

SEARCHING FOR A JOB IN POST-RECESSION 2014: What does and doesn't matter for recent graduates.

The statistics in the media are not encouraging: The job market for young professionals is more competitive than ever. The competition is not local, or even national any more, it's global. More than half of recent college graduates are working in jobs that don't require a college degree. More than half of students are moving back home after graduation because of the exorbitant cost of urban living.

And after devoting most of their lives to academic discovery and achievement, recent graduates are expected to have had several impactful internships, be brilliant networkers, have a perfect LinkedIn profile and have built and managed dynamic teams across time zones, all with perfect grace.

It can be overwhelming. But it doesn't have to be.

Like most things, the media focuses on shock value to get readers' attention, and while some of the statistics are valid, the truth is that if you know how to approach the job search campaign, it's no different than any major project.

Like any task, it can be broken down into manageable, digestible, solvable steps.

So, for parents who want to empower their recent graduates (read: get them out of the house) and for graduates who want to cross that seminal barrier to adulthood (read: get out of the house), here are some of the best practices we have gathered at GoBeyond, gleaned from successfully working with hundreds of young professionals and their supportive families.

THE RESUME

WHAT MATTERS › Results, clarity, grammar, a storyline. This is your calling card and needs to showcase the specifics of what you did, without boring the reader. The only objective with this document is to get you in front of the hiring manager for an in-person interview.

WHAT DOESN'T MATTER › Summary statements, references, gaps. Focus on a clear story that bridges gaps and thus doesn't require a summary. Growth is more important than failure or wrong turns.

THE INTERVIEW

WHAT MATTERS › Preparation and more preparation. Your passion. Listening actively. Connection. Interviews are one of those things, like public speaking, that we improve on the more we do it. The GoBeyond model is so successful because we optimize the number of relevant opportunities, it means the power (and thus the choice) swings from the employer to the candidate.

WHAT DOESN'T MATTER › How much you KNOW. Matching every desired skill set in the job posting. You've secured the interview because they want to talk to you. But that doesn't mean they expect you to understand the minutiae of the business. In fact, it can work against you so focus on the person across from you, be genuine, and be prepared.

THE JOB

WHAT MATTERS › Your manager. The team. Personal growth opportunity. The company's prospects. Most young professionals will stay in their first job less than 3 years, so clearly assess what you can contribute and what you hope to gain while you're there.

WHAT DOESN'T MATTER › Function. Industry. Compensation. Well, this is not entirely true. But if you have a broader background, starting in sales operations doesn't mean you can't move to marketing. As for compensation, this is not to say you don't want to negotiate, but if how much you get paid is driving your decision, be careful! Even if your path seems clear – say you're a computer science major from MIT and know you want to code – there are numerous ways in which you can put your skills to use while putting yourself in an ideal environment where you can learn and grow.