



**DRIVEN**  
**TO SUCCEED**

**HOW TO START YOUR CAREER AFTER COLLEGE**

**J A S O N N A V A L L O**

# **Driven to Succeed**

How to Start Your Career after College

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# What will you learn from this book?

How to start your career after college. More importantly, you will learn how to find and get the right job to start a successful career after college.

If you're asking yourself:

- Which field should I choose?
- How should I write my résumé?
- Where should I look for jobs?
- How should I prepare for interviews?
- How should I start a job search?

This book will answer all of your questions.

Call me your career advisor. I'm here to point you in the right direction and weather you through the storm. What makes me qualified? Well, I am hired by some of the world's largest corporations to find and hire talented people to work for them. I work with hundreds of successful people, including executives, in their job searches. I know what employers look for in applicants, and I know the mistakes you can easily avoid to significantly increase your chances of being hired.

So, which field should you choose? Find out on the next page.

# Which field should you choose?

Ideally, in a field that's growing and that interests you. Believe it or not, a lot of successful people just “fell into” the career fields they work in. However, you don't have to rely on chance like they once did. If you have your heart set on working in a specific career field, like medicine or law, I urge you to skip this section and move on to the next. If you're not sure which field you want to work in, here's a quick guide to help get you started.

The answer is in your research. Find the answers to the following questions and write down all the fields that interest you:

1. Which fields are growing? (*Tip: Search online for "[year] growing fields"*)
2. Which fields relate to your college major? (*Tip: Search for "[major] career fields"*)
3. Which fields are your friends and family members working in? (*Tip: Ask them!*)
4. Which fields have you always been interested in?
5. Which fields do you have prior working experience? (*Tip: If you interned at a brokerage firm one summer, "stockbroker" can be added to your list.*)

Next, sort the list by your level of interest. This is your “hit list.” Although you should apply for all entry-level positions that interest you, these fields should be your primary focus. Learn as much as you can about each one, especially the typical career path so you'll know where you can be five to ten years from now.

# How should you write your résumé?

With great detail. You are your own brand. When employers hear or read your name, you want them to think just like society does about products from corporate brands Trump, Ferrari, Michael Kors, and Louis Vuitton—high quality. There's a reason why the world listens when Bill Gates and Warren Buffett speak. They spent years branding themselves and strived to be the best in their industries. Benjamin Franklin once said, "It takes many good deeds to build a good reputation, and only one bad one to lose it." Warren Buffett has a similar quote: "It takes 20 years to build a reputation and five minutes to ruin it. If you think about that, you'll do things differently."

Think of your résumé as a product, like the iPhone or Samsung Galaxy. When employers are looking at your résumé, they're deciding whether or not they're going to "buy" you. Why do we buy things? Sometimes we buy on impulse and experience "buyer's remorse" afterward, but most of the time, it's because we see value in certain things and because that particular product stands out from the rest. It's like that famous quote says, "Fortune favors the bold." You are unique, and there is something about you that makes you stand out from your competition. What is it? Only you know, and it's your job to write it in just one page for all of the recruiters and employers to see. Some jobs can get hundreds of résumés, so how will you make the cut? I'll show you.

## The Format

There are many ways you can format your résumé. Your college or university's career center usually provides résumé templates and other valuable resources you can use. You can also find plenty of résumé templates online. It really comes down to what you're the most comfortable with. However, here are the main parts of a résumé:

### Name and Contact Information

Always at the top and centered, unless there's another style you like. I like to put my name in bold and have the font be the largest on the résumé. Below your name should be your home address, followed by your cell phone number (or

home phone number) and email address. As a side note, when you're sending your résumé to an employer, you want to be professional. You're not professional with a voicemail that has background music or an email address like jaymoney710@email.com (not my real email address, by the way).

All employers want to hire professionals, so setup a voicemail saying something like, "You have reached the voicemail of [your name]. Please leave your name, number, and a brief message, and I'll get back to you as soon as I can," and change your email to a format like "first.lastname@email.com."

Example:

**Jason B. Navallo**  
Street Address  
City, State, Zip Code  
(XXX) XXX-XXXX  
firstname.lastname@email.com

## **Objective (or Professional Summary)**

An objective (or professional summary) gives employers a clearer picture as to what you're trying to accomplish. Some applicants prefer to write short objectives, like "A recent college graduate seeking an entry-level position in the financial services industry." Others like to be more creative and outline their strengths in a few sentences. Again, it all depends on what you're the most comfortable with. If you're confused, an online search for "résumé objectives" will give plenty of examples to put you on the right track.

