- Be aware that interviewers may not make excellent eye contact; they are required to record responses as well as their observations of the interview. However, make sure as the interviewee to continue making eye contact with each individual interviewing you
- Know that your skills and experience may be compared to the content knowledge and criteria specific to the position for which you are interviewing.
**Informational Interview**

If you are unsure of a specific industry or position and what a day in the life of an individual in your desired industry does, the recommendation is to conduct informational interviews to gain the knowledge you are lacking to make sure you make a well informed decision. The strategy behind this type of interviewing is to interview someone who either shares a similar interest as you or has a career within an industry that you may have been contemplating. This is another great method to conduct research before you pursue any positions. When using this technique, it is suggested that you have an idea of what you are seeking from the individual that will be meeting with you by:

- Determining what your ideal position is as it corresponds with your set of skills
- The skills and content knowledge required to be successful in a specific position
- Deciding the type and size of the organization that you would like to work for
- Determining your desired salary level in the field
- Preparing where your interests lie within the field

(Farr, 2004)

⇒ **RECENT TRENDS**

Due to shrinking budgets and the pressure of hiring the correct candidates the first time around, many companies are relying on new methods and technologies to assist in the hiring process. These next types of interviews have become more common in the recent years.

**Behavioral-Based Interviews**

Behavioral interviewing is based on discovering how the interviewee acted in specific employment-related situations. The logic is that how you behaved in the past will predict how you will behave in the future (i.e. past behavior and performance predicts future behavior and performance).

Many companies are moving toward this style of interviewing because it yields a higher percentage (65-80%) of successful hiring compared to the traditional methods (30%) outlined previously in this section. These interviews typically lead off as many of the traditional interviews do; so be prepared for both!

Ways to prepare for behavioral-based interviews:

- Review the job description to get a sense of what skills and behavioral characteristics the employer is seeking
- Reflect on special situations that YOU have dealt with and/or projects which you were involved with
- Also, be ready to disclose results that may not have turned out as planned; speak on your reaction and what you learned from the experience

Sample Questions:

1. Describe a situation in which you contributed to a successful team. What actions did you take and what were the results?
2. Tell me about a time you found yourself in a conflict with a co-worker. What steps did you take to resolve the issue and what was the outcome?
3. Give an example of when you played a key role within a team. What was the role? What challenges did you face and what was the final result?
One strategy to rely on when answering behavioral-based questions is the STAR method.

**Star Method**
The STAR method assists you by organizing your answers to behavioral-based questions by including the Situation and/or Task, the Action and Results. When providing a complete answer focus on the specific action YOU took in a project and the key results of YOUR effort. The biggest mistake individuals make in this type of interview is the tendency to focus on what the entire group did rather than how their specific efforts and skills contributed to the larger group and the effect they had on the group or project itself.

When preparing the STAR method answer provide each part for a complete answer:

**Situation or Task**
- What was happening?
- Where did it take place?
- Who was involved (audiences involved, including constituents, staff, clients, etc.?)

**Action**
- What did YOU do?
- How did you react?
- What did you say?

**Result**
- What was the result of your effort?
- How did the situation end?

**Video and Teleconferencing Interviews**
Many companies are beginning to utilize video and teleconferencing tools. The questions format of the interview will not be much different than previously detailed. However, be aware that you may be invited to interview in the comfort of your own home. Treat this interview the same way you would any interview. Preparation is the key to your success and if you are unfamiliar with the software take time out to practice now before you have an interviewed scheduled. The more popular video and teleconferencing tools being used are Google Video Chat, LimeWire, MSN Messenger, Skype, Windows Live Messenger, and Yahoo Messenger.
Preparing for Interviews

Research the Company

- Primary mission or purpose of the company / organization
- Principal services / products
- Latest annual sales / revenue information
- Major competitors
- Organizational culture (management style, work environment, structure)
- Trends in the industry or field and ‘hot’ issues

Research the Graduate Program

- Demographics of the institution
- Research opportunities
- Curriculum / program requirements
- Assistantship / internship opportunities

Research the Position

- Major responsibilities of the position
- Qualifications and skills required
- Training and education required
- Typical earnings, advancement, career path, and employment outlook
- Opportunities for continuing education and training

How to Look for Information (Refer to Section III of guide)

