

# Landing a job

## Presented by Kim Strong

1. Make the most out of your college experience.
  - Educators: Take advantage of highly qualified mentors.
  - Clubs, organizations: Involvement in college activities makes you a more interesting job candidate.
  - College newspaper: Get in early and move up while you're there.
  - Student connections: The people who show up to class in T-shirts and jeans will one day be your lifelong friends. Those connections are important to find and keep.
2. Your goal in college: Walk out with a well-rounded background.
  - Edit: Know how to edit (find holes) and copy edit (correct grammar and style).
  - Write (newspaper and magazine): Newspaper and magazine styles are different; know both.
  - Photograph: The basics, at least.
  - Videotape: Most journalists don't have this skill yet; you'll have an advantage.
  - Innovate online/blog: Everyone's blogging now, but what ideas do you have for innovating online?
  - Know a second language, preferably Spanish.
3. Do an internship -- and take full advantage of it.
  - Immerse yourself: Use your whole summer to intern (don't cut it short to go on a family vacation), and learn everything about the business that you can.
  - Know everyone: From the receptionist to the reporters to the editors, know who you're working with, even if you only talk to half of them.
  - Be open to any new experience, even intimidating ones: Interns show their true colors when they're willing to try something challenging.
  - Find a mentor or mentors: Again, these are people who will help you on your internship and later, when you need a reference or help finding a job.
  - Ask questions of your colleagues: Ask how a reporter nailed a really tough interview; ask an editor how you could have improved your story. Don't ask the easy stuff, like, "Where's the phone book?" and "How do I get to the police station?"

-- Keep in touch after you've left: Email your mentor and your editor a couple of times in the year that follows, complimenting a big story the newspaper had and sharing a great story you've written.

4. Compile a diverse and compelling array of clips.

- News
- Opinion
- Projects
- Sports
- Alternative story forms
- Arts, culture, lifestyle
- Take photos for some of them

5. Write a killer resume and cover letter; choose your clips well; and don't forget the references.

-- Resume: one page; include only details that matter (don't mention McDonald's when you were 17 unless you were named manager or "Employee of the month"; no mistakes (have someone check it before sending it out); no "objective" line (it limits you, if the job that's open doesn't match that "objective").

-- Cover letter: tell a story; make yourself memorable.

-- Clips: at least 10; diverse (not too many columns); include an online piece or two.

-- References: always include.

-- Don't email the resume and cover letter unless the employer has specifically requested it.

-- Send it to the editor, executive editor or managing editor: Anyone lower on the tree may throw away the resume if he doesn't have a job opening at the time.

6. Sell yourself to PEs (potential employers).

-- Settle down when you talk on the phone: Don't try to do something else when you're being interviewed.

-- You might have a great resume, but do you fit this job?

Remember that the employer is trying to see if you're a fit. You should know the job and requirements well enough to show the PE how you fit the position.

-- Dress appropriately: A tie and jacket for men (no corduroys or jeans) and a dress or skirt for women.

-- Take additional clips and references: You never know if each person you meet will have a copy of what you sent.

-- Be prepared to ask questions of your PE: Newspaper folks want to see if you're good at asking questions, but don't go overboard.

-- Be humble: You're bright and energetic, but you haven't

conquered the world yet. The people interviewing you have met some pretty glam people. Don't oversell yourself.

- Blasé doesn't sell: Overselling yourself is one problem, and sitting in the interview without much to say is another. Let your light shine.

- Know the trade: Keep up with journalism business news.

- Read the paper you're visiting beforehand.

- Be flexible about this job: The hours might not be what you want to start with or the job might not be all that you want, but getting in the door and working hard will create opportunities.

7. Make a smart decision when choosing your first job.

- Is this an environment of learning? Pay attention to how people work while you're there. Ask about training opportunities and team projects and mentoring.

- Have people stayed in the same jobs for a long time? If they've been there a long time, sometimes that means it will be hard for you to move up or move over. Check into it.

- Are people excited that you'd be coming on board? Or are you just another Joe filling another job? Look for excitement.

- Has you PE managed your interview well? A schedule, proper introductions, a well-planned lunch -- all this tells you the employer wants to impress you. And that's a really good thing.

- Did you have to try out? Newspapers that do tryouts often take hiring very seriously, and you want to work for a paper that puts effort into hiring.

- Were your references called? This is the same detail-oriented work you want to see done before you're hired.

8. New job: Everyone is a teacher.

- Some good teachers; some bad: Watch and learn.

- Adapt and learn: Every newspaper is different with different goals, different language, different standards.

- Find a mentor: Mentors don't always have "editor" in front of their name. Connect with reporters and copy editors who can show you the ropes.

- Know your manager's goals: What are your manager's goals (big projects, great crime coverage, consistently strong front pages) and what are your manager's goals for you (ask her)?

- Sources are gold: Scoops and big stories evolve from great source relationships.

- Don't burn bridges: The journalism world is a small one. Try not to make (too many) enemies.

- Teach your colleagues what you know about the brave new

world: What you bring to a newspaper is computer/Internet savvy. Share that knowledge and new ideas.

9. Learn to adapt.

-- Change is constant in journalism; adaptable employees write the rules: Essentially, the train is moving fast these days, and those who jump on board and adapt quickly have more job opportunities.

-- Be on board with innovations before the train slows down.

-- Don't turn into a cynic: Be dogged, unrelenting and skeptical. Cynicism is exhausting.

10. There is no map in life, so you must be the navigator of your career.

-- Again, don't burn bridges.

-- Change jobs when you feel you're stagnating, but don't hop around too often.

-- Go where your passion leads you: It's a lot easier to make good decisions if you're choosing the path that you love.

-- With great risk comes great reward.