Example:

**Objective:** A recent college graduate seeking an entry-level position in the [industry name] industry.

## **Education**

Next is your education. The main parts are: 1) college or university, 2) degree type, 3) major(s)/minor(s), 4) GPA, and 5) graduation date (or expected graduation date). You could also include any honor societies or organizations you've been a part of, or just include these in a different section on your résumé.

Example:

**Baruch College** – New York, NY

Bachelor of Business Administration

January 2012

Major: Finance & Investments, Major GPA: 3.4, Overall: 3.1

Awards/Honors: Peter F. Valone Academic Scholarship, UNICCO Scholarship

## Work Experience

To be placed after your name and contact information, objective (or professional summary), and education, your work experience should be presented in reverse chronological order, or with your most recent work experience listed first. There are five parts that make up a work experience: 1) company name, 2) position title, 3) location, 4) dates of employment, and 5) responsibilities and accomplishments.

Example:

**Discounted Jewelers, Inc.** – Marketing Intern

New York, NY – Summer 2013

- Increased the company's Twitter followers by over 350%
- Implemented strategies that increased website traffic by over 600%
- Installed and maintained a company blog to update loyal customers

## Other Experience

I recommend you add an "Other Experience" (or whatever title you choose) section to sell your other accomplishments to employers. Are you involved with charitable organizations? Have you co-founded a small start-up in the past? Were you the leader or officer of an organization on campus? Whatever you accomplished, add it here. The same formatting exists as with your "Work Experience" section, although your "Other Experience" section should always come after.

Example:

**Chess Club** – President

New York, NY – April 2008-Present

- Lead a 50+ person organization with a \$10,000 annual budget
- Initiated marketing campaigns that increased yearly membership by over 60%

## **Computer Skills (or Technologies)**

Another important section is your “Computer Skills” or “Technologies” (especially if you’re planning to work in IT). This section is important because it shows employers and recruiters which computer hardware and software you have experience with. There are many ways to do this, but the key here is to list and indicate your level of proficiency for each one.

Example:

### Computer Skills

Proficient in Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Access)  
Experience with financial systems, including Bloomberg Professional

## **Languages**

Speaking different languages can be valuable for some employers, which is why you should include your language skills on your résumé. On top of listing which languages you know, it’s important you indicate your level of fluency for each one too, so you don’t paint the wrong picture of how well you know them!

Example:

Languages: English (Fluent), Portuguese (Conversational), Spanish (Elementary)

## **Personal Interests**

I also recommend adding a “Personal Interests” section to your résumé. It’s usually no more than one line and placed before your references, and listing a few of your favorite hobbies (the relevant ones too, of course) can help you connect with employers. You may just have them whispering to themselves something like “Oh, he’s a golfer too?” or “Wow, he’s a runner—that shows commitment.” You’d be surprised at how some of the littlest things can make all the difference in whether or not you’ll be called for an interview. However, your work experience is more important, so if you don’t have enough space for this section on your résumé, don’t add it.

Example:

Personal Interests: Investing, Golf, Snowboarding, Paintballing, Football



## References

The last section of a résumé is usually references. Most people simply put “References: Available upon Request,” letting the employer know to ask if they’re interested in speaking with their references. It’s important, in this case, that you speak to your previous employer(s) first to get permission before you include them as a reference. Also, if an internship or work experience didn’t end too well, be cautious of adding someone as a reference if you know they may not have the kindest words to say about you.

Example:

References: Available upon Request

## Keywords

Large corporations can get hundreds of résumés every day. Recruiters don't read every single one. Instead, they have a computer program that filters through them and displays only those résumés that have specific keywords. For example, if you’re applying for an entry-level position in business management, recruiters may look for the keywords “management” and “customer service” in résumés (as a lot of business management positions can require experience in these areas), and only those résumés that have the specific keywords will be displayed.

Keywords are also important to help recruiters determine whether or not you’re qualified for the job. Most recruiters are not even close to being experts in the fields they recruit for. For example, the average technical recruiter is not technical at all. Most haven’t written a single line of code before. However, they are good at picking apart a résumé and making “educated guesses” as to whether or not a candidate is worth presenting to their client (the company the job is for), which heavily depends on the candidate placing the right keywords on their résumé for them to see.