- Obtain a job description from the company or organization
- Attend the company information session (if one is being offered at the Toppel Career Center)
- Schedule an informational interview
- Access company profiles on their websites
- Find company information on the Vault Online Career Library (access through HireACane)
- Look up competitive salary ranges in NACE Salary Surveys
- Speak and network with people that work, hire, and teach in the career field in which you are interested
- Research graduate/professional schools online

Before the Interview: Preparing Your Answers

Once you have determined the skills you possess (Refer to Section I) that best match the company profile and position description, you need to organize your thoughts so that your answers flow naturally. Experienced recruiters ask penetrating and often difficult questions. They have limited time and are skilled at getting to the point. Advanced preparation allows you to illustrate good communication skills and express yourself in a well-organized, professional manner.
Although you cannot anticipate every question, you can prepare your responses and practice answering difficult questions.

- Recall and write your accomplishments ahead of time
- Follow each skill or accomplishment with a specific example
- Describe your skills/accomplishments by using behavioral-based interviewing techniques
- Describe relevant experiences
- Review relevant course work that relates to the position described
- Answer negative questions by demonstrating what you learned from the experience and that you took responsibility for any mistakes
- Prepare for brainteasers during technical interviews
  - Demonstrate to the interviewer that you think in a logical manner
  - Explain your thinking as opposed to offering a guess

**“TELL ME ABOUT YOURSELF” (90-Second Pitch)**

During your interview you will most likely be asked, “Tell me about yourself”. When you hear this it is not a time to panic and figure out what to say. Rather than rambling on and starting to describe your entire life, remember to focus on your professional experience. When providing the answer to this type of inquiry, consider using the following format to organize your response:

1. What is your educational background?
2. Describe your work experience, campus involvement, and/or community involvement.
3. What are your strengths and abilities?
4. What are your career objectives?

**Resume-Related Questions**

Resume Related Questions: Before the interview, make sure you review your resume and are able to answer specific questions by providing concrete examples to the experiences outlined in your resume.

1. Tell me more about your internship at your previous company. What were your most important accomplishments? Be specific in describing your responsibilities and give an example of your most important accomplishment. Why was it important? What impact did it have?
2. Who was your supervisor at your previous company? Remember, it is a small world. You never know who knows one another. If asked, you should have the name of your previous supervisors on the tip of your tongue.
3. Tell me more about your involvement in the ABC (non-profit) organization. Describe what motivated you to join the cause? Are you a passive member of the organization or have you taken a leadership role in some aspect of the group?
General Interviewing Questions

1. What is your definition of success? Be prepared with your own idea of success. Sometimes it is helpful to mention a person who represents your vision or success.

2. Why are you interested in our company/program? Talk about information that you found through research. Maybe the innovative approach to business is what attracted you. Perhaps the research at the institution or a referral from professor piqued your interest in the graduate school.

3. What skills do you possess that would allow you to succeed in a graduate program? Refer to specific skills and provide concrete examples.

4. What are your strengths? Provide three adjectives or examples of your strengths. Present them as they relate to the particular position and organization.

5. What are your weak points or weaknesses? Do not say “None.” Give only one. Turn it around to a positive answer such as: “My computer skills are not as strong as I would like them to be, so I have taken a Microsoft Office course which has been helpful.”

6. What is important to you in a job? What motivates you? Talk about results and intrinsic returns in a position.

7. In what kind of environment would you like to work? Open environment vs. closed; innovative vs. minimal change; good communication level throughout office.

8. “What do you know about our organization/program?” Demonstrate that you have done your research! Highlight the organization’s history, products, services, and revenues. For graduate schools, make sure you are familiar with pertinent demographics, research opportunities, and faculty members.

9. What is your management style? Address issues such as delegation of tasks vs. micromanagement style, encouragement of ideas, and promotion of team spirit vs. independent environment.

10. What are your career goals and objectives? Talk first about the position for which you are applying. Be more specific with short term objectives and fairly general with long range plans (consider a 5 year plan).

11. Why should we hire you/accept you into our program? Discuss things that you bring that other candidates might lack (e.g. work experience, international travel, specialized skills, multiple language skills, volunteer experience).

12. Describe what you find stressful in a job. How do you handle the stress? Provide examples of when you have been in stressful situations. Your response should include a positive result. The interviewer wants to understand how you achieve personal and professional balance.
13. What other companies are you interviewing with and for what positions? Answer this question at your discretion. The interviewer knows you are conducting a job search and expects that you may have other offers.

