INSIDER REPORT: The New Graduate’s 10 Secrets for a Great Job Offer

Peggy McKee
The Biggest, Most Important Job Search Tip EVER

No matter what you do, if you’re just starting out or you’ve worked for decades...

For an employer, the psychological act of choosing someone to hire is amazingly similar to a consumer choosing a product to buy.

Think about the process of being a consumer:

- You want a product that **solves a problem** for you or helps you **reach a goal**. You want it to be **useful**, **effective**, and a **good deal** for your money—although you’ll absolutely **pay more** for something that provides some kind of **extra value or benefit**.
- You may do some research on a few products you
think might work for you. You’ll probably read some reviews. You may talk to a salesperson to ask a few questions. Then you’ll make a decision and buy one.

In this analogy, the **employer is the consumer**, or the customer.

**You** (as the potential employee) are the product. You are the entity that will provide **value, solutions, and/or benefits to the company**.

And, you’re not only the product—**you’re the sales rep**. You have features and benefits the buyer (employer) needs to know about. You have to ‘advertise’ effectively to **get their attention** and **show your value**. Your salary is the purchase price of your ‘product’.

![Diagram](https://CareerConfidential.com)

When you realize that your job search is a sales process, it fundamentally changes how you approach it AND how successful you are at it.

With this approach, you have a better chance to get the job
you want—now and with each new job for the rest of your life.

What’s in this guide...

- LinkedIn Profile
- References
- Resume
- Cover Letter
- Target Companies
- Target Hiring Managers
- Phone Interview
- Face-to-Face Interview
- Thank You Note / Follow Up
- Negotiating the Offer
- Resources for You
LinkedIn Profile

LinkedIn is like a marketplace. This is where hiring managers and recruiters are and they actively search LinkedIn for great candidates all the time. You want them to contact YOU about job opportunities. And you need to be networking here.

Get on LinkedIn and Optimize Your Profile

1. Use a Strategic Headline - Not Necessarily Your Job Title

Use what you’re looking to do as a headline—using keywords that matter for that job. (So recruiters and hiring managers will find you when they search for someone with your skill set or degree.)

If you’re not sure, check out what thought leaders in your field are using. What are rising stars in your field doing? See how their tactics can apply to you.

Peggy I. McKee
Career Coach/Recruiter/CEO at Career Confidential
Gunter, Texas | Management Consulting

500+ connections

Current
Career Confidential, PRC Consulting
Previous
Chiron Corporation, Bio-Rad Laboratories
Education
University of Oklahoma
Recommendations
11 people have recommended Peggy I.
2. **Use a Business-Appropriate Photo**

The only truly “acceptable-to-everyone” photo for LinkedIn is a head-and-shoulders shot of you smiling confidently, wearing business-appropriate clothing.

Check out this article for tips on how to appear professional and approachable: *LinkedIn Profile Photo Tips: Choose the Picture that Will Help You Get Hired*

3. **Don’t Just Upload Your Resume**

LinkedIn encourages users to upload your resume, but don’t. You can do a lot more with LinkedIn than that:

- **Highlight** some of your best work accomplishments using **numbers, dollars, and percentages** (more below).
- **Add video** of you delivering your elevator pitch.
- **Add links** to your website, **blog articles you’ve written**, or projects you participated in.
• Mention your volunteer work, club activities, participation in research projects, or internships.

Again, if you’re unsure, look at what leaders in your field are doing and see if you can adapt some of it to your own situation.

Use LinkedIn to Network

LinkedIn is typically where the people who own and run the businesses are. So...

1. **Find the names and emails of hiring managers (and recruiters) and contact them directly** to let them know who you are and what you do.

2. **Use your connections to secure informational interviews or job shadows.** See this blog post about [why and how to set up a job shadow](https://CareerConfidential.com).
Join Groups

Join groups filled with people working in your field—not job seeker groups. You need to be speaking with the people who have the connections and information you need.

• Pick up information on *industry thoughts and trends*.
• Get to be known by asking great questions.
• Find *job postings* that aren’t on LinkedIn’s job board (or anywhere else). However...don’t apply for these jobs here. Figure out who the hiring manager is and contact them directly (more on that below).