What keywords should you use? It all depends on the position you’re applying for. A good way is to dissect the job description. What responsibilities match up with what you’ve done in the past on an internship, or, say, a class project? For example, let’s say you’ve found an administrative assistant job opening you’re interested in and one of the key responsibilities is maintaining large Excel

spreadsheets. Now, let's say you've done this all last summer on an internship. Shouldn't you include this on your résumé somehow? A good bullet point would be "Maintained complex Excel spreadsheets..." This couldn't make it any clearer to the recruiter that you have the specific work experience they're looking for in a candidate for that position. However, a lot of students don't take the time to tailor their résumé before applying for positions. Although you may still get called up for interviews, spending just a couple of minutes beforehand tailoring your résumé will significantly increase your chances of being interviewed.

## **Be Interesting**

Interest is the glue that sticks us to things. I remember asking myself, "There will be hundreds of people who will apply for the same jobs as I am. How can I make my résumé more interesting? What will make me stand out from my competition?" The key is to think about all of the interesting and challenging projects you've worked on, either in class or in your spare time.

In my case, I had a Series 7 license at eighteen years old and I created websites that thousands of people visit every day. Overall, it makes me more interesting. I was the teenager who passed the test a lot of grown men, including doctors and lawyers, can't pass, as well as the entrepreneur who created websites that provided valuable information for thousands of people every week. Now, compare that to ninety-nine other candidates' résumés that all look very similar to each other. Who would you choose?

I want you to reflect upon the past four years of your life and write down all of the most interesting projects you've worked on that you can remember. What were you the most passionate about? It could have been a project for one of your classes or something you've done in your spare time. What did you do that you are most proud of? I've met a lot of people who could not answer this question the first time I asked them. Why? They just didn't believe what they were doing was great to begin with. It takes a friend, family member, or even a bystander to tell them before they begin to realize it.

While going up to your friends and asking them what you're particularly good at may be weird for you, a good indicator would be the awards you've won in the past. Are you a talented athlete or musician? Are you an aspiring entrepreneur

who has worked on developing ideas in the past? Are you part of a club or organization where you took on the top leadership position? These are questions you have to ask yourself to find out what makes you interesting. What are you better at than others? Write your thoughts down and pick the ones you're the most proud of to include in your résumé.

## Words That Sell

So, you know you have to include relevant keywords in your résumé and you have to be as interesting as possible (without confusing anyone), but how should you say it? For example, let's say you took on a social media internship at a local jewelry store one summer. Your day-to-day tasks included managing the store's Twitter account and promoting the company website as much as you could. Interesting, but from the start it doesn't sound too complicated, right? Now, let's compare two different ways of how to sell your experience to the employer, and let's assume all the following information is true:

### Résumé A

**Discounted Jewelers, Inc.** – Marketing Intern

New York, NY – Summer 2013

- Managed the company Twitter account (Boring)
- Promoted the website by using social media and word of mouth (Boring)
- Created and maintained a blog to attract more visitors (Oh yea, and boring)

### Résumé B

**Discounted Jewelers, Inc.** – Marketing Intern

New York, NY – Summer 2013

- Increased the company's Twitter followers by over 350%
- Implemented marketing strategies that increased website traffic by over 600%
- Designed, installed, and maintained a company blog to update loyal customers

Which one would you choose? Both are true, but one is "telling" and the other is "selling" the employer. You will not get a phone or face-to-face interview without first selling the employer with your résumé. They will not pick up the phone to call you unless they think you'd be worthwhile to speak to. If you're having trouble coming up with what to say, ask a friend to help you. You may not be the best writer or salesman, but you know how to sell yourself. It may come easier for others, but the harder you work, the easier it'll become for you. Sell yourself.