14. How creative are you? Why? Describe a time when you had to be creative, and try to be creative in your answer!

15. Why did you select your college or graduate school? Avoid answering this question “because of the school’s geographical location.” Think about academic programs, campus climate, and research opportunities.

16. What are your feelings concerning working long hours, evenings, and weekends? Travel? Think about this question before you answer it. Your values regarding work are important to the potential employer.

Preparing Questions to Ask (Sample Questions)
During the interview or at the end you are given an opportunity to ask questions. Make sure to create a list of questions that show your depth of research and knowledge of the company and position that you are interviewing for. Remember, the interview process is a two-way street. Take great notes on the responses given so you can make a well-informed decision.

1. Make a list of your own questions. Do not rely on generic questions. You should always ask questions because the employer will know that you are interested in the organization/program.

2. Keep questions focused on the position and company. Save salary and employee benefits questions for after the offer has been extended.

Mock Interviews
Career Advisors provide direct feedback on your skills during a mock interview. The appointment will take about 45 minutes. The advisor will evaluate your strengths/areas of improvement and provide you with additional techniques for a successful interview.

• You will first need to attend an Interviewing Skills program
• Call Toppel Career Center at 305-284-5451 to schedule an appointment
• Bring a CD to your session (it is beneficial to record the interview)

Importance of Following Up
 Appropriately following up with an employer can make a positive difference in getting a job offer. Some tips that you should consider after the interview is complete:

   • Create notes on the interview
   • Send a thank you note
     ‽ Do not forget to get business cards from each individual you met with throughout the interview process. This will ensure proper spelling of names and using correct titles.
     ‽ Depending on the majority of your communication, send a thank you note by e-mail
     ‽ It is recommended that you send a handwritten thank you note and if possible to each individual who took time to meet with and/or interview you.
VII. Determining What You’re Worth: Negotiating Salary

“In business, you don’t get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate.” -Chester L. Karrass

How to Determine Your Value

1. Utilize a salary calculator that allows you to input factors such as geography, size of the organization, and the specific industry of a business. The data in the Salary Wizard (www.salary.com) is an excellent starting point for determining what employers are paying to compensate an employee in a specific location. The salaries are calculated based on a national average to which an adjustment has been applied to account for broad geographic differences in pay.

2. Consider your personal variables. Personal variables are those characteristics that have a direct influence on an individual’s pay. Employers consider personal variables: years of experience, education, performance reviews, professional associations/membership, size/area of responsibility, number of direct reports, and whether you will make a significant impact on their business. Make sure that you are weighing yourself against the both the requirements and preferences of the position.

3. Make sure that you have all salary history readily available.

5 Steps for Salary Negotiation

1. Agree on a benchmark job.
2. Agree on your proficiency and performance level.
3. Agree on the market value of the job.
4. Agree on where your salary should fall.
5. Agree on what performance is necessary for future salary increases.

(Schlegal, 2010)

Step 1- Agree on a benchmark job
Compare your experience to that of the job description and then share your thoughts regarding your experience versus the benchmark job with the employer. Make sure that your responsibilities are at least a 70 percent match to those of the benchmark position. This is usually a step that most employers complete early in the recruitment process. It is important that you know what benchmark job the company has compared yours to, and understand any discrepancies. This will save you from future
confusion. For example, they might think you are at the middle level of a job (e.g., a Level II) while you think you're at a senior level (e.g., a Level III). If so, you need to resolve the differences in cordial way. **If you are currently employed** and really are working at a higher level, you may be able to negotiate for a promotion. Or you may have advanced as far as you can in your position. If there is no path for you with the company, you may have to choose between doing the same job for a significant period of time and moving to another company. On the other hand, if you have shown that you can handle additional responsibility and the company has room for growth, this may be your time to move up!

**Step 2- Agree on your proficiency and performance level**

Whether you are receiving a job offer from a company or going through your performance review, you and your employer should agree on where your performance fits in relation to the benchmark job description. If you are working towards a new position, for example, chances are that you already have some of the required skills but are developing others. In the new salary negotiation, your level of proficiency and performance will determine how close to the median you'll be paid. While proficiency and performance are closely related, they are not the exact same. As you improve in your position with a company you simultaneously become proficient. The better your skills (i.e. proficiency) get, the more competitive you are against those in your same line of work. On the other hand, performance is the level at which you execute a job. During a typical performance review proficiency is addressed. This is where an employer will discuss topics such as team work, punctuality, attitude, initiative, communication, and other skills.

