

# Confidence, creativity key for new grads

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by [Kimberlee Milne](#)

Entry-level positions are supposed to be just that, but recent college grads are noticing increased expectations. As Kate Lorenz of [CareerBuilder.com](#) said, "No experience means no job, and no job means no experience."

How should a young person with no real job experience overcome this hurdle? On the positive side, employers are increasing their entry-level hiring by 7.3 percent this year, according to [collegegrad.com](#). But for those who aren't so lucky to be chosen for one of those positions, here are some tips for young adults looking to claim their first job.

First, master the résumé.

- Look at examples to gain ideas of various layout and format options. Choose one that works for you and experiment. Ask your friends or your parents for examples that you can relate to.
- Market yourself by paying extra attention to the areas in which you have experience. Highlight any internships, volunteer experience or previous jobs that will help you in your field.
- Change your objective statement to cater to your audience for every single résumé you send.
- Proofread over and over. Don't rely on spellcheck. Give your résumé to someone else to read, and take their editing suggestions.
- Make a reference sheet, and contact the people you'd like to list for references. Talk about things they might want to talk about if they get a call.

After you've formatted your résumé, send it to your target companies. Follow up if you don't hear anything. And don't give up if your first round of résumés goes without correspondence.

Check out other options, and try again.

Make sure you are being realistic about the jobs you are applying for. It's not necessarily important to land in your field right away; if you can get into a company through another avenue and will have a chance for promotion to the department you'd like, try that.

Now you must master the interview.

- Make a list of your strengths and weaknesses. Find words that will make you stand out and that will positively highlight your weaknesses in a way that shows you can overcome them.
- Be ready to answer general interview questions, such as why you want to work for the company, how your friends would describe you, why you picked your major and what your plans for the future are.
- Know everything there is to know about the company. Study its Web site, printed materials, competitors and past. Find out about its plans for the future, and incorporate what you can bring to the table and how it fits into those plans.
- Remain confident. Confidence comes with practice. Set up mock interviews with family, friends and even your college career office.
- Don't lie. This will get you nowhere.

Even if you aren't completely positive you want to work for a company that's offered an interview, participate to get the interview practice. Always take advantage of any opportunity to sell yourself. You are not under obligation to take a job after a first or even second interview. Keep an open mind outlook and learn as much as you can from each experience.

Having little or no experience doesn't have to mean no job. If you market yourself properly, you'll land a terrific first job that will give you a great starting point to a great career.

## Practice Run

Before a job interview, build your confidence through practice interviews. Solicit friends, family, even your college career office to conduct sessions and give feedback.

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