



Mortar Board

Scholars...Chosen for Leadership...United to Serve

COLLEGIATE NEWS

Job-search tips for recession grads

The discouraging fact is that the U.S. is in a recession, and things may not bounce back until 2011. It isn't all glass-half-empty, though. Some industries are booming, and with a few tips from Mortar Board and a budget-savvy lifestyle, a recent graduate like you can find a way to come out on top.

Get prepped

Know yourself and your skills. Make lists of your strengths, weaknesses, skills, interests and examples of each. You will need to be familiar with these facts in order to use them in job interviews.

Work hard on your résumé. Use action verbs to describe responsibilities, ensure that all information is accurate and complete, and make certain the document has a crisp, clean appearance. Your university's career services office may offer assistance and examples. Need more help? Find out what a U.S. News & World Report blogger says are the seven things you should leave off your résumé.

Talk to professors and supervisors about being references. Ask permission to use someone as a reference and supply them with information about you, your job search and interests.

Market yourself. Think of yourself as a brand and market yourself appropriately. Create a profile and actively participate in discussions and groups on LinkedIn. Build your own Web site or blog with an easy-to-find URL. Get business cards complete with your professional e-mail address (sorry, "cuteshoelover" and "footballrules" are not professional - unless you design shoes or are a referee.) Marketing yourself thoroughly and professionally can help your name rise to the top of an applicant pool.

Clean up your brand. When thinking of yourself as a brand, you certainly don't want negative aspects floating around. Clean up social networking profiles and increase privacy settings. Remove distasteful photos. Google your name to see what an employer could find and clean up what you can.

Launch the search

Start early, and spend your time wisely. Know how much time it typically takes to find a job in your field (3 to 9 months is the average amount of time before graduation that you should begin your search) and structure your search accordingly.

Network. Often, candidates find jobs and employers find employees through personal connections. Improve your odds of landing the perfect position by networking with friends, family, professors, professional organizations and student organizations - whomever you can! Talk about the types of jobs you are searching for and your qualifications, and a match may already be waiting. In these trying economic times, a personal connection will help you get a jumpstart on the process.

Combine new and old job search techniques. There are a variety of places and techniques to learn about openings: word of mouth, professional organizations, school career services offices, job boards such as the Mortar Board Career Center, and a multitude of company and career Web sites.

Consider government jobs. Plentiful government jobs are expected to be available in 2009. You can search online for federal or state-level jobs. Don't forget that all Mortar Board members are eligible for federal government employment entrance at the GS-7 ranking, which can mean an instant pay increase for certain jobs.



Find your job with Mortar Board

In conjunction with JobTarget, Mortar Board has launched the Mortar Board Career Center, a search engine for all members, both collegiate and alumni. Mortar Board members are able to search for a variety of jobs, both nationally and locally. National employers will have the ability to post positions and exclusively recruit Mortar Board members. Anonymous resumes can be posted and easily searched and seen by potential employers. Start searching today at www.mortarboard.org.

Need a scholarship? Search now.

Mortar Board's specialized scholarship search engine, hosted by Scholarship Monkey, gives members access to more than a million scholarships with more than \$3 billion in awards.

Browse the search engine now.



www.mortarboard.org/merch

Recognize which industries are hiring. In addition to government jobs, the fields of accounting, engineering, energy and health care are doing well.

Hone in on specifics. Determine certain industries, companies and locations you would like to target in your search. To find Mortar Board contacts in these specific areas, use the Career & Graduate School Network.

Interviewing for success

Research. Learn all you can about the company before the interview. Read reports, visit the Web site, scan newsletters and stay up-to-date on any major changes within the company.

Know some common interview questions. You should arrive prepared and ready to answer anything that comes your way. Here are a few common questions to launch your preparations.

- Why are you interested in this position/company?
- Tell me about yourself.
- What are your strengths/weaknesses?
- Where do you see yourself five years from now?
- Do you have any questions for me?

Prepare good questions. An interview is a two-way street; you and your interviewer should be learning from each other. Make sure you address key questions about job responsibilities but steer away from questions already covered by the company or inappropriate (i.e. salary and benefits questions). Some good questions to ask:

- Can you explain what a typical day in this role would be like?
- What skills do you consider most relevant for this position?
- What qualities should your ideal candidate for this job possess?
- What is the next step in this process?

Dress the part. Dressing appropriately often is synonymous for wearing a suit. Pay attention to the details of your appearance and limit jewelry. For men, this means more than a watch is a little much. Don't forget to top off that great first impression you'll make with a strong handshake.

Sound natural, not rehearsed. You want to sound prepared with your responses, but not unnatural or mechanical. Practice with a friend or record your responses and listen to them yourself. Don't be afraid to tell the potential employer about your skills and accomplishments.

Don't read your résumé verbatim. There is no need to simply rehash facts already stated on your résumé. Employers have already read it, and this document should serve as a jumping off point for questions. Expand upon what you've included in your résumé to give the employer more detail.

Be appreciative. Nothing says "thank you" like a thoughtful, hand-written note. These notes should be written and mailed immediately after the interview to your interviewers and company contacts. Depending on mail time and the day of the week, you may want to follow-up with an immediate e-mail after the interview while your card is in the mail.

Seal the deal. Make sure you thoroughly read any offers you receive, research average salaries in your field, and know what's expected in your new position.

How to prepare for behavioral interviewing

Behavioral interviewing is a strategy used by interviewers to learn how you have reacted in past situations and gauge how you may handle a similar situation or project with their company. An interviewee can tell an employer wants a response in a behavioral format if they use phrases such as "please describe" or "tell me about a time when."

The best way to prepare for these types of questions is to make lists of situations illustrating your skills and strengths that you can use as a response to a variety of behavioral interview situations. Concrete results or effects are very helpful in illustrating the strengths you are seeking to highlight.

Answer behavioral questions by:

1. Describing the situation or circumstance in which you found yourself or the task with which you were faced
2. Explain the action(s) you took in the situation
3. Share the end result, stressing positive impacts you made

Some common behavioral interview questions are:

- Can you describe a time where you needed to use teamwork to solve a problem?
- Please give me an example of a time when you had to assume a leadership role unexpectedly.
- Give me an example of a time when you had a conflict with a teammate or coworker and how you solved it.
- Explain a time when you went above and beyond what was needed.

For more information, visit the resources section of the Mortar Board Career Center. This section connects you with career coaches, allows you to share questions with experts, and provides free access to a library of great articles with tips for interviewing and job searching.

Mortar Board hiring summer intern

Interested in learning the ins and outs of a national honor society? The Mortar Board National Office in Columbus, Ohio is hiring a part-time intern to work a 12-week period over the summer. Interns should have strong computer and customer service skills, and can be of any major or field of study. Responsibilities will vary, but include:

- Leading the conference registration process, compiling information and travel plans for delegates
- Working on logistical conference details such as event seating charts, rooming lists, enlisting volunteers to help with event set-up, and confirming event details
- Coordinating the evaluation process for the conference, including assisting with the design of the evaluation forms and tabulating statistics after the conference
- Assisting with post-conference follow-up as needed with vendors and attendees

Opportunities can be targeted to specific majors and interests. For example, interns may be able to assist with communications-related tasks such as writing magazine or newsletter articles, assisting with brochure revisions, and brainstorming unique marketing techniques.

If you plan on spending the summer in Columbus, Ohio and are looking for a part-time paid internship with flexible hours, consider joining the Mortar Board National Office team. Class credit may be possible with your university. To learn more, view a complete job description online. Applicants should submit a letter of interest and résumé to Megan Stevens (mstevens@mortarboard.org) by April 30.