## Applying without Experience

You will come across a lot of positions that require “1 to 3 years relevant experience.” You may not have that relevant experience to offer the employer, just a college degree and the willingness to learn. The hard truth is that relationships matter a lot in job hunting. If you’re not fortunate enough to have a friend or family member help get you a job to start a career in a field you’re interested in, don’t be discouraged. You just have to work harder than those who do. The skills you’ll learn about job hunting today will benefit you many years down the road when you’re working with me to find you a better job with more pay and career growth. Going back to today, here’s what you can do:

1. Demonstrate passion - Show employers you actually want the job, and that you're not just another student/graduate who's submitting résumés at every posting they see. That's why I suggest you add an “Objective” to your résumé, so you can tell the employer exactly what you want to accomplish. Show them you want to work for them and that you will be an employee who will learn quickly and do whatever it takes to get the job done.
2. Consider contracts - I know a lot of successful people who started off working on short-term contracts. They took whatever opportunities they could get, gained some experience, worked hard, and ended up being hired full-time by great companies where their careers really took off. You can get short-term contracts by working through consulting agencies (search online for “[location] staffing agencies” and “[field] staffing agencies”).
3. Consider internships - If you can afford to, consider taking an unpaid internship to get your foot in the door for a particular field. However, I would aim for contract positions first, unless you find an internship that's an amazing opportunity, where there's a strong chance of being hired once it's over.

Not every employer wants to hire you. This is true for everyone, no matter how successful they are or what field they're in. The harder you work, the greater the chances you'll have of finding those employers who do want to hire you. Keep working and never give up.

## Brevity

In the beginning of your career, your résumé should be no more than one page. When you're older and have more work experience, you'll have to add more pages, but for now, you must keep it simple. You also don't want to "oversell" yourself on your résumé either. You don't want to be the annoying salesman you meet in a store who doesn't know when to stop talking. There is such a thing as overselling, even on résumés.

Example:

**Discounted Jewelers, Inc.** – Marketing Intern

New York, NY – Summer 2013

- Increased Twitter followers by over 350%, sending out over fifty tweets a day
- Successfully implemented brilliant strategies that increased website traffic by over 600%, and answered over one hundred emails a day
- Chief architect over a beautiful blog that many people visit every day

That probably wasn't the most realistic example, but do you see what I mean by overselling? The key is to keep it short and sweet. Sell yourself just enough to keep the employer interested, but don't overload them with too much information. You should simply be selling your most relevant accomplishments. Ask yourself, "Did I do anything more important?" after you think you've completed all the bullet points for a particular work experience. If anything else comes to mind, go back, revise, and repeat the question.

## Be a Junior Candidate

If you're applying for an entry-level job, sell yourself as an entry-level candidate. A lot of times, students feel the need to oversell their accomplishments by giving themselves senior titles like vice president or director of a project when it was only them involved in the project to begin with. Senior titles are appropriate for some things, like clubs or organizations in college, but a lot of students have a sense of entitlement and feel they should be a vice president coming right out of college. Although it is fine to be confident in yourself, you're not facing reality, and you'll end up wasting your time when you should just look for positions that are for entry-level candidates.

One of my college friends had this sense of entitlement and sold himself way too much on his résumé. What ended up happening? He kept applying for assistant vice president/vice president roles! The second the employer walked into the room for the interview, he knew they were both wasting each other's time. On top of that, my friend would walk out of the interview all depressed, not knowing what went wrong. You have to crawl before you can walk, and the sooner you realize that, the greater the chances you'll have of landing your first job. "0-3 years' experience" is what you should be looking for on a job description. If it's anything more than that, you're wasting your time!

The key at this point in your life is to get your foot in the door in any way possible, even if the more junior roles aren't that appealing to you. You'll have time later on to prove yourself and take on more challenging and interesting roles as you gain work experience, but for now, you have to focus all of your energy on just getting into a company so you can learn and grow as a professional.

## **Internships**

You may have had internships in college, which is great. However, you must emphasize that these positions were internships on your résumé, as opposed to part-time or full-time jobs. A lot of times, candidates list "[position title]" as opposed to "[position title] (intern)," which is a huge difference. You have to remember that the average recruiter will spend less than ten seconds reviewing your résumé. If they see a work experience on your résumé for three months, which you did not indicate clearly as an internship, and your next work experience was two years later, they're going to assume you were two years out of work because either you were not taking your career seriously or because it took that long to find an employer who would hire you. You cannot afford to have them think that. So, label each internship as either "intern" or "internship" and you'll make your résumé a lot easier to read.

## **Part-Time Jobs**

You also may have had to take on a number of part-time jobs in college to make some pocket money and to help pay off your student loans. This also probably hurt your chances with taking on internships during the summer to gain some

work experience in a corporate environment. However, even if this was the case, those part-time jobs could be used to your advantage too.