“If you are very good at the technical requirements of your job, but have not developed solid soft skills, your performance review is likely to reflect these deficiencies. Conversely, if you have a winning attitude and are a solid team player but aren't yet good at the specific skills required for the job, your lack of proficiency could hold you back” (Schlegel, 2010).

**Step 3- Agree on the market value of the job**

So you have agreed with your potential employer (or current) on a benchmark job as discussed in Step 1. Now it is time to discuss the numbers. It is imperative that you conduct proper research. Online information is acceptable and a great place to begin. Conversely, employers may have better resources for research that you have access to. The information that they possess is usually relative to their industry and company values.

The figures that Salary Wizard provides are from the current month’s national average for any given position across industries and geography. Employers salary data is usually a reflection of their own history and their direct competitors. This may explain any inconsistencies. Don’t let this part of the process discourage you. You are doing a fantastic job of negotiating if you and the employer are discussing the varying data sources.

**Step 4- Agree on where your salary should fall**

“After you and your employer have agreed what job you’re doing, how well you’re doing it, and what the market pays for that job, you’re ready to discuss what you’re worth to the company” (Schlegel, 2010).
Moreover, if you have standard proficiency and your performance is average then your salary offer will be at the median point of the salary range for the position at hand. However, also consider the employer’s perspective and compensation plan. Your worth to the company could be far more valuable than you’ve considered. If this is the case, the employer may extend a higher than average salary offer. Many companies do so for retention and on-going recruitment. Many times an organization will pay above the market rate because of the difficulty to find “A” talent. Employers may also pay more because the position is critical to the strategy that they have adapted for company growth. This is when the ball is in your court and your negotiating power has to some extent increased.

Total compensation is very big component to consider when addressing salary. Employers may offer you a less than average salary due to the entirety of the offered package. A “compensation package” includes bonus, stock options, benefits, discounts, and other employee rewards. Be careful to understand the full package and what its worth is to you.

If the company is unable to pay you what you are worth you may choose to discuss methods for getting you to the salary level that you should be at. It is suitable to discuss performance reviews and larger than normal merit increase as a possibility. It is also acceptable to discuss a long term plan for reaching the pay level that you deserve.

At this point of the negotiation process, you are well on your way to closure! You should be agreeing on a number with the employer and heading toward acceptance of the offer.

**Step 5- Agree on what performance is necessary for future salary increases**

This is often a part of the negotiation process that people leave out. Don’t miss this opportunity to discuss what performance is required to get an even higher salary down the road. It is better to negotiate future increase on the front end. Don’t wait to have this conversation when you start because market change, company dynamics, and many other factors may come into the picture then. While this part of the negotiation is not necessarily guaranteed to come to fruition, it will set the stage for later discussion. The employer will understand your expectations. This also insinuates that you will perform at your very best level!

“A good negotiation is a discussion in which each party understands and respects the other's position and it ends when all parties feel their positions have been heard and their needs have been optimized within the other party's limitations” (Schlegel, 2010).

**Salary History Request**

Often a company will request an actual document of salary history in order to move forward in the recruitment process. In these cases, you will need a separate document that reflects the exact same format of your resume and cover letter. All documents should “match” one another. Please take a look at the example below which displays a format where all of the information the employer seeks is listed. Notice the title, company name, date of service, and so forth are listed in reverse chronological order of the resume. This is the format you should use when communicating this information on paper.
For example:

{Your contact information on letterhead that matches your resume and cover letter}

SALARY HISTORY

Director of Sales & Marketing
ABC Corporation, Cleveland, OH
June 2004 - January 2008
Annual Salary: $78,000

(or)

Director of Sales & Marketing
ABC Corporation, Cleveland, OH
June 2004 - January 2008
Beginning Salary: $75K, plus insurance, 401(k) and travel expenses
Ending Salary: $78K, plus insurance, 401(k) and travel expenses
(Campbell, 2009)

When presenting information to a potential employer, it is crucial that you take into account your compensation package in its entirety. You should include your 401(k), medical/dental benefits, bonus potential, commission plan, stocks, and any other employee benefits extended to you as a valued associate of that company. Everything in your package adds up to a dollar amount and could make a significant impact on your compensation increase or decrease as a result of employment with a new company.

