

## **How to be Super Employable**

By Chris Palmer and Angeli Gabriel

To survive in today's economy, we must do everything in our power to make ourselves "super employable." At a basic level, employers want to hire people with the academic credentials and work experiences that match the needs of the job. You develop these fundamental skills and experiences throughout your life through your schooling and jobs.

To be super employable at this fundamental level, gain as much knowledge and experience as you can. Develop special skills that are valuable to employers: learn Chinese, computer programming, or edit films using the latest software. Complete a Master's degree in a field that you want to pursue as a career. Not only does a specialized degree directly expand your skill set, it will also demonstrate to employers that you have the capability and desire to accept and follow through a large task. During and after your education, pursue internships and entry level positions to get your foot in the door. Your schooling and work experience will likely be the first thing that potential employers see on your resume, so work hard to make these basics as strong as possible.

You may be thinking that at this point in your life and career, it is impossible to dramatically change your knowledge base and work experience. In that case, focus on the areas over which you do have control: first, demonstrate your passion, second, network actively, and third, pay attention to the details.

First, demonstrate your passion and drive to your potential employers. Passion can be shown through volunteering for relevant projects or completing your own projects, such as filming and editing your own movie. Employees want to see an entrepreneurial spirit that will continue to motivate you to succeed if they decide to hire you. Having a genuine interest in a profession and a motivation to learn about it – despite the lack of pay – is something employers would value and could make any applicant an attractive candidate for a paid position.

Second, actively network. Making new business friends can lead to fresh ideas, useful information, new partnerships and, of course, new jobs. Networking will give you connections to potential employers and could provide references during the application process. Networking is about building relationships and trust, and it is an essential skill for professionals who want to grow their careers. To network successfully, try to be authentic, unselfish, and honest. The key to successful networking is to be a decent and honorable person even when you're not networking. For more tips on networking, see my previous article at <http://realscreen.com/2008/09/01/networking-20080901/>

Finally, pay attention to the details to make sure you are always putting your best foot forward. Make sure your Facebook and other social networking sites are completely professional—or completely private and hidden. Potential employers should not be able to see any pictures of you from last Saturday night. Second, make sure your cover letter

and resume have absolutely no errors—they can be a deal-breaker. Ask someone you trust to review these documents for you. Before an interview, make sure you prepare rigorously. Practice answering the easiest and hardest questions you imagine them asking you. Learn about what makes the company special and why you want to work there. Dress professionally, be confident and smile: these small details can make or break your interview.

It is difficult to get a job today. In the long-run, bulk up your educational credentials and work experience as much as possible. In the shorter run, make sure you actively demonstrate your passion and drive, network as much as possible, and pay attention to the details during the application process. Following these guidelines will get you on your way to super employability, and, with any luck, a fulfilling, sustainable job.

*Some ideas for this article came from my daughter's blog post, which may be especially useful for more recent graduates:*

<http://money.usnews.com/money/blogs/alpha-consumer/2012/05/15/7-things-employers-want-from-new-grads>

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