For example, let's say there are two candidates who are interviewing for the same position, which in this case would be an entry-level bookkeeper position for a midsize company. Both go to the same school, with the same major and almost the same exact GPA. One candidate, Brian, was able to take accounting internships during the summer, working for local accounting firms. The other candidate, Richard, had to work part time at his parents' Laundromat. Since he's been working there for the past ten years, Richard's developed strong business knowledge and communication skills starting from an early age. On top of that, he is also in charge of all the bookkeeping for the Laundromat, so he's had some bookkeeping experience before, although at a much smaller level.

If you compare the two candidates, they both have a lot to offer. Brian, on the one hand, has the "ideal" experience—interning for local accounting firms. The other, Richard, may not have the internship experience, but he does have some bookkeeping experience, on top of years of customer service and sales experience, which all companies can appreciate. At the end of the day, if your situation is much like Richard's, don't be discouraged. Every work experience you have can be presented as a good thing. It all depends on how well you sell it.

## **Watch the Gaps**

Recruiters and hiring managers don't like gaps on résumés. There's nothing worse than a candidate who has four- to twelve-month gaps between jobs. It shows instability and leads a lot of recruiters to think that perhaps you are not a good candidate because it took you so long to find another job. When you're in college, you have to worry about this problem as well. If you graduated already and haven't been able to find a job for six months because you decided to travel, be sure to explain that to the employer if they ask you.

As time goes on and you are still jobless, it will only become harder for you to find a job. Employers don't want to hire candidates that other employers don't want. It's the exact opposite, actually. If you find yourself six months to even a year unemployed, you're only making it harder for yourself. That's why you should put in a full effort each day in applying and interviewing for jobs, even before

graduation (if possible). It's also a good idea to remain active while looking (volunteering/continuing education) to show that you're always doing something. However, it is most important to not be picky and to take on any job (even if it's an internship) until you find something better, as long as it's in a field you're interested in and/or you're learning a valuable skillset.

## **Be Different**

Employers want to hire candidates who are unique. You are not unique if your résumé looks like your friends'. For example, my first experience working as a recruiter was when I was searching for a graphic designer in college who could draw a mascot for a website I was planning. I was looking for someone to draw a caricature of an ordinary guy wearing a polo shirt and jean shorts. However, I soon realized that it's quite difficult finding someone with the talent to draw something like that, let alone someone who would draw it for a reasonable price.

Driven to find someone, I signed up as an employer on the career website for a local arts school. As an employer, I was able to search through students' résumés. I must've gone through 200 of them, and I ruled out 196 within a blink of the eye. Do you know which résumés I saved to my hard drive? Those that were unique. Of the résumés I went through, 196 were so dull, I thought to myself, "These people are really art majors?" The four I had chosen took the time to create these beautiful résumés that really demonstrated their artistic ability. However, content also matters in making you different, not just entertainment and glitter, so it's equally important that you spend as much time focusing on the actual content of the résumé as with making it look pretty and different.

When you're putting together your résumé, you have to ask yourself, "How can I make mine different from my competitors'?" Whether it's picking a unique font, creating a personal website (I recommend [Bluehost](#) to do this), or adding new and interesting sections to your résumé, always aim to be one step ahead of who you are up against.

## **Putting It All Together**

Putting together the perfect résumé takes time, and it's not something you can do in one shot. You can always improve it. The last thing you want to do is submit



a résumé with typos in it or a résumé that is not clear in what you're trying to accomplish as a professional. Once you feel you've put together a decent résumé, pass it along to some of your friends and family members and have them review it. Also, your college or university may have a career center with advisors who can review it and provide honest feedback and suggestions for improvement.

The font, color, and size also matter. You should use the same font type throughout your entire résumé, as well as the same color. I recommend you use black, unless of course you are an art major! It would be okay if there is some blue because of your email address, and you may want to bold certain areas of your résumé, like the companies you've worked for or certain keywords you'd like to stress, but keep it all the same color. You also want to keep the same font size as well. The font size can be larger for some things, like company names, but they should match up, for example, on all of the bullet points (accomplishments) for all of your work experience.

Note: Always keep a copy of your résumé in both .DOC and .PDF formats. Although .PDF documents secure your résumé's layout, most recruiters will ask you for a .DOC version so they can add it to their company's database. Also, ensure that your résumé is properly formatted for the different versions of Microsoft Word. Sometimes, if the employer has a different version, the résumé you've worked so hard on could look like a complete mess, which is something you cannot afford to let happen.

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