References

All references are a walking, talking Yelp review for you—a huge influence on hiring decisions. When people qualify for a job and don’t get it, it may be that bad references ruined their chances at the job.

**The best references are those who have directly experienced your work:**
• **Former bosses** (even if your high school or college jobs didn’t directly relate to your degree) can speak to your **work ethic, initiative and integrity**. (Waiting tables and other jobs are valuable. Employers know they develop skills like customer-service, communication, organization, and even time management.)

• **Volunteer work**—work experience doesn’t have to be paid work to be valuable.

• **Teachers or Professors** may be able to speak to your knowledge, technical skill sets, or character.

**Coach Your References**

Coach every reference before they speak to a potential employer:

• Let them know **what job** it is that you’re going for
• Suggest a few things they might **highlight** about you
Not only does that alert them that they’re about to be contacted, it jogs their memory so that they can be the most effective reference possible for you.

Find more information here (for now and in the future):

- **Job-Winning References: What to Do, and What Not to Do**

- **What Will Your Job References Say About You? Don't Mention THIS in Your Interview** – Audio (This is a BIG mistake many job seekers make.)

**Resume**

If the job search is a sales process, then your resume is your ‘marketing brochure.’ It should grab the attention and interest of hiring managers so that they want to talk to you to find out more.

Don’t worry if your resume is a little light—that’s OK. You don’t have to try and embellish anything or worry that it’s not good enough.

https://CareerConfidential.com
The most important thing you can do is shape what you DO have into something that appeals to a hiring manager.

**Numbers, Dollars, and Percentages**

Adding quantification to your resume (numbers, dollars, and percentages) is THE single biggest resume improvement ANYONE can make, regardless of age or level of experience.

A quantified resume is one that specifically includes numbers, dollars, and percentages (#s, $s, and %s) to help describe your accomplishments.

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<td>Responsible for bringing in new clients</td>
<td>• Brought in 20 clients in 3 months</td>
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<td>Responsible for delivering product on time and under budget</td>
<td>• 98% on-time product delivery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dean's List</td>
<td>• Maintained 3.7 GPA over 4 years</td>
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Why is adding quantification such a powerful improvement? Numbers:

- **Provide hard evidence**—a concrete framework for what you’ve done.
- **Create a ‘wow’ factor**—even if they aren’t the biggest or the best. Having them is enough. They grab attention and stand out in the text.
• **Create a Halo Effect.** They set a positive bias in that hiring manager’s mind about you. They’ll perceive that you have more value.

As a recruiter, **even if my clients are guaranteed an interview** based on my relationship with the company, I **still** make them quantify their resumes because of the halo effect. They even get stronger job offers.

So if you AREN’T guaranteed an interview, how much more important is it that you quantify YOUR resume?

Go through your resume today and translate your achievements into numbers, dollars, or percentages that speak the hiring manager's language: "How can this person benefit MY company?"

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**Extreme Resume Makeover Kit**

- Perfect Template- Personalized for You
- 400 Examples of Quantification
- Coaching and Personal Review

[Create a Job-Winning Resume Now](https://CareerConfidential.com)
Cover Letter

Your cover letter’s job is to get the employer to read your resume. It’s like an ad that generates interest.

**Never, ever skip a cover letter.**

It’s true...some employers won’t read it—but those who do will place a high value on how you present yourself. Your letter will **set a bias** about you in their mind.

**Rules for a Compelling Cover Letter**

- Target it to the **specific company and job** (no generic form letters).
- Be engaging – use **your own voice and personality** (no need for stilted formality), but keep it at a level of professional communication.
- Use **bullet points** to make it easy to read or skim.
- Use **quantification** to grab attention (just like with your resume).
• Include a **Call to Action** (say when you’ll be contacting them to follow up).
• Sending your resume by email? The cover letter should be the **BODY** of the email, NOT an attachment.

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**Podcast Giveaway – How to Write a Cover Letter**

[Download Your Free Cover Letter](#)
[Podcast Here](#)

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**Target Companies**

In the job search, you’re the product and the hiring manager is your customer. If you want them to “buy,” you have to get your product in front of them.

