

# HOW COLLEGE STUDENTS CAN AVOID GETTING “WHITTLED OUT” IN THE JOB SEARCH

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\*\*\* In a struggling economy, hiring managers get flooded with resumes for job openings. How can college students keep from being whittled out of the mix in the early stages? In a recent Newsday article, hiring managers had several suggestions for job seekers. In addition, NACE's 2003 Planning Job Choices provided resume tips for new graduates from employers, career counselors, and recent graduates.

Tips from these sources include:

**Paying attention to detail** --- Job seekers probably have sent out dozens of resumes and tend to cut corners by, for instance, not proofreading the cover letter, failing to include information the hiring manager asked for, or beginning the cover letter "Dear Sir or Madam" when the hiring manager's name is on the company web site. Students need to take the time to make sure the correspondence and information they send is correct and error-free.

**Doing the basics** --- They should proofread for spelling, grammar, and tone, and make sure they have followed the instructions of the employer. Firing off an e-mail is a convenient method of communication. However, college students shouldn't let the sloppy nature and informality of e-mail correspondence seep into their communications --- whether it's e-mailed or written --- with potential employers.

**Constructing an effective resume** --- Job seekers should organize the information in a logical fashion and keep descriptions clear and to the point. They should include as much work experience as possible, even if it obviously doesn't relate to the job they are seeking. Also, they should use a simple, easy-to-read font.

**Customizing their response** --- Job seekers should address the hiring manager directly, and include the name of the company and the position for which it is hiring in their cover letter/e-mail response.

**Making it easy for the hiring manager** --- Job seekers should use their name and the word "resume" in the e-mail header so it's easy to identify. If the employer asks for information --- such as references or writing samples --- job seekers should make sure to provide it.

**Focusing on what they bring to the employer, not what the job seeker wants from the job** --- This is an opportunity for job seekers to market themselves and stand out from the other candidates. What can they do to make the hiring manager's life easier? What can they do to help the company?

**Being professional** --- Job seekers won't be taken seriously if they don't have e-mail or voice mail/answering machine. If they don't have e-mail, for instance, free accounts are available through Yahoo! and Hotmail. They should provide the recruiter with a cell phone number if the job seeker's voice mail/answering machine doesn't pick up when they are online. Also, it's a good idea for them to ditch the cute e-mail address or voice mail/answering machine messages in favor of ones that are more professional.

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