

Tips for Success

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Your reputation in your chosen field is the one thing that sets you aside from everyone else. Always work to maintain and improve it.

The strongest tool you have next to your reputation is your communication skills. Communicate clearly when speaking to potential employers. Don't use nonwords, such as "umm" or "uhh." Before you go to a job fair, an interview or any other networking event, practice speaking in front of a group of friends, family members or coworkers.

Keep in touch with previous employers. You'll never know when you'll need advice to solve a problem, a person to bounce an idea off of, or a reference.

Leave a positive impression everywhere that you go. This starts in your first college class. You never know which one of your current classmates will be your boss someday. And you never know just how connected your professors are to working professionals. (After all, who do you think taught those working professionals?)

Don't be afraid to ask for help. This is especially important when preparing résumés and cover letters. Ask a friend or a colleague to proofread your work objectively. A second set of eyes never hurts. One misspelling in your résumé is all you need to disqualify you from your dream job.

Don't ever say anything bad about anyone. You'd be surprised how much that can hurt you in the professional world.

When you have a job interview, take the time to drive to the location a few days before the interview. Find out how long it will take you to get there, where to park your car, what tolls you may have to pay, and what detours to avoid, if any. This way, you'll save time worrying on interview day and you'll avoid some of the stress along the way.

If you have an interview for a job you think you'd really like, make it to the final round of interviewees, and don't get the job, send a thank you card to each member of the hiring committee once you've learned that you weren't the choice. Write something similar to: "Thank you for taking the time to interview me. I enjoyed meeting with you, and I'm sorry you have chosen someone else. If anything should change, please let me know." Ten percent of the people who do this get that job. Why? Because the person the committee initially chose already accepted another offer.

When you attend a networking function, always wear your nametag on your right side. When you go to shake someone's hand, your nametag will stand out. Also, hold your drink in your left hand. If not, people will remember your cold and clammy handshake.