The problem you have is that your customer has a **gatekeeper**— the Human Resources department in charge of online applications.

**Online applications are the enemy of every job seeker** –but especially so if you are not the letter-perfect, ideal candidate.
HR’s goal is to weed out everyone who’s not ideal and present the busy head of that department with a short list of people to talk to. They cut:

- Everyone without “enough” experience
- People who live in the wrong city (even if you’re willing to move yourself)
- Resumes without experience in a certain software or program (even if you have something almost exactly the same)

**If you could do the job but you’re not getting interviews from online applications, you MUST go directly to the hiring manager.**

It takes a few minutes to explain this concept fully, so we developed a 1-hour webinar to teach you why you must stop applying and contact hiring managers (and how it’s done):

Free Training Webinar
*Stop Applying and Get Hired Instantly*

The 70%-80% of all jobs that aren’t advertised at any given time are considered ‘hidden’ jobs—part of the ‘hidden job market.’

Even if you’re conservative and assume it’s only 50%, that means there is at least ONE MORE job available for every one that you see online.

Why would companies not advertise their job if they want people to fill it? They...

• haven’t gotten around to it yet—they’re slammed with work
• can’t agree with HR on a job description, so it hasn’t been approved yet
• are still reeling that their best employee just quit
• don’t like to advertise—too many unqualified applicants to sort through
• prefer finding candidates through people they know—employees, acquaintances, their network, or recruiters
There are all kinds of reasons a job may not be advertised yet.

But...if you happen to contact the hiring manager at the right time, you’ve just put yourself in front of the line for that job. If you introduce yourself as a solution or as someone who brings benefits or who can help them get the work done, they may be thrilled to interview and hire you immediately.

This approach can put you into your dream job in your dream company.

Read:

*How to Find Hidden Jobs and Get Interviews*

Attend Free Webinar:

*How to Get Hired in 6 Weeks—Guaranteed!*
Phone Interview

Phone interviews are also known as phone screens—for good reason: they’re a **weeding out** process.

Even though they liked you enough to call you, they also liked several other people—more than they have time to interview in person.

**They’re looking for reasons NOT to like you, so they can cut you off the list quickly and get on to the ones who will be worth it.**

For this reason, it’s important to bring your ‘A’ game...

- **Prepare** for the phone interview like you would an on-site interview.
- **Research** the company (don’t wait until the interview to ask questions you could find answers to with Google).
- **Practice** answering common phone interview questions.
- **Have a few smart questions to ask** them (be
strategic—ask things that will help you ace the on-site interview).

- **Close** – ask if they feel comfortable moving you forward to the face-to-face.
- **Follow up** with a prompt thank you note.

Here are several free resources to help you with phone interviews:

**Giveaway:**

[Phone Interview Tips Podcast](https://CareerConfidential.com)

**Blog Series:**

[Phone Interview Tips](https://CareerConfidential.com)

**Blog Article:**

[Skype Interview Tips](https://CareerConfidential.com)
Face-to-Face Interview

The #1 Rule for Crushing a Job Interview is:

You Must Be Better Prepared Than Your Competition.

The best-prepared candidate makes the best impression, has the best interview, and almost always gets the offer. To make that happen, you have things to do before the interview, during the interview, and after the interview.

Before You Get to the Interview...

Research

Know as much as you can about the company's:

- History and Locations
- Products/Services
- Sales processes (if you're in sales)
- Finances
- Plans (Recent News?)
- Noteworthy executives
- Operating challenges and approaches
- Anything else you can find out prior to stepping into the room
How do you find it?

- Do an internet search
- Check out LinkedIn – the company’s LinkedIn page and executive profiles
- Ask your network (try to get the inside story on what is happening at your prospective company and be prepared to talk about it)
- Check blogs and social media pages of company executives and managers (looking for background, career path, and focus)

***If you haven't done this job before, consider arranging a job shadow to get a better grasp of the day-to-day details.

Prepare and Practice Interview Answers

The face-to-face interview is where you truly ‘sell’ yourself for the job. With your research, you’ve learned a lot about your ‘customer’ so that you can focus with laser-like precision on what they want and need for this role.