The main reason why a company wants your salary history is to be able to make sure that you are “qualified” compensation wise and that they are not over or under recruiting the best talent for the position. Salary history also gives the company the advantage when it comes to negotiating time. For this reason, only provide salary history information if you are asked to do so. At the negotiating table, you don’t want to play any cards prematurely (Campbell, 2009).
Resources

- Career Insider powered by Vault (Access through your HireACane account)
- O*Net
- Occupational Outlook Handbook
- City-data.com
- Salary Calculators
  - www.salary.com/
  - www.payscale.com/salary-calculator/
  - www.salaryexpert.com/

References:


VIII. Pursuing Entrepreneurship as a Career

An entrepreneur is someone who organizes, manages, and assumes the risks of a business or enterprise. An entrepreneur is also an agent of change and entrepreneurship is the process of discovering new ways of combining resources in an effort to create value for a business, stakeholders and greater community. When the market value generated by this new combination of resources is greater than the market value these resources can generate elsewhere individually or in some other combination, the entrepreneur makes a profit.

Entrepreneurship occurs for several and often multiple reasons:
- Desire to own a business and work for oneself
- Strong need to see an opportunity be exploited
- Internal drive
- Loss of job
- Unfulfilling corporate, work or personal experience
- Financial objectives
- Unique skill or experience

Being an entrepreneur is more than just starting a business, it is about having the attitude and the drive to succeed. All entrepreneurs have a similar way of thinking and possess several key personal qualities that make them successful. They are often very ambitious, set massive goals and stay committed to achieving them regardless of obstacles. Entrepreneurs have a passionate desire to do things better and to improve their product or service. They are creative, innovative and resourceful.

Entrepreneurial opportunities can come from many sources:
- Personal interests
- Prior experience or unique knowledge
- Societal or economic changes
- Technology or industry changes
- Franchise, business purchase and family business

Entrepreneurship often involves substantial innovation beyond what a small business might exhibit. This innovation gives the venture the competitive advantage that results in wealth creation. The innovation may be in the product or service itself, or in the business processes used to deliver it.

Rather than simply generating an income stream that replaces traditional employment, a successful entrepreneurial venture creates substantial wealth. In addition, while a successful small business can generate several million dollars of profit over a lifetime, entrepreneurial wealth creation often is rapid.
Entrepreneurship Principles:

Acknowledge and accept the magnitude of the task you are undertaking:

- The entrepreneur and team are critical
- Know what you know – know what you do not know
- Surround yourself with knowledge and resources
- Manage resources wisely and conservatively
- Capital is key
- Be flexible and open – constantly plan, listen, understand, adapt and adjust
- Manage both successes and failures to your advantage
- Commitment, patience, time, persistence, favorable circumstances are essential
- Ask for help
- Effort does not always equal outcome
- Try and try again

Questions to answer before you make a decision to start a business:

1. What problem am I solving?
2. What is my solution to that problem?
3. Who are the competitors?
4. What is unique about my solution?
5. Who is my target market?
6. How big is the market?
7. How do I plan to market/advertise to potential customers?
8. What is the cost of my services/products?

These questions can assist you when preparing to create a business plan. To review resources that are available to you please visit the U.S. Small Business Administration for step-by-step instructions on creating your plan. Through this resource you will learn how to create an executive summary, business description and vision, definition of the market, and description of services and products. You may gain support through the Toppel Career Center. The Toppel Career Center offers career guidance, resources, and advice to entrepreneurs, innovators, and inventors at the University of Miami through The Launch Pad.

One basic goal of The Launch Pad is to show University of Miami students and alumni that starting a new venture is a legitimate career path and a viable way to make a living. A second key goal is to encourage every UM student and alumni who wants to start a new venture, either for-profit or non-profit, to do so in South Florida and thereby contribute to the economic and social growth of our region.
Through regular individual and group consultative sessions, workshops, networking events, and local Venture Coaches, The Launch Pad is strengthening an entrepreneurial culture at the University of Miami and helping students and alumni from every school, college, and campus transform innovative ideas into successful and sustainable South Florida enterprises. The Launch Pad programs connect ideas, people, and resources through building relationships with experts in the local business community. Through these relationships, there is a likelihood of bringing new enterprises to South Florida.

To contact the Launch Pad call 305-284-2789 or email at TheLaunchPad@miami.edu. For more information please visit the Launch Pad website. The hours of operation for the center are Monday – Friday 9am – 6pm. For additional resources please visit the Launch Pad resources section of the website.