

Top 4 Tips for Recent Graduates Looking for a Job in 2009

By: Melissa Bullard

If you're a recent college graduate, the current economic situation and news about rising unemployment may have you concerned about getting a job, particularly if you've already searched and come up short. Don't panic. There are a few tactics that can make your resume stand out, improve your chances of getting one of those fantastic entry-level jobs, and give you something worthwhile to do with your time.

1. Keep a Positive Attitude

According to the Wall Street Journal, the unemployment rate in April among those with only high school diplomas was about three times that of college graduates the same age. Even if job opportunities aren't abounding at the moment, you've still got an edge over those without a degree. Many companies are still hiring; it's just a matter of matching your particular skills to those most needed by employers. Eventually, waiting longer means you may appreciate the job you get even more.

2. Consider Rewiring Your Résumé or Curriculum Vitae (CV)

Think outside the box: just because you graduated with a degree in math doesn't mean you have to teach math or work in finance. People have used elementary education degrees as a step toward social work. What sub-skills, extra training, and uncommon volunteer experience do you have? You may have the necessary skills to get your dream job, but no employer knows that unless you pull them out from hiding under your degree and job titles and make them explicit in your résumé. What happened when you helped out at the food bank? Did the administration go wireless? Did efficiency increase? Were you key in recruitment of new volunteers? Now may be a good time to revise your résumé or CV, highlighting volunteer experience and remembering to focus not just on tasks, but also on results.

3. Prepare Yourself As Best As Possible

Take advantage of tools and advice that can help you in your job search. Many career fairs offer networking opportunities, and some offer free résumé consultation. If the school where you graduated offers career counseling or mock interviews, take advantage of these resources to hone your interviewing skills and find new fields that match your coursework. College preparation Websites such as CollegeGrad.com can give you résumé, interviewing, and job search tips.

In the meantime, see what is missing from your education or experience. Some jobs require a particular skill or knowledge set that you might not have. If you are unable to find employment, take advantage of the extra time to take classes, earn a particular certification, or even go to graduate school. If you think you may eventually need a master's degree to get ahead in your career and you're having trouble finding a job now, why not consider starting the master's degree now, or at least taking some graduate courses?

4. Keep Looking

Don't give up the search. CollegeGrad.com and dozens of other career websites post new job ads every day. Finding employment can be like a full-time job, but the harder you work at it, the better your chances are of stumbling upon your dream career. Good luck!

About the Author Melissa Bullard earned a Bachelor's degree in English Literature, then a Master's Degree in Spanish Language and Literatures from the University of Nevada, Reno. She has taught writing, literature, and Spanish classes, and is currently working as a freelance writer, translator, and piano teacher.

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