You’re not selling like a used-car salesman...you’re selling like an informed expert on this product (your skills) and how they can help this potential ‘buyer.’ You ARE the expert. They won’t know much about you unless you tell them.
Your interview answers should be targeted to the interests of that hiring manager.

With your research in mind, have stories ready that demonstrate **how you've handled difficult situations or challenges** in the past. Your stories don’t have to be about specific skills of that job (although it’s great if they are). They can highlight similar skills or qualities you have that would help you in the role.

Practice your answers to common interview questions (seriously consider role-playing interview questions with a coach). The more prepared you are, the more confident you'll be...and you'll appear more competent and trustworthy.

**Read:** [101 Tough Job Interview Questions and Answers](#)

**Watch:** [50 Job Interview Questions and Answers](#) (first 5 are free)

**Explore:** [Career Confidential Coaches Listing Page](#) to find a coach who’s right for you
Create a 30/60/90-Day Plan for Your Interview

A 30-60-90-Day Plan acts like a ‘test-drive’ of what it will be like for them if and when they hire you.

If you’ve ever bought a car from a dealership of any kind, you know that the sales rep wants to get you in that car for a drive. If you drive it, you’re more likely to buy it. The same psychological principal works in the interview process.

The last time I used a plan like this in my job search, I got 5 job offers.

*What Is a 30-60-90-Day Plan?*

It’s an outline of what action steps you plan to take in the first 3 months of your new job. It is specifically tailored to that job.

A typical plan might include things like:

- 1️⃣ 30 Days – Orientation and Training
- 2️⃣ 30 Days – Establishing Roots – Getting Deeper into the Process
• 3rd 30 Days – Branching Out to Make Improvements or Grow the Business

Even though all jobs are different, every job has action steps that must be completed in order for you to be considered “successful.”

You research and create your plan before you go to the interview. During the interview, you talk over your plan with the interviewer / hiring manager. If anything isn’t correct, the feedback helps you fix it. The hiring manager gets an up-close look into your critical thinking skills and approach to this job.

_How Does a 30-60-90-Day Plan Help You Get the Job?_

A plan helps you know more about the job. It helps you communicate with the hiring manager much more clearly about what you are capable of. It not only shows that you can do the job well, it demonstrates your work ethic, enthusiasm, commitment, and knowledge.

These things are all especially important if you’ve never worked in that role.

30-60-90-Day Plans are a huge topic...check out these blog articles for much more information:

https://CareerConfidential.com
Ask Questions in the Interview

Asking questions in the interview:

- Shows your interest in the job and strategic thinking skills
- Gives you information you can use to answer their questions more effectively
- Turns the interview into a conversation and highlights your confidence and appeal
- Gives you critical information you need to make an informed decision about whether or not to accept an offer
• Gives you the information you need to do a better job of selling yourself

A few words of warning...

Never, ever ask about salary, healthcare, or other benefits during the interview. You want them to want you before you start talking money.

Here are some great questions to ask:

1. *What are you looking for in an ideal candidate?* This will give you an idea of what skills they want and what key points in your experience you want to highlight.

2. *Does company management encourage promoting from within the organization?* Find out about possibilities to advance your career.

3. *In what way does this position fit into the long-term goals of the organization?* Look for an answer to define the purpose of this job, the security of the position, and the potential for long-term growth.

4. *Where do you think your team needs improvement and how do you see the person in this role contributing to that?* This gives you an opportunity to come back with the qualities that they said they needed.

5. *What were the positive and negative attributes of the
person who held this position before me? The hiring manager will be able to give you clues as to what they liked about your predecessor and what they did wrong that you can avoid.

6. How would I be evaluated in this position and who would be responsible for the evaluations? Finding out this answer will give you more insight into the priorities for candidate and who will be managing you in the position.

7. Why would a candidate want to work for you instead of your competitor and why would they stay? You are giving them an opportunity to sell you on the position now and to give you some ideas about whether the job would be right for you.

And the most important question of all to ask:

Based on our conversation today, can you see me being successful in this role?

While this may feel pretty bold or even slightly pushy, this aggressiveness and honesty in asking for the job is what gets people hired. If you find out what misgivings they have before you leave the interview, you will have a chance to
clear things up and counter their doubts--and quite possibly save your job offer.

Get in-depth guidance on how to answer interview questions, bring a 30-60-90-day plan, and ask for the job in my free training webinar: Perfect Interview Answers

Thank You Note / Follow Up

A great way to stand out from your competition and tip the hiring scales in your favor is to send a substantial thank you note.

Your note should:

- Be genuinely appreciative
- Specifically reference the conversation you just had and your fit for the job

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• Possibly add something new to the discussion that shows you’ve thought about it critically
• Let them know when you will follow up

If they don't get back to you when they said they would, wait a day or two and call them. Don’t let them ghost you. You deserve an answer, whether it’s yes or no.

This kind of follow up is not pushy or intrusive...it's good, professional communication. It shows your continued interest in the job. I’ve talked to many hiring managers who didn’t hear back from a candidate and assumed they were no longer interested. That shouldn’t be a thing, but it is.

The job search is a sales process.

You are in charge of moving it forward as much as you can.

Download my Free Report on Following Up after the Interview

(+ see a video on how to follow up)
Negotiating Your Offer

When you receive your offer, don’t be afraid to ask for a little more—but it doesn’t necessarily have to be cash.

Every job offer has at least SOME room for negotiating. If the offer is firm, they’ll let you know.

You may be able to ask for more money based on your research of fair salaries for entry level people in your region, but it may be easier to negotiate for benefits or perks that add to the value of the offer. Parking fees, advanced training, vacation days, flexible hours, a higher percentage for any bonuses...you have a lot of options to choose from.

Always approach your negotiation from a positive point of view.

This is (hopefully) the beginning of a mutually beneficial relationship.

Here’s a good article from Forbes on how to research salaries when job hunting.
Salary Negotiations Webinar

I did a webinar with the guru of salary negotiations, Jack Chapman. He is a fountain of information on how to react and what to say at every step of this process.

Listen to the recorded webinar here.

Never leave money on the table in a job offer salary negotiation again!
Resource Links

LinkedIn Profile Tutorial
https://careerconfidential.com/linkedin-profile-tutorial-product-reviews/

Job Shadowing
https://careerconfidential.com/fastest-way-find-a-job-tip14/

Job Winning References
https://careerconfidential.com/job-winning-references/

References Mistake (Audio)
https://careerconfidential.com/job-references/

Extreme Resume Makeover Kit

Cover Letter Podcast Giveaway
https://careerconfidential.com/specials/podcastpick/

Free Training Webinar – Stop Applying for Jobs and Get Hired Instantly
How to Find Hidden Jobs and Get Interviews

How to Get Hired in 6 Weeks—Guaranteed!
https://careerconfidential.com/webinar-signup-get-hired-in-6-weeks-guaranteed/

Phone Interview Podcast Giveaway
https://careerconfidential.com/phone-interview-tips/

Phone Interview Tips Blog Series
https://careerconfidential.com/phone-interview-tips-series/

Skype interview
https://careerconfidential.com/3-best-tips-to-ace-your-skype-interview/

How to Answer Interview Questions Series
https://careerconfidential.com/how-to-answer-interview-questions-series/

How to Answer Interview Questions VIDEOS
https://careerconfidential.com/members/job-interview-questions-answers-video-series/
30 60 90 Day Plans

- https://careerconfidential.com/7-reasons-a-30-60-90-day-plan-will-get-you-hired/
- https://careerconfidential.com/this-is-why-you-need-to-bring-a-30-60-90-day-plan-to-your-first-interview/
- https://careerconfidential.com/5-tips-for-writing-the-most-effective-30-60-90-day-plan/

Best interview questions to ask
https://careerconfidential.com/best-interview-questions/

Webinar Signup – Perfect Interview Answers
https://careerconfidential.com/webinar-signup-perfect-interview-answers/

Download a Free Report on Following Up after the Interview
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